



The Vasa Voice



VOLUME 60 No. 3

MARCH 2024



What's Happening This Month at Vasa

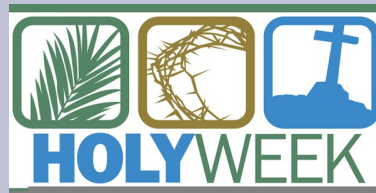
Wednesday Evenings in March—Lenten Worship: Holy Communion + Holden Evening Prayer. 7:00PM each Wednesday through March 20th.

March 2—Vasa Museum Soup Luncheon—This is the 37th annual Vasa Museum Soup Fundraiser. All proceeds will go toward landscaping on the Museum grounds! See Page 5 for details!

March 3 —First Communion Instruction (5th graders!) begins at 10:15am at the Lutheran Center, Classroom #3. See Page 10 for details.

March 6th & 20th—Women's Bible Study 9:30—11:00AM, Lutheran Center, Fellowship Room

March 13—Vasa Family Night!.



March 28th—Maundy Thursday

Worship + First Communion 7pm

March 29th - Good Friday

Worship 7pm

March 31st—Easter

Worship 9am

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

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Worship Volunteers for March

USHER

March 3	Volunteer Needed
March 10	Marv Fredrickson
March 17	Kevin Eckblad
March 24	Randy Klein
March 31 (Easter)	Kevin Eckblad

READERS

March 3	Sid Featherstone
March 10	Barry Skog
March 17	B-J Norman
March 24	Kathy Tilderquist
March 31 (Easter)	Katie Featherstone

HOSPITALITY

March 3	Sue Ness
March 10	Audrey Rosener
March 17	volunteer needed
March 24	volunteer needed
March 31 (Easter)	volunteer needed

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

March 3	Mike Bauch
March 17	Mike Bauch
March 31 (Easter)	Mike Bauch



Faith Formation



First Communion instruction begins on Sunday, March 3rd at 10:15. Classes will be held at the Lutheran Center in Classroom #3 and will go through March 24th.

Typically, students' First Communion occurs on Maundy Thursday during evening worship, which is March 28th this year. However, if that doesn't work for your family, Pastor Maureen is comfortable making alternate arrangements.

March

birthdays

March 1	Bella Otto
March 3	Michael Carlson
March 4	Norlene Josephson
March 5	Marilyn Burke
March 6	Madilyn Stehr
March 7	Kevin Eckblad
	Johnie Parker
March 9	Theresa Josephson
	Brian Mandelkow
	Rita Pearson
March 11	Julia Pawlenty
March 13	Marilyn Hanson
March 16	John Gardiner
March 18	Melvin Trelstad
March 20	Andrew Bauch
March 21	Caleb Hovel
	Amy Schaffer
March 24	Barbara Weigman
March 27	Chris Finne
March 27	Dave Gardiner
March 28	Emmett Poole
March 29	Shane Clemens
	Sharyn Sorenson
March 30	Andrew Weigman
March 31	Sid Featherstone



Thoughts from Pastor Maureen

Ashes and Ash Wednesday

The ashes that are used on Ash Wednesday come from the palms that are waved on Palm Sunday. I take some of those leftover palms and hang them to dry. A day or two before Ash Wednesday I get out our table top grill and a propane torch and burn the palms down to ashes. These ashes are typically mixed with olive oil and imposed as a cross on the foreheads of the penitent at the Ash Wednesday service.

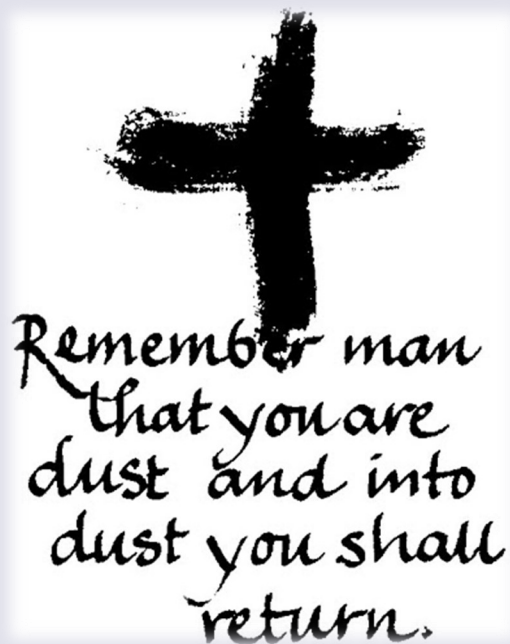
This year Ash Wednesday coincided with a Family Fun Night so we held our service in the gym. We read a portion of Psalm 52 and invited everyone to receive the sign of the cross on their forehead. As each individual received the ashes they heard the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

The wearing of ashes was a sign of repentance in biblical times. The ashes of this holy day symbolize two main things: death and repentance. "Ashes are equivalent to dust, and human flesh is composed of dust or clay (Genesis 2:7), and when a human corpse decomposes, it returns to dust."

Participating in an Ash Wednesday service is a spiritual discipline that provides us with a space to recognize our mortality. Ashes on our forehead is a visible reminder of our

sinfulness. They provide a powerful symbol when we recognize that the palms that we waved with joy a year earlier in praise of "King Jesus" have been burned to dust. It reminds us of how frequently we fail to follow the way of Jesus and how all of our best intentions often turn to dust.

As we move through the month of March and look forward to Easter, remember that we have to go to the cross first. Easter cannot occur without Good Friday.



Vasa Family Night



Wednesday, March 13th

5:30–7:00pm

Vasa Lutheran Center

Light Meal – Spaghetti Hotdish

Easter Theme Activities

Short Devotional

All Are Welcomed

Some Encouraging Observations

Offered by Pastor Maureen

About the Annual Report:

Every year I have to submit an annual report to the national office of the ELCA. Mostly they ask statistical questions about baptisms, confirmations, transfers in and out, and deaths. When I submitted our annual report I was delighted to discover that Vasa gained a total of ten new members over the last year. The breakdown looks like this:

- ♦ Baptisms: 4
- ♦ Affirmations of Faith: 6
- ♦ Transfers in: 5

Total members received this year: 15

- ♦ Deaths: 5

Total members removed this year: 5

I recognize that these numbers are not huge. But they indicate that God is not done with this congregation and that there are still people who are choosing to be a part of our ministry. Remember Aesop's fable about the tortoise and the hare? Slow and steady wins the race. We don't have to be in a hurry; we just need to keep on doing what we do, which is to share God's love with the world.

About The Endowment:

When Delores Fremouw died, she gave Vasa Congregation farm land which was subsequently sold. The proceeds of that sale were in excess of \$825,000. With this gift, Vasa established our Endowment Fund. Over the last 23 years "more than \$833,000 has been disbursed to continue God's work at home and around the globe." We have given away the equivalent of the original investment!

The power of creating an endowment fund is that the money continues to grow. Even though we have given away \$833,000 the total assets remain at approximately \$1,124,000.00. It is exciting to consider how we might continue to support various ministry efforts using the proceeds of this fund as a resource to do God's work in the world.

*If you have a desire for more details regarding the endowment, look at Vasa's 2023 annual report, pages 22 and 23.

you
make a
A DIFFERENCE



VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
January 22, 2024 @Lutheran Church

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:07 pm by Bryan Diercks, President

Devotions: Kevin Eckblad

Members present and absent:

Present: Pastor Maureen Hagen; Bryan Diercks, President; Randy Klein, Vice President; Duane Hanson; Mo Hauck; Kevin Eckblad; Chris Finne; Barbara Weigman; and Andrew Featherstone, Secretary; Eight voting members present

Unable to attend: Missy McCann; Roger Guttromson; Ben Norman; Kent Volz; and Mo Hauck;

Also Present: Kathy Tilderquist

Adoption of the Agenda:

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda for the January 22, 2024 council meeting.

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes:

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2023 council meeting as written.

MOTION CARRIED

Reports Reviewed and Accepted:

Treasurer's Report (Attached)

The kitchen remodeling team is meeting to go over kitchen project again.

We received \$34,442.13 for general fund contributions during December from members and non members. December was a very strong month for giving.

Finance Report (Attached)

A 2024 MN state law requires any hourly employee accrue one hour of paid time off for each 30 hours of work. Office and janitorial positions are the Church's only hourly positions. The budget for these positions will be reviewed and probably increased.

Kathy reviewed the Treasurer's Report, Income & Expense Report and the Designated Fund Report. Unrestricted offering was 106% of budget. Insurance expense was 108% of budget because Church Mutual required five payments in 2023. There will be four billings in 2024. The church finished the year in a strong financial position.

Parish Life (Attached)

Kids will have a play or presentation on Palm Sunday.

There are discounts for families who register early for Bible Camp. Vasa has subsidized camp attendance at 75% with parents paying 25%. Do we subsidize this year? If so, at what percentage?

Property Team Report (NA)

John is doing the work to get a quote for sound deadening panels for the gym.

Property Team is working with the kitchen committee over the remodeling project for the kitchen.



**VASA CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
(CONTINUED)**

Cemetery Board (NA)
Executive Board Report (NA)
Pastor's Report Attached)

Confirmation for the 7th and 8th grade students resumed on January 3rd. There are 10 students in the class and they are studying the 10 commandments.

The Annual meeting will be on February 25th. Barbara will do the rolls for the meeting.

Maureen was asked to serve as the President of the Board of Directors for Good Earth Village. Term begins on March 3, 2024 and continues until the annual meeting in March of 2025. At that time, my service on the board will be complete.

Museum Board (N/A)
Endowment Board Report (N/A)

New Business:

Budget Approval

MOTION CARRIED

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 7:25 PM.

MOTION CARRIED

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer

Report submitted by: Andrew Featherstone, Secretary

VASA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Treasurer's Report

January 31, 2024

For the Month of January:

Checkbook Balance, January 1, 2024	\$ 80,370.66
General Fund Contributions:	11,192.93
Total Funds Available	91,563.59
Budget Approved Monthly Expenses:	12,119.19
Checkbook Balance, January 31, 2024	\$ 79,444.40

CHURCH COUNCIL

President: Bryan Diercks 507-259-3909

Vice President: Randy Klein 651-212-8045
rdklein@mmm.com

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

Tim Carlson 651-442-5066

Kevin Eckblad 651-380-7849

Chris Finne 651-380-3690

Roger Guttromson 651-308-6349

Maureen Hauck 651-331-8593

Missy McCann 651-307-2274

Ben Norman 651-208-7124

Kent Volz 651-402-0942

Barbara Weigman 507-202-7880

WHO TO CONTACT IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Indoors: Jim Hedeon 651-380-6054

Kitchen: Sue Hedeon 651-380-6270

Faye Drewianka 651-212-3209

Outdoors Duane Hanson 651-380-1763

Steve Hyllengren 651-258-4338

Congregational Survey Results are in...

These are the results of the survey that was taken at the Annual Meeting on February 25, 2024. These results, and accompanying comments will be forwarded to the Church Council for their consideration. Thanks to all who took the time to complete the survey and offer their opinions.

	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
1. Maintain Red Carpet	27	23	2
2. Preserve Gold Leaf Emblems	32	18	2
3. TVs in Sanctuary	16	33	2
4. 170th Anniversary	15	26	9
175th Anniversary	42	2	8
5. Change Service Time to 9:30	21	27	4



COME ENJOY THE MUSIC



SPRING SALAD LUNCHEON

Cross of Christ Lutheran Church
24036 County 7 Blvd.
Welch, MN 55089
April 6, 2024
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

COME...be our guest!

Inspired to learn, listen, and enjoy
how music plays a vital role in the:



Hispanic Culture

Native American Culture

African American Culture



2024

SAVE THE DATES!

Thursday, April 25, 9 am-7 pm

Friday, April 26, 9 am-4 pm

Saturday, April 27, 8am-Noon

(CHURCHES WILL HOLD THEIR SALES
THURSDAY & FRIDAY ONLY)

VASA AND WELCH AREA

8-mile RUMMAGE (& BAKE) SALE



Sales to be held at Vasa Lutheran Center on HWY 19, Cross of Christ Lutheran Church on HWY 61, and at various homes along County Rd 7 & between both churches for over 8 miles!

Details about drop-off days and times will be posted online in April, and in the April VASA VOICE. But now would be a good time to begin the “de-cluttering” process and start setting aside things to donate. **EXCEPT—NO TELEVISIONS OR ELECTRONICS!!**

FILL THE TRUCK!



Once again VASA will be coordinating with the Epilepsy Foundation to pick up all remaining donated **clothing, shoes, belts, purses, sheets, and towels**. In exchange, Vasa will receive a donation from the Epilepsy foundation which will be applied toward our fundraising total.

Bring all your items to the Lutheran Center, but please don't mix other household items with the above items. Put them in a separate bag or box. It makes it easier to pack up after the sale.

Ready to give back?

The choice is yours.



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.

9. Log out

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.



HOW MANY PEOPLE DO WE REACH WITH LIVE-STREAM?

Google provides a number of (anonymous) measurements of who is watching YouTube videos. Some statistics, like the age of the viewers, is not available because we don't have enough viewers. However, there is much to learn by reviewing the reports.

When we stream a Sunday service, the YouTube control panel on the computer in the back of the church will show how many people/devices are watching live. This is usually around 15 to 20 viewers. By the end of the service, the total views will be a little more, around 25 views. Clearly, some people are checking in on their phones for just a few minutes. (Presumably, to see if grandpa and grandma are in church.) However, over the next week or so, many more people find and view our service. On average, each video is watched 56 times. Last year, several videos were watched over 90 times. (Not just the Christmas program!) This number has increased over time. The average was 53 views a year ago.

We know that many people watch the entire service; while others just check in for a minute or two. The combination of these two groups makes the reported average watch duration for our videos 21 minutes. Since most Sunday services are 50 to 60 minutes long, and if we make the assumption that the casual viewers are only watching for about one minute, we can make an estimate of how many people watch service all the way through. After doing some algebra, this turns out to be an average of 16 people watching live and another 16 people watching the (whole) service later.

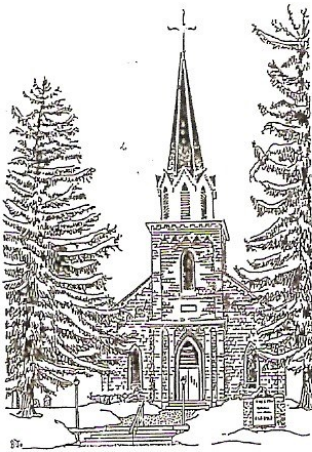
That means we are reaching about 32 households every week. This is half-again as many people as worship in person. Personally, I think we often meet God in the people around us. So, coming in-person, surrounded by the congregation is best. But our streaming efforts are real evangelism.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 9AM Service of Holy Communion (Sunday School children practice for Palm Sunday presentation at the Lutheran Center) Pastor Maureen continuing Education	4	5  9:30 Coffee and Conversation	6 Women's Bible Study 9:30—11:00 Faith Formation 5:30-6:30 Lenten Worship + Holden Evening Prayer 7:00pm	7	8 Pastor's Day Off	9
10 9AM Service of the Word (Sunday School children practice for Palm Sunday presentation at the Lutheran Center)	11 <u>TEAMS MEET</u> 4 PM Property 5 PM Finance 6 PM Parish Life 6:30 PM Museum	12  9:30 Coffee and Conversation	13 VASA FAMILY NIGHT 5:30—6:45 Lenten Worship + Holden Evening Prayer 7:00pm	14	15 Pastor's Day Off	16
17 9AM Service of Holy Communion (Sunday School children practice for Palm Sunday presentation at the Lutheran Center)	18 6PM CHURCH COUNCIL	19  9:30 Coffee and Conversation	20 Women's Bible Study 9:30—11:00 Faith Formation 5:30-6:30 Lenten Worship + Holden Evening Prayer 7:00pm	21	22 Pastor's Day Off	23
24 9AM PALM SUNDAY  31 EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP 9AM	25	26  9:30 Coffee and Conversation	27	28 Maundy Thursday Worship 7:00PM	29 Good Friday Worship 7:00PM	30
						

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

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

(office@vasalutheran.org)

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!