

What's Happening This Month at Vasa

March 1st—Vasa Museum Soup Luncheon—This is the 38th annual Vasa Museum Soup Fund-raiser. All proceeds will go toward landscaping on the Museum grounds! Special Musical Guest: Dave Carpenter!

March 5th—7:00PM Ash Wednesday Service + Holden Evening Prayer We will gather for worship in the gym that night, place ashes on our foreheads as a sign of repentance, sing the Holden Evening Prayer liturgy, and receive communion.

March 5th & 19th—Women's Bible Study 9:30—11:00AM, Lutheran Center, Fellowship Room

Wednesday Evenings in March—6:30PM Lenten Worship: Holy Communion + Holden Evening Prayer. each Wednesday through April 9th. (*Note the new start time.*)

March 12th—5:30PM Vasa Family Night!

March 23rd —10:15AM First Communion Instruction (5th graders!) at the Lutheran Center, Classroom #3. See Page 2 for details.

VASA'S LENTEN THEME THIS YEAR is
"Ambassadors of Kindness."

During worship, there will be an opportunity to reflect on questions which relate to each topic about kindness. The March 5th topic is *Kind, Not Nice*.

The scripture references for March 5th are:

Micah 6:1-8—What has God Required of You?
 Ephesians 4:25-5:2 — Rules for the New Life
 Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21—The Lord is Good to All
 Luke 10:25-37— Parable of the Good Samaritan

Reflection Questions for March 5th

- ◆ What does kindness mean? What does it value?
- ◆ What does kindness mean to you in the context of political discourse and interactions with those who hold different views?
- ◆ How does kindness differ from mere tolerance or politeness?
- ◆ Are there nuances or distinctions that are important to consider?

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Worship Volunteers for March

USHER

March 2	Bruce Tilderquist
March 9	Duane Hanson
March 16	Rick Samuelson
March 23	Randy Klein
March 30	Tim Carlson

READERS

March 2	Kathy Tilderquist
March 9	Sasha diercks
March 16	Mo Hauck
March 23	Melanie Carlson
March 30	Barry Skog

HOSPITALITY

March 2	Sue Ness
March 9	Marilyn Hanson
March 16	Mo Hauck
March 23	Audrey Rosener
March 30	Lora Gruber

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

March 2	volunteer needed
March 16	Geri Lindholm

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



Faith Formation



First Communion instruction begins on Sunday, March 23rd at 10:15. Classes will be held at the Lutheran Center in Classroom #3 and will go through April 13th.

Typically, students' First Communion occurs on Maundy Thursday during evening worship, which is April 17th this year.

Thoughts from Pastor Maureen

The apostle Paul wrote many letters to the churches that he established in the Roman empire. Clearly prayer was an important part of his spiritual practice. He often opens his letters by telling his readers that he is praying for them.

Paul's message pivots when he closes his letters. That's when he encourages his readers to copy his practice and be steadfast in prayer. He uses words like: persevere, supplication, and "devote yourselves."

Romans 12:12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.

Ephesians 6:18 Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.

Philippians 4:6 Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Colossians 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving.

There is an old mnemonic that I find helpful in reminding myself how to pray.

A is for adoration. Begin by praising God.

C is for confession. Spend some time confessing the sins that are known to you.

T is for thanksgiving. Spend time giving thanks to God for all that has been done for you.

S is for supplication. Finish by asking specifically for what you need.

There may come a time when you simply don't know what to say when you pray. That's when Paul's words in **Romans 8:26** bring a great deal of comfort. "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." The Holy Spirit will pray on our behalf when we are at a loss.

There is also the prayer that never fails: *Thy will be done*. God knows what we need and is committed to us as beloved children. When we turn in faith to God and trust that God will provide, God does not fail.

Keep on praying!

Pastor Maureen



VASA FAMILY NIGHT

Wednesday, March 12th
Vasa Lutheran Center
5:30-7:00PM

Tator Tot Hotdish
Fun Activities
Lenten Service

All are welcome!

We Care for our earth



In the past few weeks Vasa Congregation has received several notes of thanks for charitable donations made to various organizations that help those in need.



ELCA Foundation

For \$1,010.00 deposited into the ELCA Endowment Fund on behalf of Vasa Lutheran Church.



Lutheran
Social Service
of Minnesota

For a gift of \$525.00 supporting the work of Lutheran Social Services.



HOPE &
HARBOR

For gifts totaling \$1,000 (made in 2024) to assist those in need.



The Vasa / Spring Garden Tractor Parade will be here before you know it—June 22! This year the parade is reversing course—heading FROM Spring Garden TO Vasa where lunch will be served in the Lutheran Center. Mark your calendars! You won't want to miss it!

Vasa Happenings

Norlene Josephson, son Jim and daughter Sue as well as friend Millie watched our live stream of worship on February 16. It's lovely to know that we can provide such a service to people beyond our walls as we share the good news of God's love to the wider world.



Nick Kees, one of Vasa's accompanists is acquainted with Pastor Lynn Rigg who had this lovely reed (pump) organ in her home. Because Pastor Lynn is relocating to California and must down-size this organ needed a home. Nick told Pastor Maureen that if Vasa didn't take it, the organ was going in a dumpster!

The brass plate states that it was manufactured March 31, 1899 by the Great Western Organ Co. out of Chicago IL. Currently the organ is sitting in the Lutheran Center gym until we find the best possible permanent home.





VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

January 13, 2025 @ Lutheran Church

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:10 pm by Bryan Diercks, President

Devotions: Pastor Maureen

Members present and absent:

Present: Pastor Maureen Hagen, Pastor; Bryan Diercks, President; Kent Volz; Ben Norman; Barbara Weigman; Missy McCann; Mo Hauck; and Andrew Featherstone, Secretary;
8 voting members present

Unable to attend: Randy Klein, Vice President; Tim Carlson; Roger Guttromson; and Chris Finne;

Also Present: Kathy Tilderquist

Adoption of the Agenda:

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

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes: It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2024 council meeting as written. **MOTION CARRIED**

Reports Reviewed and Accepted:

Treasurer's Report (Attached)

Kathy paid for Workman's Comp and liability insurance.

The down payment for painting and flooring was paid in January of 2025 and won't reflect on the 2024 numbers.

The checkbook balance is \$73,518.98. The financial position of the church remains strong.

Finance Report (Attached)

Effective January 1, 2025 Vasa Lutheran does not have property insurance coverage on any of the structures. Church Mutual non renewed our coverages effective 01/01/2025. The 2024 insurance cost for all lines of coverage was \$24,170.79. The renewal quote for just property coverage was \$100,000 plus taxes and fees (the excess and surplus lines market does not build taxes and fees into their non-filled rates.)

The Finance Committee recommends the \$18,000 difference be set aside on a quarterly basis to pay for property damage claims that would have been covered by insurance.

Parish Life (Attached)

Time to organize the 170th Anniversary Celebration. Volunteers will be needed to organize and coordinate.

Christmas Eve worship had 116 people at the 2:00 o'clock service and 52 and the 5:00 o'clock service.

Ash Wednesday worship will be on March 5th.

7 & 8 grade Confirmation resumed on January 8th.

Property Team Report (NA)

The remodeling in the Sanctuary is going good. We finished the entrance room and gather space area. We are currently insulating the window trim in the main areas of the sanctuary.

The pews for the Church will be moved out of the Church on January 14th and brought to the barn at Steve and Colleen Jensen, which is the Old Children's Home down the road.



VASA CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
(CONTINUED)

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

Emily Peterson has signaled her intention to retire this fall. We plan to hire her replacement to be on board by August 1 with a two month overlap so that Emily can train her in. Pastor is completing my term as a member of the Board of Directors for Good Earth Village. My term expires on the first Sunday of March.

New Business: Approval of the 2025 budget- It was moved and seconded to approve the budget with the corrections for 2025.

MOTION CARRIED

Acceptance of Roger's and Kevin's resignation- We the council accept Roger Guttromson and Kevin Eckblad resignations.

Insurance status- we are currently waiting for Ali Peter's for plans for insurance.

Redirection of annual premium for property insurance into Endowment Fund- no decision was made n how much to redirect at this moment.

Seeking to volunteers for Cannon River Conference (Feb 16th) and Synod Assembly (May 30th- 31st)- Pastor Maureen will work on finding a couple volunteers.

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 7:30 PM.
MOTION CARRIED
Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer

Report submitted by: Andrew Featherstone, Secretary

<u>CHURCH COUNCIL</u>		
President:	Bryan Diercks	507-259-3909
Vice President:	Randy Klein rdklein@mmm.com	651-212-8045
Secretary:	Andrew Featherstone rwfeatherstonepainting@gmail.com	651-470-9823
	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
<u>WHO TO CONTACT IN CASE OF EMERGENCY</u>		
Indoors:	Andrew Featherstone	651-470-9823
Kitchen:	Sue Hedeem Faye Drewianka	651-380-6270 651-212-3209
Outdoors	Duane Hanson Steve Hyllengren	651-380-1763 651-258-4338

VASA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Treasurer's Report
January 31, 2025

For the Month of January:

Checkbook Balance, January 1, 2025	\$ 75,300.98
General Fund Contributions:	<u>15,577.88</u>
Total Funds Available	90,878.86
Budget Approved Monthly Expenses:	<u>(14,933.28)</u>
Checkbook Balance, January 31, 2025	\$ 75,945.58

MARK'S MEDITATION

FEBRUARY, 2025

WHAT IS ATONEMENT? (OR, WHY I LIKE LUKE)

March 2025

The two most holy days in the Jewish calendar are Rosh Hashanah, and nine days later, Yom Kippur. The intervening days are intended for confession and repentance. Rosh Hashanah defines the start of a new year and means "head of the year." Yom Kippur is Hebrew for the "Day of Atonement."

During the Second Temple period (515 BCE to 70 CE) Yom Kippur was the day that the Jewish High Priest would enter the "Holy of Holies" and offer a special sacrifice intended to atone for the people's sins. This sacrifice included two goats. One goat was sacrificed on the altar. The other goat—the scapegoat— was brought before the high priest who would lay his hands on it; symbolically placing the sins of the people on the goat. It was then led into the desert, to a desolate place called Azazel. This is what a Jew who lived during the lifetimes of Jesus and the Apostles would have understood to be the practice of atonement for sins. Therefore, it is not surprising that early Christians would come to see Jesus' execution as an atonement for our sins. Yet, how does this work?

The Apostle's creed and Nicene creed are silent about atonement. The Apostle Paul doesn't really talk about atonement in his's epistles. Instead, he focuses mainly on Jesus' resurrection as having the power to transform humanity. The gospels (written later) have differing views of atonement. The author of Mark sees Jesus' death as the ultimate sacrifice. He writes "Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom;" implying that the barrier between ourselves and

God has been removed. The author of Matthew echoes the Yom Kippur scapegoat tradition by quoting Isaiah "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases." (8:17) The last (canonical) gospel to be written, John, is more emphatic. Jesus is the sacrificial lamb! He even changes the day of Jesus' execution to make his point. Jesus is the lamb sacrificed for the Passover meal. (1 Elaine Pagels (professor of Religion at Princeton) argues that the Gospel of John is essentially a rebuttal to Luke; and to the Gospel of Thomas, which implies that you can find God (and forgiveness) by looking inward.)

What about Luke? What does he think about Jesus and atonement? Bart Ehrman (professor of Religion at Duke) says this author sees things differently. It is apparent that Luke disagreed with Mark on the idea that Jesus' death was a ransom or a debt paid. Luke deletes Mark's statement that the Son of man came to give his life for many (Mark 10:45). Luke also deletes the saying at the last supper about the cup being poured out for many. In Luke's telling, the curtain no longer rips when Jesus' dies but before his death (so the death is not what brings access to God). Finally, in the book of Acts, also authored by Luke, when the apostles preach salvation, they repeatedly say that it comes by repentance that leads to forgiveness; they never preach that Jesus' death brought an atonement. Over the centuries, many theories of atonement have been put forth. But they all have issues, or suffer from circular reasoning. For instance, if the Trinity is true, then who is Jesus paying a ransom to with his death? Himself? This is undoubtedly why there are so many theories. I think Luke understood this and this is the reason Luke set out to write a "well-ordered account" of Christ. Luke sees God's forgiveness as freely given—as grace. No transaction necessary. To me, this is what an omnipotent God looks like.

2025

Thursday, April 24, 9 am-7 pm

Friday, April 25, 9 am-4 pm

Saturday, April 27, 8am-Noon

(VASA LUTHERAN WILL HOLD ITS SALES THURSDAY & FRIDAY ONLY)

SAVE THE DATES!

VASA AND WELCH AREA

8-mile RUMMAGE (& BAKE) SALE



Sales to be held at Vasa Lutheran Center on HWY 19, and at various homes along County Rd 7 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.



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.

On Ash Wednesday we read a portion of Psalm and invite everyone to receive the sign of the cross on their forehead. As each individual receives the ashes they hear the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Historically, 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.


Remember man
that you are
dust and into
dust you shall
return.



IN MANY CULTURES there is an ancient custom of giving a tenth of each year's income to some holy use. For Christians, to observe the forty days of Lent is to

do the same thing with roughly a tenth of each year's days. After being baptized by John in the river Jordan, Jesus went off alone into the wilderness where he spent forty days asking himself the question what it meant to be Jesus. During Lent, Christians are supposed to ask one way or another what it means to be themselves.

If you had to bet everything you have on whether there is a God or whether there isn't, which side would get your money and why?

When you look at your face in the mirror, what do you see in it that you most like and what do you see in it that you most deplore?

If you had only one last message to leave to the handful of people who are most important to you, what would it be in twenty-five words or less?

Of all the things you have done in your life, which is the one you would most like to undo? Which is the one that makes you happiest to remember?

Is there any person in the world, or any cause, that, if circumstances called for it, you would be willing to die for?

If this were the last day of your life, what would you do with it?

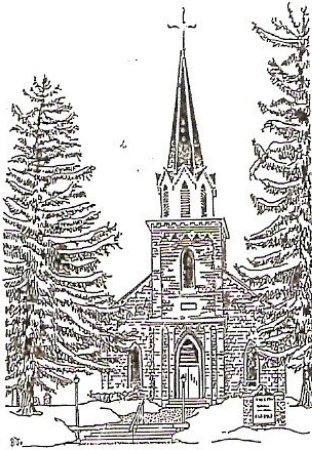
To hear yourself try to answer questions like these is to begin to hear something not only of who you are but of both what you are becoming and what you are failing to become. It can be a pretty depressing business all in all, but *if sack-cloth and ashes are at the start of it, something like Easter may be at the end.*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		<h1>March</h1>				1 VASA SOUP LUNCHEION  11:00-1:00
2 9AM Service of Holy Communion +Sunday School at the Lutheran Center	3 TEAMS MEET 4 PM Property 5 PM Finance	4  9:30 Coffee and Conversation	5 Women's Bible Study 9:30—11:00 ASH WEDNES- DAY + Holden Evening Prayer 7:00pm	6	7 Pastor's Day Off	8
9 9AM Service of the Word +Sunday School at the Lutheran Center	10 TEAMS MEET 5 PM Parish Life 6PM CHURCH COUNCIL	11  9:30 Coffee and Conversation	12 VASA FAMILY NIGHT 5:30—6:30 Lenten Worship + Holden Evening Prayer 6:30pm	13	14 Pastor's Day Off	15 
16 9AM Service of Holy Communion + Sunday School at the Lutheran Center	17	18  9:30 Coffee and Conversation	19 Women's Bible Study 9:30—11:00 Lenten Worship + Holden Evening Prayer 6:30	20	21 Pastor's Day Off	22
23 9AM Service of the Word (+ SS)	24	25  9:30 Coffee and Conversation	26 Quilts for Grads 9:30-11:00 Lenten Worship + Holden Evening Prayer 6:30	27	28 Pastor's Day Off	29
30 9AM Service of the Word (+ SS)						

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!