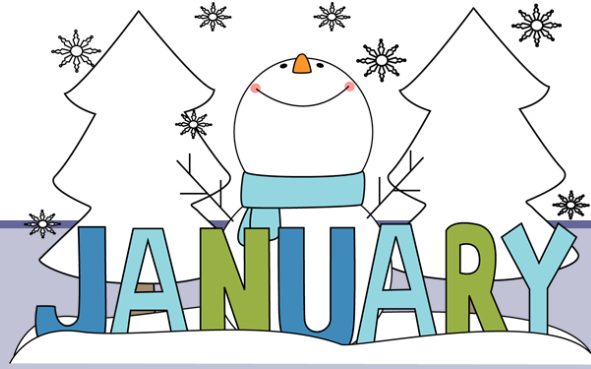


The Vasa Voice

VOLUME 62 No. 1

JANUARY 2026



What's Happening This Month at Vasa

January 4th—Sunday School resumes at 9:00am in the Lutheran Center.

January 7th—Confirmation classes for 7th / 8th graders resume at 5:45pm in the Lutheran Center. Over the next 9 weeks we will study The Lord's Prayer.

January 14th—Vasa Family Night!

January 18th—Annual Reports due

All committees, teams and boards should have their reports turned into the Church Office for the 2025 Annual Report by Sunday, 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 20th — American Red Cross Blood Drive

Vasa will host the next Blood Drive at the Lutheran Center on Tuesday, January 20st from 9am-7pm. Stop in, give blood and save lives. Refreshments will be available for all donors!

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

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P. 3 Thoughts from Pastor Maureen,

P. 4 Faith Formation info, Women's Bible Study

P. 5 Blood Drive reminder

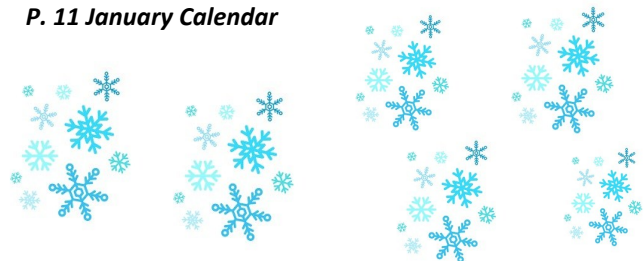
P. 6-7 Church Council Highlights, Treasurer's Report

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 4	Duane Hanson
January 11	Rick Samuelson
January 18	Marvin Fredrickson
January 25	Volunteers needed!!

READERS

January 4	Stuart Samuelson
January 11	Marcia Featherstone
January 18	Sid Featherstone
January 25	Barry Skog

HOSPITALITY

January 4	Marilyn Hanson
January 11	Sue Ness
January 18	Lora Gruber
January 25	Audrey Rosener

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

January 4	Stuart Samuelson
January 18	Marcia Featherstone



7th	Jay Mikaelson
9th	LaVonne Carlson Jordan Fredin Kennedy McCann Kaelie Nelsen Jaysa O'Connor
11th	Max Evanson
12th	Ellie Gardiner
13th	Paul Mikaelson
14th	Marissa Mandelkow Tegan Nelsen
16th	Sherri Broin 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 Hedeon Hailey Mann Jason Pagel
31st	Courtney Hovel

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)

Thoughts from Pastor Maureen

I have a very fond memory of a specific Christmas program that I acted in as a child. In October of that year all the children went to various locations to have their pictures taken while in costume. There were sandy hills east of our home and that's where pictures of the wisemen on their journey to see the Christ child were taken. Mary was briefly seated on a Shetland pony, just long enough to get a picture since the pony was a little headstrong (wink, wink!). The shepherds knelt near a manger in an old barn. King Herod sat on a throne in a room with gold drapes as the wisemen visited him. All of these pictures were taken as Kodachrome slides and projected on a screen for the Christmas program. The children sang Christmas carols during the program and of course the congregation joined in. Those slides still exist and many of those children, now grown, remember that program.

I'm not the only one with those types of memories. Recently I visited Wendy Anderson and asked her if she remembered being in a Christmas program at Vasa. "Oh yes," she responded. Which costume did you wear? "I was an angel." Where was the program held; in the chapel or the church? "It was in the church." Clearly she had good memories of being in the program.

Vasa's children acted out the Christmas story for us on December 21st. I am sure that they will carry memories of wearing costumes, standing on the stage and singing carols throughout their lives.

The story of the birth of Jesus has been acted out by children and adults for many, many years. More important than wearing costumes and acting out the events is that all of the participants, but especially the children, learn the story. It becomes fixed in their hearts and minds. As followers of Jesus, this is what we want for our children: we want them to

know the story. We want them to know that God loves us so much that God comes to earth as a vulnerable human baby. Love is the reason for the season.

This message of love is the most important idea to carry in the days and weeks after Christmas. Not the gifts, not the carols, not the decorations, and not even the family gatherings. As Ken Bible wrote in the text of the carol *Love Has Come*, (ELW 292)

Love has come—a light in the darkness!

Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.

Love has come my friends and his light shines in the darkness of our world. We need this reminder every year and celebrating the birth of Jesus bolsters and encourages us as we step into a new year.

Happy New Year my friends,

Pastor Maureen





Bible Study for women



Sunday School resumes on Sunday January 5th 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 8th at 5:45. We will study The Lord's Prayer.

First Communion classes for current 5th graders begin March 8th at 10:15am at the Lutheran Center. Mark your calendars!!

A note of appreciation...

Hello Vasa Lutheran Church,

Warm greetings in the name of our Lord.

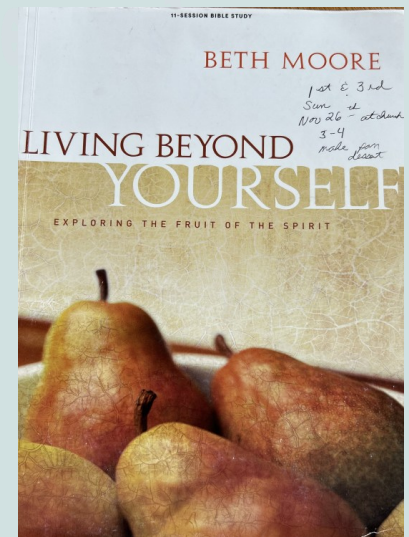
On Behalf of our entire team and the children we serve, we sincerely appreciate your continued support towards our ministry. We joyfully acknowledge receipt of your generous contribution of \$1,525. Your Partnership continues to strengthen the work the Lord has entrusted us with, and we are deeply humbled by your faithfulness. We will ensure that a detailed quarterly report is shared with you, reflecting how your generosity is making an impact in the lives of the children and communities we serve.

Thank you once again for standing with us in this mission. May the Lord richly bless you.

With gratitude and grace,

Grace Hector

For the Ministry Team



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. Beginning in January, the focus will be on the gift of Faith.

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.



Vasa Lutheran Center Blood Drive

Gym
15235 Norelius Rd
Welch, MN 55089

TUESDAY JANUARY 20th 9am—7pm

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



Scan to be directed to
RedCrossBlood.org

Come give Jan. 1-26 to automatically be entered for a chance to win an exciting trip for you & a guest to Super Bowl LIX in New Orleans! Includes travel, hotel, \$1,000 gift card, pre-game activities & more! Terms apply; visit RedCrossBlood.org/SuperBowl.



Scan to schedule
an appointment



VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

November 10, 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: Maureen Hagen, Pastor; Bryan Diercks, President; Randy Klein, Vice President; Kent Volz; Mo Hauck; Sue Samuelson; Tim Carlson; Barbara Weigman; and Andrew Featherstone, Secretary;
9 voting members present

Unable to attend: Missy McCann; and Chris Finne;

Also Present: Kathy Tilderquist

Adoption of the Agenda:

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda for the November 10, 2025 council meeting.

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes:

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2025 council meeting as written.

MOTION CARRIED

Reports Reviewed and Accepted:

Treasurer's Report (Attached)

Vasa took in around \$2,000.00 from the Bazaar. Money will go into the Bazaar Fund.

We are currently at 69% of the projected budget towards giving in the General Fund.

Finance Report (Attached)

Discussion on giving statements was brought up. A stewardship letter and giving statement for donations given in 2025 will be sent to members in November. Envelope donations for the General Fund are running at only 69% of what was budgeted for the year.

Continued communication will be done concerning lawn mowing for next season as to whether pay should be salary or on an hourly basis.

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.

Thanksgiving service will be held on November 23rd.

Decorating Church November 29th at 9:30AM.

Property Team (Attached)

Carpet cleaning for the gathering space and gym will take place November 25th. Items will be moved out after the service on November 23rd.

Windows are ordered for the Lutheran Center bathrooms. They should arrive around mid December.

Cemetery Board (NA)

Executive Board Report (NA)

Pastor's Report (Attached)

Preston Parks has been doing great after taking over for Emily.

Maureen will be on vacation from November 23rd to November 29th. She will lead worship on November 30th, the first Sunday in Advent.

We are in the process of updating the Church Constitution. Preston and Pastor will begin work on shaping a document that will show the proposed changes. Randy has gone over it and will assist Preston in the mockup. The goal is to have it ready to be voted on at the Annual Meeting.

We are planning on sponsoring a food shelf drive from November 30th thru December 24th. We will encourage monetary donations. All cash donations will be matched by at least one "giving unit" from the congregation, and perhaps more.

Museum Board (NA)

Endowment Board Report (NA)



Tabled Business:

New Business:

December meeting Dates: (Tentative schedule)

Property: Monday December 1st @4:00pm

Finance: Monday December 1st @5:00pm

Parish Life: Monday December 8th @5:30pm

Council: Monday December 8th @6:00pm Devotions: Tim Carlson

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 6:45 PM.

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer

Report submitted by: Andrew Featherstone, Secretary

MOTION CARRIED

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

VASA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

November 30, 2025

For the Month of November:

Checkbook Balance, Nov 1, 2025	\$ 61,026.47
General Fund Contributions:	8,673.45
Mission Endowment Offering	8,300.00
Total Funds Available	77,999.92
Budget Approved Monthly Expenses:	<u>(17,232.49)</u>
Checkbook Balance, November 30, 2025	\$ 60,767.43





MARK'S MEDITATION

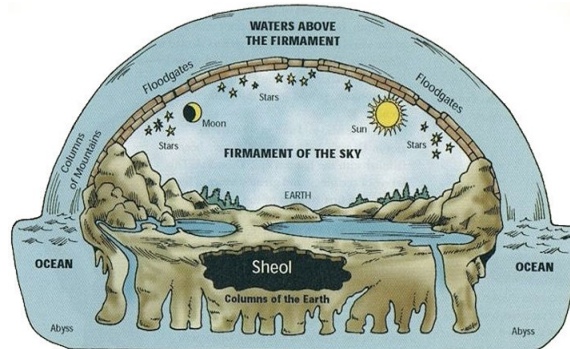
By Mark Hagen

The Cosmology of the Bible

January 2026

The beginning of a new year is a good time to contemplate the beginning of things. The biggest of all beginnings is God's creation of the world. What did the authors of Genesis and the Torah, the Old Testament prophets, Paul and the Gospel authors understand about the world and the cosmos? How should we understand terms such as "Firmament," "Seventh heaven," and "Sheol?" After all, it was not until 1543 that Nicolaus Copernicus proposed that the earth was not the center of all things. In fact, the Vatican did not formally acknowledge this fact until 1992!

The ancient Hebrews had an understanding of the cosmos similar to the other civilizations around the Mediterranean. They believed it consisted of three parts: A relatively flat disk of corruptible earth that people lived on, an abyss below; the underworld which was the silent abode of the dead, and a perfect crystal sphere above, on which hung the sun, moon and stars. The ancients believed that above the celestial sphere is the heavenly vault; translated in the KJV as the firmament. This is a solid barrier that holds back the waters above from the earth below. The firmament extends to the ends of the earth and connects the heavenly waters to the oceans. Likewise, the abyss below also contains a huge supply of water and is the reason there are springs and water at the bottom of a well. The earth



rests on huge columns. In the Hindu religion, these columns are giant turtles. When asked "What do the turtles stand on?" the fundamentalist Hindu answer is "It's turtles all the way down!"

This view of the cosmos brings order to our surroundings. Death and decay below; a verdant, living, but corruptible, earth in the middle; and a perfect heaven above where the throne of God resides. In fact, if you just climb high enough, you can see God. This is described in Exodus 24:9-11.

9 Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up <Mount Sinai>, 10 and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there was something like a pavement of lapis-lazuli (sapphire), like the very heaven for clearness.

The gospel writer John apparently thought the Exodus account was allegorical, stating in John 1:18 "No one has ever seen God." But the Apostle Paul thought heaven can be seen, even visited. In 2 Corinthians 12 he writes:

"2 I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows.

Today, our telescopes, spaceships and mathematical models give us a different picture of the cosmos. Does this mean that since the authors of the Torah got this wrong, the rest of the Bible is also wrong? Absolutely not! The value of Scripture has always been its understanding of inner-space, not outer-space. This will always be true. Yet, knowing how the Bible's authors perceived the world around them is an important step in gaining this understanding.



THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among others,
To make music in the heart.

(Howard Thurman)

Howard Washington Thurman (1899–1981) was an American author, philosopher, theologian, mystic, educator, and civil rights leader who played a leading role in many social justice movements and organizations of the twentieth century. He was **one of the principal architects of the modern, nonviolent civil rights movement** and a key mentor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Vasa Family Night

Wednesday, January 14th

5:30-7:00 pm

Vasa Lutheran Center

Fruit of the Spirit: KINDNESS

Please join us for

Chili Dinner &
Cinnamon Rolls

Short Devotional

Activities for the Kids
(possibly sledding)



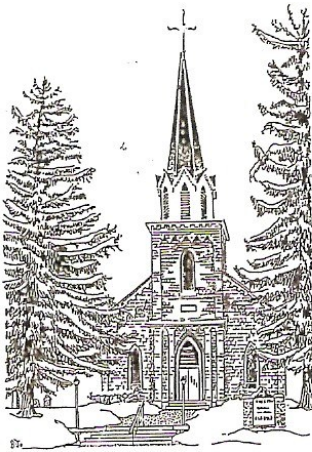
"BE KIND AND COMPASSIONATE TO ONE ANOTHER, FORGIVING EACH OTHER, JUST AS IN CHRIST GOD FORGAVE YOU." EPHESIANS 4:32

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 	2 Pastor's Day Off
4 9AM Service of Holy Communion AT THE LUTHERAN CENTER 10:15 AM Finance Team Meeting	5 <u>TEAM MEETINGS</u> 4PM Property	6  9:30	7 Ages/Stages Bible Study 9:30AM 5:45—6:45 7th/8th Confirmation 6:30pm Wednesday Eve Worship	8 	9 Pastor's Day Off	10
11 9AM Service of The Word (with Sunday School at the Lutheran Center)	12 5:30PM Parish Life 6PM CHURCH COUNCIL	13  9:30	14  5:30-7:00 PM	15 	16 Pastor's Day Off	17
18 9AM Service of Holy Communion (with Sunday School at the Lutheran Center) ANNUAL REPORTS DUE	19 	20  9:30 Coffee and Conversation  American Red Cross 9:00AM —7:00PM	21 5:45—6:45 7th/8th Confirmation 6:30pm Wednesday Eve Worship	22 	23 Pastor's Day Off	24
25 9AM Service of the Word (with Sunday School at the Lutheran Center)	26 7:00PM ENDOWMENT TEAM	27  9:30 Coffee and Conversation	28 5:45—6:45 7th/8th Confirmation 6:30pm Wednesday Eve Worship 11	29 	30 Pastor's Day Off	31

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!