



Steeple Talk

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

Volume 46; Issue I

JANUARY 2026

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!! I hope your new year is full of celebrations and new excitement. Though if the new year is a bit of a letdown, that is understandable. After the Christmas and New Year's celebrations, time can feel odd and even a little discombobulated. It is the usual time that we take down the tree and put away all the twinkly lights and garlands. The first week of January can feel a little humdrum or even melancholy.

However, for over a month, we have been bombarding you with quotes and stories about joy. So, starting off the new year with anything but joy seems a little wrong at this point. This reminds me of a letter my mother-in-law received many years ago.

The letter was addressed from a dear family friend and mailed out around Christmas and New Year's. This friend was well-read and articulate. The type of person who was always coming up with thoughtful observations and helpful insights. Her letter did not disappoint, and toward the end, she signed off with a kind of blessing. She wrote, "Wishing you a new year full of courage and enthusiasm."

No doubt life takes courage from time to time. Sometimes life takes all the courage we have. But with the guidance of Christ greeting us in the new year, our faith will make it through. Additionally, I believe we can find the joy in the birth of Christ to bring enough enthusiasm for the entire year and beyond!

Now, before I give the subject of joy a little rest, I will leave you with one final quote.

"Be not lax in celebrating. Be not lazy in the festive service of God. Be ablaze with enthusiasm. Let us be an alive, burning offering before the altar of God."

-Hildegard of Bingen

Pastor Amanda



PASTORAL ACTS:

DEATH:

Patricia Jo Porter

Born: March 20, 1962
Place of Birth: Fargo, ND
Died: December 7, 2025
Funeral: December 12, 2025 at OSLC
Pastor Joe Johnson, Officiating
Interment: Hunter Cemetery
Hunter, ND

TRANSFERRED OUT:

Benjamin and Shelby Strand, Ole, Cora, and Arlo

BAPTISMS:

Anthony James Knecht

Son of Benjamin and Kendra Knecht
Born: September 21, 2025
Place: Fargo, ND
Baptized: December 21, 2025 at OSLC
Pastor Joe Johnson, Officiating
Godparents: Elizabeth Branson, Christopher Knecht

Eleanor Lynn Plutowski

Daughter of Andrew and Molly Plutowski
Born: September 24, 2025
Place: Fargo, ND
Baptized: January 4, 2026 at OSLC
Pastor Joe Johnson, Officiating
Godparents: Jordyn Tuite, James Plutowski



ANNUAL MEETING—SUNDAY, JANUARY 25, 2026

Our Savior's Lutheran Church's Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 25, 2026 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 Wed., January 7, 2026.



**Confirmation
NEWS**

Sunday Acolytes in JANUARY:

Jan. 4 - 8:30am: Caleb A., Brayden B.	10:30am: Bennett E., Brock F.
Jan. 11 - 8:30am: Aiden F., Jacob G.	10:30am: Claire G., Jade H.
Jan. 18 - 8:30am: Emmett H., Brady K.	10:30am: Callie K., Lane N.
Jan. 25 - 8:30am: Mason S., Eli T.	10:30am: Andrew A., Bergen B.

Wednesday Meals in JANUARY:

Jan. 7	FAMILY SERVING: Thompson
Jan. 14	FAMILY SERVING: Dickhoff
Jan. 21	FAMILY SERVING: Fitzner
Jan. 28	FAMILY SERVING: Hatlestad



OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Council Minutes

December 7, 2025 at 11:30 a.m.



Members Present – Michael Bare, Vicki Buchholz, Dawn Paulsrud, Glen Hultin, Eric Johnson, Teresa Forseth, Brad Ydstie, Jason Lovas, Daniel Nelson, Carissa Olsen, Mike Tweten, Pr. Joe Johnson.

1. **Call to Order** – Noting a quorum, President Daniel Nelson called the meeting to order at 11:37 a.m.
2. **Devotions** – Pastor Joe Johnson led us in devotions- *Mary's Song*.
3. **Confirmation of Agenda** – Jason Lovas moved to accept the agenda as presented. Brad Ydstie seconded. All in favor, motion carried.
4. **Old Business**
5. **New Business**
 - a. Budget 2026 – Jason Lovas reported he will finish the budget after December's numbers are complete.
6. **Pastor Joe's Report** – The season of Advent is off to a good start. The Advent theme is "Joy" with a focus on the joy of the season. Thank you to everyone who helped decorate. In the past month I had a baptism, a wedding, and a funeral. I continue to stay busy with sermons, sermon prep, bible studies, hospital, home, and nursing home visits and crisis care. I have participated with the Neighbors Helping Neighbors Command Team finding ways to feed the hungry and those living with food insecurity in Traill County. I continue to serve on the EaND Candidacy Committee, and we meet on Friday, December 12 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** – I had the privilege of hosting two baking classes on Nov. 9th and 16th. We learned how to make pizza, cinnamon rolls, and caramel rolls. The classes were fun and engaging but more importantly we got to know each other in new ways. Finally, when the classes were done, we had food that was brought home, shared with neighbors, or given to people in need. In the baking of bread with one another we were sent out into the world to share what God had given us.

Pastor Joe and I took vacation during the week of Thanksgiving to see our son in MT. Thank you to all of the people that pitched in while we were gone.

Lastly, besides my normal pastoral duties, Nov. has been busy with the preparation and distribution of the women's advent calendar box. We sold 75 boxes and raised money for the Northlands Rescue mission. The project was a big success.
8. **Treasurer's Report** – Jason Lovas reviewed the Treasurer's report, stating that expenses exceeded income by \$29,948 as of November YTD 2025. The balance of the media fund is \$2,550. Michael Bare made a motion to approve treasurer's report, seconded by Mike Tweten. All in favor, motion carried.
9. **Deacons' Report** – Dawn Paulsrud reported on their Prayer Bag project.
10. **Trustees' Report** – Mike Tweten reported they received a request to replace curtains in the lounge and will work to get that done.

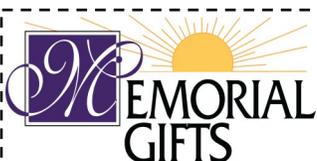
11. Committee Reports

12. **Secretary's Report** – Daniel Nelson moved to accept the minutes as presented. Teresa Forseth seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

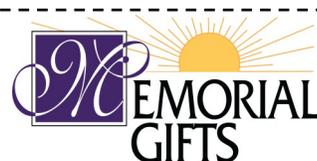
13. **Next Meeting – Sunday, January 4, 2025 @ 11:30 a.m.**

14. **Adjournment** – Meeting adjourned at 12:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carissa Olsen



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, WELCA / WELCA: Altar, Library or Kitchen, Scholarships (Bible Camps, etc.), OSLC Endowment Fund, and Blanchard Endowment Fund

GENERAL FUND – In memory of Patty Porter, given by M/M Dallas Boeddeker; in memory of Kathy Cuthbertson, given by M/M Lynn Foss; in memory of Les Rotvold, given by M/M John Hutchison

BANDS - In memory of Les Rotvold, given by M/M Dave Nelson

YOUTH - In memory of Les Rotvold, Kathy Cuthbertson and Deb Himmelspach, given by M/M Tom Olsen

MEDIA FUND – In memory of Les Rotvold, given by Robert Tweten and M/M Gerald Boeddeker; in memory of Kathy Cuthbertson, given by M/M Gerald Boeddeker; in memory of Patty Porter, given by Joel Thorsrud

OSLC ENDOWMENT FUNDS

The following is the breakdown of the funds disbursed by the Endowment Committee for 2025:

Blanchard Lutheran Church Endowment: \$675.00 to Kiwanis Food Pantry.

OSLC Hillsboro Endowment:

- \$470.00 to Lutheran World Relief
- \$195.00 to Dakota Boys & Girls Ranch
- \$500.00 to Lutheran Disaster Response
- \$285.00 to Traill County Community Giving Project

Thank you to all who submitted requests!

Living Lutheran

Waiting With Hope

December 19, 2025

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it? (Isaiah 43:19).

What does it mean to wait with hope? The upcoming months will be filled with great hope. We have the hope of Advent, the promise of Christmas and the excitement of a new year and all the possibilities it offers. We also have the Lenten journey that guides us toward continued hope in the risen Christ at Easter. But we shouldn't focus on a specific date, as if we're expecting something to happen at a certain time. Instead we wait for something more meaningful, more profound. We hope for a deeper awareness of God's presence among us.

I want to return to that first place of hope: the birth of Jesus in Judea, a place I had the privilege of visiting two years ago as part of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land with the Metropolitan Chicago and Florida-Bahamas synods.

This trip navigated through much of the Gospels, from Bethlehem to Nazareth, from Capernaum to Jerusalem, among others. Throughout the journey, I wondered what Peter had felt when Jesus said, "Come, follow me." I tried to imagine Paul's emotions along the road to Damascus as he heard Jesus' call to a new life, not as a prosecutor but as an apostle. Now, as I look back at that time, I hope and pray for a lasting peace for the people of the Holy Land, Palestinian and Israeli alike, as they embark on their own journey through an uncertain future.

That's where we find ourselves today and always. God continually reminds us that tomorrow is not for us to know about until it unfolds before us. The journey I am talking about is not from Advent to Christmas or from Epiphany to Lent. Instead it's the journey we have been called upon to take together. If you had asked me six months ago whether I would be writing to you today as your presiding bishop, I would have said it is not for me to decide but God's will.

In Isaiah, we read, "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?" (43:19). This new thing isn't a new beginning—not for a church that has been around for nearly 40 years, for a faith tradition more than 500 years old, defined by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, who was born in a manger more than two thousand years ago. Instead it's a chance to remind ourselves that we are one church, connected in the call to share the "good news of great joy" with all the people.

We are a church dedicated to the work of justice and peace, hope and renewal, love and grace. And right there, that word comes forth, tied to everything else: hope. We hope for greater justice in this world and peace for all humanity. We hope for renewal in God's salvation; we hope to love and be loved. In other words, hope is not a novel idea born out of wishes but a constant relearning of the grace and mercy God has given us, time after time after time.

In the coming months, I look forward to affirming this hope, both in myself and in you. I pray we can continue to be a church that listens deeply, loves generously and serves our neighbor with justice. I am excited to connect with you through *Living Lutheran*, in new videos we share online, in resources shared with your congregations and synods, and in person.

May this time of waiting be one of awakening. May we perceive the new thing God is doing, all over again. And may we walk together, rooted in hope, reaching toward what God is unfolding.



From the Presiding
Bishop Curry



NOTE: WELCA has Meal Delivery: January 26-30th—Sarah Workgroup

Our Savior's WELCA met on **Thursday, December 4, 2025** with President Sylvia Hansen presiding.

Pastor Joe led the Bible study on "Joy" - Luke 2:10, Nehemiah 8:10, Psalm 30:5, and John 15:11.

The Purpose Statement was read.

The Secretary's report was read with a correction being noted. Judy Doeden had presented and amended the WELCA budget for 2026 at the last meeting. Judy made a motion to accept the amended Secretary's report and Jackie Lovas seconded. The motion was approved.

Judy gave the Treasurer's report and Sandra Mustad made a motion to accept and Cheryle Messner seconded. The Treasurer's report was approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Connie Anderson reported they collected 54 Christmas shoeboxes.
- The Christmas Concert is Sunday, December 14th. Dorcas workgroup will serve coffee and treats following the program.
- Dorcas workgroup still needs another co-chair person.
- Sylvia H. handed out Prayer Cards which will be available in church for people to use.
- The gifts to the ND State Hospital are due next Sunday.

NEW BUSINESS:

- There has been some calls on missed meal deliveries. There is a form that can be completed if those delivering meals wish to eat at the Senior Center for free. Hannah workgroup has meal delivery in December.
- Sylvia mentioned some positive response for a Valentine's Brunch. This would be similar to the Christmas Brunch with people decorating and hosting a table.
- Quilting will start on Monday, January 5, 2026 at 9 AM.
- **WELCA will meet next on Thursday, January 8, 2026 at 10 AM.** (since Jan. 1st is a holiday)

Sarah workgroup will serve coffee at the Care Center in January. We will discuss more about making changes to serving coffee on the third Thursday of the month based on poor attendance by the residents.

We closed with The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted.

As mentioned earlier, there has been some interest shown in having a decorated table luncheon in the winter or spring. Many have enjoyed the Christmas ones we have held in the past. Please let me know of your interest in this project. Do you prefer a winter date (like Valentine's) or a spring date (Easter or Mother's Day)? We also need to have people who will head-up the project and do the planning.

If interested, please contact Sylvia at 636-5378 or 430-0820. We will go forward with this idea if enough interest is shown.

Sylvia Hansen
WELCA President

We again have some GOOD NEWS from Central African Republic. I will print the report from Lutheran Partners in Global Ministry below. How wonderful to hear that some of the women and girls who have taken the Literacy class last year are able to read well enough to read the scripture in their church service. Others are thrilled to be able to write their name or count the items in their business. This is truly a project that was requested by the church women's group and continues to be supported by them. Hopefully, enough financial support will be given so that more classes can be started in other towns.



Our Global Missions Committee met and decided to send a donation of \$4,000 for use in this project. As this is our sister synod assigned by churchwide, we feel it is where the major part of our financial support should go. We have supported this project from the very beginning. Please keep the people in your prayers and support the Global Missions financially.

In His Service,

*Sylvia Hansen
Global Missions Committee*

Phase Two Underway for Women and Girls Literacy Program in CAR

During a pivotal meeting in 2018, women leaders from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic emphasized that women's literacy was a top priority. They believed prioritizing literacy for women and girls would enhance their quality of life by creating income generating opportunities and by promoting dignity. This discussion led to a literacy program pilot project for 80 women and girls in the cities of Bouar, Gallo, and Baboua.



With your support, the pilot program launched in 2024. The pilot was a success, and phase two of the program is currently underway, with classes taking place three times per week. Last year's instructors have returned for phase two, as well as many of last year's participants. Word spread about this opportunity, and additional participants joined this year, too.

The main goal of phase two is to continue teaching women and girls to read and write, so that they can contribute to the development of their families and society. It also seeks to empower women to fight against gender-based violence.

According to our partner, Jean Paul Yerima, "To date, 27 learners are already able to read and write their names, some of whom are starting to read the Bible in their community during the celebration of Sunday worship in front of a crowd thanks to the literacy course."

Odette, one of the students in the pilot program, shares her experience as a participant:

"Since I was born, my parents did not enroll me in classical school, and I did not know how to read and write. Thanks to the literacy course, my teacher taught me to read the French alphabet. Today, I can read. I also write names, and I can sing with the songbook. It was an opportunity for me to meet with other women, to share our experiences, and also the good way our teacher advises us to take care of our children. Thanks to the literacy program, I learned arithmetic, and it makes it easier for me in my small businesses."

Learn more at lpgm.org/literacy

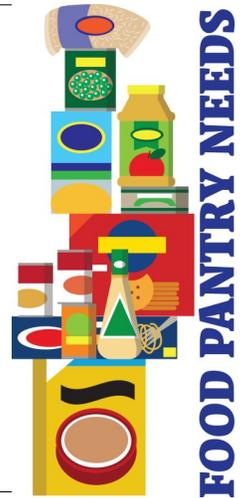
INFORMATION

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:

Ramen Noodles, Stove-top stuffing, Hamburger Helper, Beef Stew, Chili, Chicken Noodle Soup, Canned Chicken, Canned Green Beans, Peaches & Pineapple Chunks, Pork/Baked Beans, Cereal, Cookies, Cake Mixes, Laundry Soap, Dish Soap, Hand Soap, Body Wash, Deodorant, Shampoo/Conditioner, Feminine Hygiene Products, Cleaning Supplies

The Hillsboro Kiwanis Food Pantry is located at the Hillsboro Armory. Open the 1st and 3rd 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



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY
Anti-Racism
with Prairie Rose Seminole

January 15, 2026
10am - 3pm

Our Savior's Lutheran Church
Hillsboro, ND

The Offering

Scan here

or

Text \$ amount to:
833-460-2876

Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement

GET IT ON Google Play

Download on the App Store

OSLC OFFERING STEWARDSHIP 2025 OFFERING RECEIVED		WORSHIP ATTENDANCE	
November 2	\$ 3,915.00	8:30am 72	10:30am 119
November 9	\$ 2,062.96	8:30am 55	10:30am 68
November 16	\$ 18,973.00	8:30am 65	10:30am 100
November 23	\$ 12,809.00	8:30am 65	10:30am 89
November 30	\$ 4,982.38	8:30am 39	10:30am 97
Nov. Direct Deposit	\$ 8,602.64		
November Total:	\$ 51,344.98		
2025 Total	\$336,345.80		

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

INCOME AND EXPENSES:

2025 Income received through
November 30: \$358,305.21

2025 Expenses through
November 30: \$388,253.51

Income Less Expenses: -\$29,948.30

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

W.O.W. BIBLE STUDY

We would like to thank everyone who has offered their help or expressed concern, love, and best wishes over this past year, especially to the ladies of W.O.W. (Women of the Word). This has been a season of significant health challenges. Your encouragement and friendship has been a great source of strength and blessing to us. Thank you and God Bless you!

Basil and Senora Almquist

*Watch for updates as to when Monday morning W.O.W. Bible Study will resume in the new year.



QUILTING

We will resume quilting on **Monday, January 5, 2026 at 9 AM**. We are always looking for new people to assist with this project. Making kits and quilts is one of our most needed projects. *Lutheran World Relief* tells us how receiving a quilt or kit, when in dire need, is a reminder to the recipient that someone is thinking of them. If you are available on any part of Mondays, January through March, 9am-4pm, consider coming and joining in the fun! Come for all or any part of the day, bring a sack lunch or go out for lunch, bring snacks to share if you wish. No experience necessary.

We hope to see you there!!

ND State Hospital Gifts:

Two boxes of gifts were sent to the volunteers at the ND State Hospital to dispense at Christmas to clients there. THANK YOU to those of you who donated; we had many nice gifts to share. It is our small way of letting them know someone remembers them and cares about them.

Thank You,
WELCA



Usher Scheduling for 10:30am Sunday services:

We are still looking for volunteers to help with USHERING at the 10:30 AM service. Mike Tweten has set up a 'Sign-Up Genius' link where you can see available dates and sign-up. If you have any questions or want to sign-up, please scan the QR code at the left.

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

Address Service Requested



2026

2025 COUNCIL MEMBERS

- President:** Daniel Nelson 430-3689
- Vice-President:** Michael Bare 218-790-8222
- Secretary:** Carissa Olsen 430-9588
- Treasurer:** Jason Lovas 371-1272
- Deacons:** Krista Longthorne 238-6624
 Brad Ydstie 739-4171
- Trustees:** Dawn Paulsrud 218-790-6621
 Teresa Forseth 430-2037
 Glen Hultin 430-0491
 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
Visitation Minister: Joy McSparrow
Custodian: Steve Aanderud
OSLC Kitchen: 701-636-5705

OSLC Website: www.oslchillsboro.com
Facebook: oslchillsboro
X: OSLCHillsboro; **Instagram:** oslchillsboro ND
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 on **HTC**
 Channel 34.

