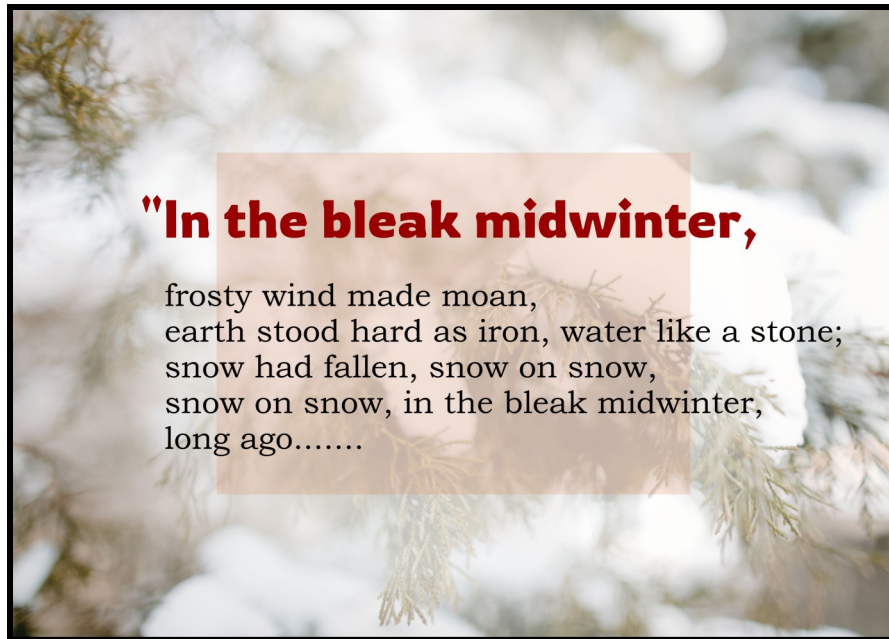




# Steeple Talk

Our Savior's Lutheran Church  
204 East Caledonia Ave  
Hillsboro, ND 58045

Volume 45; Issue I  
**JANUARY 2025**



The month of January brings us the new year! With the new year, we receive all kinds of possibilities and new beginnings! For many the new year can be exciting and invigorating. January can also bring a lull to life, and with it depression or at the very least a little bit of "seasonal blues". If you are feeling let down after the craze of December, if you are feeling alone, if you are in need of hope for the future, please know you are not alone. We are with you, and you can reach out to your church family for support at any time. Also, know that God is with YOU. The long month of December brought merriment and fun, leaving behind what can feel like endless days of harsh winter, maybe even bleak. However, God is with you! The celebration of Christ's birth was just the beginning of his light in the world. Maybe more importantly, the celebration of Christ's birth is just the beginning of his light in your life.

Christ's light is upon you, the Holy Spirit is in you, and God is with you. You are not alone.

.....Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him, nor earth sustain; heaven and earth shall flee away, when He comes to reign; in the bleak midwinter, a stable place sufficed the Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ"

*- In the Bleak Midwinter*

Pastor Amanda Johnson

# **PASTORAL ACTS:**

## **BAPTISMS:**

### **Jovie Rose Miller**

Daughter of Gannon and Mariah Miller  
Born: July 30, 2024  
Place: Fargo, ND  
Baptized: December 1, 2024 at OSLC  
Pastor Joe Johnson, Officiating  
Godparents: Nathan and Emily Kaiser

### **Amelia Marie Bonnema**

Daughter of Camran and Ashley Bonnema  
Born: July 22, 2024  
Place: Fargo, ND  
Baptized: December 1, 2024 at OSLC  
Pastor Joe Johnson, Officiating  
Godparents: Carter and Savana Bonnema

### **Ivron Kasie Folstrom**

Son of Callie Jo Folstrom  
Born: August 2, 2024  
Place: Fargo, ND  
Baptized: December 15, 2024 at OSLC  
Pastor Joe Johnson, Officiating  
Godparents: Kassie & Josue Jean Pierre,  
Richard Berg, Robert Berg, Jacie Folstrom,  
Otto Bertsch, Kasey Hannestad



## **DEATHS:**

### **Monica Webster**

Born: September 8, 1962  
Place of Birth: Robbinsdale, MN  
Died: November 21, 2024  
Funeral: November 29, 2024 at Boulger Funeral Home  
and Celebration of Life Center, Fargo, ND



**SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2025**  
**11:30 AM**

Our Savior's Lutheran Church's Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 26, 2025 following the 10:30am worship service (approx. 11:30am). All Confirmed OSLC members are voting members, and are encouraged to attend this meeting.

Reminder: End of the year Annual Reports (Staff & Committees) are due by Monday, January 6<sup>th</sup>.

## **5:30pm Wednesday Meal Servers:**

January 8 - Bockness Family  
January 15 - Dickhoff Family  
January 22 - Fitzner Family  
January 29 - Hatlestad Family

**NOTE:** NO Meal or Confirmation Classes on Jan. 1, 2025.

## **Sunday Acolytes in January:**

Jan. 5 - **8:30am:** Ryland C., Lillie D. **10:30am:** Coy H., Alexis I.  
Jan. 12 - **8:30am:** James F., Ross H. **10:30am:** Adam J., Keira K.  
Jan. 19 - **8:30am:** Chloe T., Gabriel P. **10:30am:** Joel T., Easton B.  
Jan. 26 - **8:30am:** Noelle B., Tenley D. **10:30am:** Logan F., Colbie H.





# OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

## Council Minutes

December 8, 2024 at 11:30 a.m.



**Members Present** – Barb Hultin, Jason Lovas, Krista Longthorne, Beth Christianson, Brad Ydstie, Eric Johnson, Vicki Buchholz, Dawn Paulsrud, Teresa Forseth, Pr. Amanda Johnson.

1. **Call to Order** – Noting a quorum, President Barb Hultin called the meeting to order at 11:35 a.m.
2. **Devotions** – Pastor Amanda Johnson led us in devotions about shouts of joy from Job.
3. **Confirmation of Agenda** – Jason Lovas moved to accept the agenda as presented. Brad Ydstie seconded. All in favor, motion carried.
4. **Old Business**
  - a. 2025 Budget – The council discussed the 2025 Budget. It will be approved at the January 2025 council meeting.
  - b. Auditors – Jason Lovas moved to assign Josh Opp and Jason Siegert as 2024 Auditors. Krista Longthorne seconded. All in favor, motion carried.
5. **New Business** –
6. **Pastor Joe's Report** – The fall sermon series “Won't You Be My Neighbor” was well received with an emphasis on love for the neighbor and neighborhood. The season of Advent is off to a good start. The Advent theme is “Star of Wonder” with a focus on the star leading us to Jesus. Decorating the church was scheduled for Wednesday, December 4 but was postponed a day because of weather. Thank you to everyone who helped decorate. In the past month I had two baptisms and two weddings. We also had a new member welcome open house on Tuesday, November 19 and welcomed 22 new members on New Member Sunday, November 24. I continue to stay busy with sermons, sermon prep, bible studies, hospital, home, and nursing home visits and crisis care. I continue to serve on the Eastern North Dakota Candidacy Committee and we meet on Friday, December 13 to conduct interviews. Christmas Eve services will be at 1:30 p.m. (Care Center), 3:30 & 5:30 p.m. (OSLC). I will be conducting staff annual reviews in the next month.
7. **Pastor Amanda's Report** – We finished the sermon series “Won't You Be My Neighbor” with “Neighborly Connections” facilitating open table discussions, and a neighborhood potluck. We continued to receive technology training with an emphasis on the broadcast system. Sunday school children began preparations for the Christmas program. Women's Bible Study participants helped assemble 100 Advent boxes with the theme of “Star of Wonder” to go along with the Advent focus. The proceeds for the Advent boxes will go to the Rape and Abuse Crisis Center in Fargo. In addition, there were two weddings in November as well as the new member welcome.
8. **Treasurer's Report** – Jason Lovas reported year-to-date expenses are exceeding income by \$29,000. Jason Lovas will research financing structures for the property at 314 West Caledonia Avenue and present them to the council at the January meeting. The balance of the media fund is \$4,162. Motion to approve treasurer's report made by Teresa Forseth, seconded by Dawn Paulsrud. Discussion. All in favor, motion carried.
9. **Deacons' Report** – Communion planning for December.
10. **Trustees' Report** –

## 11. Committee Reports

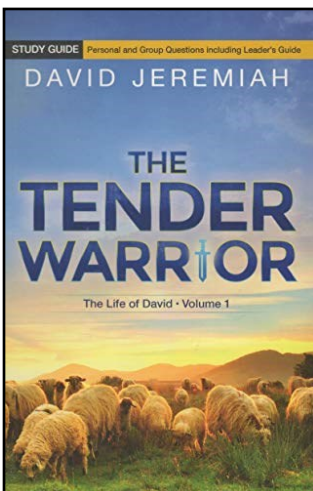
- a. Personnel –
  - i. Sarah Lovas will be performing organist duties for the interim.
  - ii. There will be a celebration to honor Karen Alfson and her years of service as church organist on December 22, 2024.
  - iii. Linda Hawn will be honored at the Community Christmas Concert on December 8, 2024 with flowers from the congregation.

## 12. Secretary's Report –

- a. **November 10, 2024 Meeting Minutes** – Jason Lovas moved to accept the November 10, 2024 meeting minutes as presented. Teresa Forseth seconded. All in favor, motion carried.
- b. **December 8, 2024 Meeting Minutes** – Jason Lovas moved to accept the December 8, 2024 meeting minutes as presented. Brad Ydstie seconded. All in favor, motion carried.
- c. **Next Meeting** – Sunday, January 5, 2025 @ 11:30 a.m.

## 13. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 12:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Beth Christianson

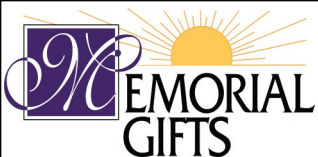


### MONDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

**W.O.W. BIBLE STUDY** has completed the Advent Study. Beginning on Monday, January 6th at 9 AM in the 2nd floor lounge at Our Savior's, they will return to the study of "The Tender Warrior - The Life of David" by David Jeremiah.

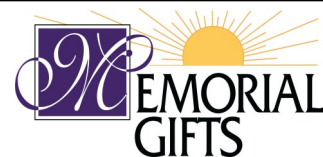
**ALL ARE WELCOME!** and Have a Blessed New Year!

~Senora Almquist, Leader



## DECEMBER MEMORIAL REPORT

*Thank You to all who gave memorials.  
Tammy Nelson, Memorial Secretary*



**Dedicated Memorial Accounts:** General Account, Media Ministry (radio broadcast, etc.), Global Missions, Building and Grounds, Capital Improvements, Youth Activities, National Youth Gathering/Mission Trips, Christian Education (Sunday School, etc.), OSLC Choir, GosBELLS, OSLC Bands, Parish Nurse, WELCA / WELCA: Altar, Library or Kitchen, Scholarships (Bible Camps, etc.), OSLC Endowment Fund, and Blanchard Endowment Fund

**GENERAL FUND** - In memory of Melvin Schramm, given by M/M Glenn Brustad

**MEDIA FUND** – In memory of Muriel and Loren Wegge, given by Paula Tronson, Joy Tandberg, Donna Nelson, and Nancy Olson

**BANDS** – In memory of Roxanne Reed, given by M/M Dave Nelson

12-20-24

Dear friend,

*Christmas greetings to you from Helena, Montana. I pray this message finds you in good health as we await the coming of Our Savior. The year has gone by so fast and much has happened in our lives. Good news is we are waiting for the promise that God made and has always kept. May His coming bring light that helps you close this year and open the new year full of His Grace and joy in our individual lives and our families.*

*This is my first newsletter since my family and I have been living on two continents. This newsletter gives you an idea of what the ELCA is engaged in in that part of the world. Your prayers and support make this and more happen. Thank you!*

*Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2025.*

*Willie Langdji*



## **Your Missionary in West & Central Africa**

My name is Willie Langdji, and I serve as Regional Representative of the ELCA in West and Central Africa. In the past you have received newsletters from my family (Anne, Micah and Willie Langdji). We lived together as family and served in the same region, but my wife and son are living in the US right now while I continue to live in Cameroon and serve in the region.

In this newsletter I highlight aspects of the ELCA's accompaniment walk with national Lutheran churches in three countries in the West and Central African region. You will read about women's health in the Central African Republic, Partners in Mission annual meeting in Sierra Leone, Grand Canyon companion synod visit to Senegal as well as my summer vacation with family in the USA. All of this will give you a feel for how your giving to the ELCA through your congregations and your synod or directly to the ELCA transforms lives across the region.

### **Summer 2024 in the U.S.**

I spent last summer in the US. It was my Home Assignment year when I was supposed to visit sponsoring congregations and share about the mission work you are engaged in the West and Central Africa region. I wasn't able to visit many of you but got the wonderful opportunity to attend the ELCA Multicultural Youth Leadership Event and Youth Gathering with Micah. It was amazing to share in the spirit of "Made to Be" with the thousands of young ELCA members and their siblings from around the globe.

Summer was also time to be with family, go hiking and camping and get rained out, as this has become my camping experience ever since I started this fun adventure in 1999 in the beautiful Badlands of North Dakota... (I don't know who ever named such a beautiful place "badlands".)

### **Obstetric Fistula Camp in CAR**

Back to the region, I traveled to the Central African Republic (CAR) to assist the Evangelical Lutheran Church of CAR (ELC-CAR) in preparing for the first obstetric fistula camp. This is a camp where specialized medical care is provided to women who need fistula repair. An obstetric fistula is an unusual opening that forms between the vagina and another organ, such as the bladder, colon or rectum. It can result from childbirth or surgery. Women living with fistulas usually come from very poor homes and are rejected by their families and communities because they cannot keep from smelling bad or go about normal activities. Fistula repair is one of many medical services severely lacking in CAR.

The church is there for such situations and with the support of the ELCA and Mission Afrika (Danish Lutheran Mission) the ELC-CAR organized this first camp in the country. A total of 40 patients ranging in age from 14 years to 56 years were diagnosed. Many of these women had to walk over 200 km (120 miles) from their homes to pay for a motorcycle that will take them to the Emmanuel Health Center of the ELC-CAR at Gallo where the camp was held.

Of the 40 diagnosed women, 26 were operated upon by the medical team made of specialists from Cameroon, Tanzania and Australia. Time ran out to provide for the others, so another fistula camp is being planned.

Your giving to ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response made this camp happen. Thank you!

The women who had their fistulas repaired will return home with their dignity restored and be fully reintegrated into their communities.

While in the CAR preparing for the camp, I had an accident with a machine and sustained serious injuries to my right hand. After preliminary medical care at the Emmanuel Health Center in Gallo I returned, earlier than planned, to Cameroon where I continued treatment. I am adapting to a "new hand" with two fingers that had to be partially amputated

### **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone: Partners in Mission Meeting**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone (ELCSL) hosted its regular Partners in Mission Meeting. I could not attend but my colleague, Rev. Dr. Elitha Moyo represented the Africa Desk of the ELCA Service and Justice Home Area.

The ELCA companion synod of the ELCSL is the Northern Texas Northern Louisiana Synod and Bishop Erik Gronberg led the synod delegation to be with the siblings in Sierra Leone, rejoicing in the achievements of mission together in Sierra Leone and the US, and reflecting on future actions together. Highlights of the time in Sierra Leone include the consecration of St. Mark's chapel in Calaba Town (a suburb of Freetown) and the inauguration of the health center in the remote community of Juhuun, about 6 hours from the capital city, Freetown.

### **Strengthening Companion Relationship Between the ELCA and the Lutheran Church of Senegal**

Companionship is lived out through people-to-people connections and the witness they bear to God's love for humanity through Christ. It is therefore important to add human faces to the words and actions as we live our faith.

It is in this spirit that Bishop Deborah Hutterer of the ELCA's Grand Canyon Synod led a 5- person delegation to Senegal from November 29th to December 6th. I joined this visit. It was a time to be with our siblings in Christ of the Lutheran Church of Senegal (LCS) in this 95% Muslim country where Christians and Muslims share their love for one another in their daily lives.

During the visit, the memorandum of understanding between the ELCA and the LCS was renewed during a Sunday service in the community of Mbokoutour, some 30 minutes northwest of the town of Fatick where the head office of the church is located. It was also time to witness firsthand some of the work done by the LCS and the Senegal Lutheran Development Services (SLDS) in that country. The SLDS is a national nonprofit organization that was born out of the ELCA's work in Senegal that began in the mid-70s. Today the SLDS is run entirely by a Senegalese team made of both Christians and Muslims. It provides life-transforming services in the areas of health, education and food security in suburban and rural communities of Senegal.

I am grateful for how you walk alongside me to seek to do God's work in West and Central Africa. Thank you for prayers, support and assistance.

Willie Langdji  
Regional Representative, ELCA Service and Justice Home Area,  
Willie.langdji@elca.org



# Living Lutheran

## *True and Lasting Joy*

December 13, 2024

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified (Luke 2:8-9).

Night. A liminal time. A time when God sends messages and messengers to mortals. A time when nocturnal predators are active. A time when, while the world is asleep, greater vigilance is required of those who keep watch.

And here are these shepherds. Except for Mary and Joseph, they were the first to learn of Jesus' birth. Shepherds figure prominently in Scripture as metaphors for faithful leaders, good kings, compassionate and brave. David was a shepherd boy called into God's service. Jesus declared himself to be the Good Shepherd. But in actuality, shepherding was hard and dangerous work, and shepherds were not considered to be among the elite in society. Shepherds were an out-of-bounds people, living outside of the city, and a little suspect. Why would the news of the birth of the king be announced to them?

What about Bethlehem? The prophet Micah called Bethlehem "one of the little clans of Judah" (Micah 5:2). Even today, Bethlehem would not be counted among the world's great cities. In 1950, Christians made up 86% of its population. Now they are under 10%. Its economy is based on tourism, which has been decimated by the current conflict. Bethlehem is in the occupied West Bank, in a war zone.

To these terrified shepherds, literally sitting in the dark outside of Bethlehem, an obscure town in an occupied province of the Roman Empire, God chose to reveal the birth of the Messiah. What on earth was God thinking? Why not in Jerusalem? Why not in Herod's palace? Why not in Rome, where the emperor claimed to be *sofer*, "savior."

How does the angels' announcement of the birth of the Messiah sound to people living in obscure places far from the centers of power in indescribably difficult circumstances today? To those living in Gaza and Ukraine, in Sudan, in the homes of immigrants in this country who fear deportation? To starving children here and across the globe? How dare we wish them "Merry Christmas"?

"But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord'" (Luke 2:10-11). Joy. Not happiness that is transient and human-made, but joy, given by God, that is deep and strong and unshakable.



Joy is a sign of the reign of God. The root word for "joy" in Greek is the same as that for "grace." "Gift" also comes from the same root as does "thanks." All of this points to the nature of true joy. It is gift. It is grace. It is thanksgiving. Our word "eucharist," a name for Holy Communion, ties this all together in the sacrament where Jesus' body is broken for us and Jesus' blood is poured out for us. In the eucharist, Christ invades us with God's joy. We are intimately connected to the source of joy and grace in this gift.

Perhaps that is why, in the middle of the night, to terrified shepherds outside of a small town, God chose to send the angels to announce the birth of Jesus. No distraction. No interference. Just the simple, deep, profound gift of true and lasting joy. A joy that comes from God, from the essence of God, depending only on God, that no earthly power can take away.



From the Presiding  
Bishop Eaton



**NOTE:** WELCA has **Meal Delivery- January 27-31** (Sarah Workgroup)

Our Savior's WELCA met **Thursday, December 5, 2024** with President Sylvia Hansen presiding.

Sylvia opened our meeting with a prayer.

Pastor Joe led the Bible Study on the Star of Wonder.

The Secretary's minutes were read and approved. The Treasurer's report was reviewed and approved.

**BUSINESS:**

- Connie has reported that 36 shoeboxes were delivered.
- Two boxes of gifts for the ND State Hospital have been delivered.
- The budget presented was approved.
- It was decided to have our regular meeting on January 2nd.

Sylvia reported the following:

- Dec. Care Center coffee and Meal Delivery: Dorcas workgroup
- Jan. Care Center coffee and Meal Delivery: Sarah workgroup

The meeting closed with The Lord's Prayer, Table Prayer, and potluck lunch.

**NEXT MEETING: Thursday, January 2, 2025 at 10 AM**

*A big **THANK YOU** to those of you who donated gifts for the ND State Hospital clients. We sent 2 large boxes of wonderful gifts. I have already had a thank you from the volunteers who operate the program. Those who receive the gifts will know that someone is thinking of them at Christmas.*



Our Savior's Lutheran Church  
Pastor Joe, Pastor Amanda, and OSLC members:

As Christmas approaches again, we want to take the time to say **Thank You** for all your thoughts, prayers, time and services that you have provided to Sanford Hillsboro Care Center, tenants, residents and patients. Thank You does not nearly seem enough.

We are blessed to have a community that are so engaged in being a part of the care we provided. The weekly services provided by Pastor Joe and Pastor Amanda keep us inspired. The visits to the residents, tenants and patients provided by members of the congregation are so welcome and needed.

WELCA workgroups have been providing treats for our monthly Birthday celebrations which have been greatly appreciated.

We also would like to say a big Thank You to the Hotdishes and their accompanists. They have been singing before the worship services at the Care Center. That few minutes of singing that is provided, means more than you will ever know.

Thank you to Cindy Doeden who is so gracious to work with us on scheduling and keeping us updated with the newsletter and calendars.

**Continued on next page...**



We are truly blessed to have OSLC on our care team and are humbled by your consistent kindness and generosity.

I asked a 4 year old what his Christmas Wish is, he said:

*I wish for you to have Jesus in your heart.*

May you all have a Blessed Christmas and Jesus in your hearts!

With much appreciation!

Susi, Ashley, Sandy

Sanford Hillsboro Care Center Activity Team

**HILLSBORO KIWANIS FOOD PANTRY:** On the first Sunday of the month, it is an Our Savior's tradition to bring donations for the food pantry. Place your items in the wood crate located inside and to the west of the front door of the church.

**Items needed include:**

Peanut Butter, Stove-top stuffing, Hamburger Helper, Canned Tuna, Canned Chicken, Canned vegetables, Pork Beans, Pasta Products, Spaghetti Sauce, Salad Dressing, Jello, Brownie Mix, Flour, Coffee & Tea, Ketchup, Mustard  
Toothpaste, Body Wash, Deodorant, Shampoo/Conditioner, Laundry Soap, Dish Soap, Feminine Hygiene Products, Toilet Paper, Paper Towels, Kleenex, Napkins

The Hillsboro Kiwanis Food Pantry is located at the Hillsboro Armory. Open the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays of the month from 4-6 pm. THANK YOU for your generous donations for those in need. If you have any questions please contact Rich G. at 701-436-5777 or Dan C. at 701-430-1595.



**SOCIAL MEDIA:** Watch OSLC worship services and get notified about events on:

**Facebook** at oslchillsboro (Our Savior's Lutheran Church)

**Instagram** @ oslchillsboro

**YouTube** - Our Savior's Lutheran Church Hillsboro ND

**HTC CHANNEL 34** and our **website: oslchillsboro.com**

**STEWARDSHIP REPORT:  
OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**INCOME AND EXPENSES:**

2024 Income received through  
November 30: \$332,344.32

2024 Expenses through  
November 30: \$361,287.27

Income Less Expenses: -\$28,942.95

OSLC OFFERING STEWARDSHIP 2024 OFFERING RECEIVED		WORSHIP ATTENDANCE	
November 3	\$ 2,541.14	8:30am	79
		10:30am	103
November 10	\$ 12,743.22	8:30am	54
		10:30am	118
November 17	\$ 11,671.06	8:30am	106
		10:30am	94
November 24	\$ 2,114.41	8:30am	59
		10:30am	108
Nov. Direct Deposit	\$ 9,012.64		
<b>November Total:</b>	<b>\$ 38,082.47</b>		
<b>2024 Total</b>	<b>\$320,839.83</b>		

**The Offering**


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**Our Savior's Lutheran Church**  
**204 E. Caledonia Ave**  
**Hillsboro, ND 58045**

Address Service Requested



**2024 COUNCIL MEMBERS**

- President:** Barb Hultin 430-0748
- Vice-President:** Daniel Nelson 430-3689
- Secretary:** Beth Christianson 430-2309
- Treasurer:** Jason Lovas 371-1272
- Deacons:** Krista Longthorne 238-6624  
 Brad Ydstie 739-4171  
 Dawn Paulsrud 218-790-6621  
 Teresa Forseth 430-2037
- Trustees:** Michael Bare 218-790-8222  
 Eric Johnson 701-799-6518  
 Belinda Bye 712-389-2152  
 Mike Tweten 701-238-2073  
 Vicki Buchholz 701-799-9469

**Church Office Manager:** Cindy Doeden  
**Church Office:** 701-636-5701  
**Hours:** M-F 9am-3pm  
**Church Office email address:** oslcelca@rrv.net  
 or cindy@oslchillsboro.com  
**Pastor Joe Johnson:** cell—701-430-3787;  
 pastorjoe@oslchillsboro.com  
**Education Pastor:** Fr. Amanda Johnson-218-556-8895  
**OSLC Kitchen:** 701-636-5705  
**OSLC Website:** www.oslchillsboro.com  
**Facebook:** oslchillsboro  
**Twitter:** OSLCHillsboro; **Instagram:** oslchillsboro  
**YouTube:** Our Savior's Lutheran Church Hillsboro ND  
 Broadcast live on Sunday mornings at 8:30am on **KMAV**  
**105.5 FM and KMSR 1520 AM** and at 8:30am and  
 10:30am on **HTC Channel 34.**

