



VOL. 26 ISSUE 1 Jan 2026

Shalom Now!

Official Newsletter of Shalom Lutheran Church

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

BY PASTOR DAVID FLEENER



Pastor David Fleener

In April 2024, I had the privilege to attend the Institute of Liturgical Studies at Valparaiso University. One of the plenary sessions stands out to me, resonating both as a critique of our present era and as a beacon of hope for what lies ahead. Dr. Mark Roosien, an Orthodox priest and scholar, delivered a thought-provoking talk centered on the concept of time, particularly contrasting liturgical time with market time.

It is no surprise that market time prevails in our daily lives. Whenever we engage with social media, we participate in market time, as advertisers vie for our attention and dollars. Watching streaming services or television equally immerses us in market time, where viewership is correlated with dollars. Our virtual existence is often characterized by a state known as “Blursday,” a day where everything is in flux, yet nothing of true consequence transpires. Blursday is defined by the endless scrolling on our phones, heated exchanges on social media over the latest controversies, and mass emails that generate heat but little light. In this perpetual state, everything is accessible at any hour, tailored to individual demand. Living in perpetual Blursday disconnects us from our families and communities, making us more vulnerable to propagandists, marketers, and scammers who benefit from our division and dissatisfaction.

Liturgical time offers a compelling alternative to market time. It centers on how we collectively mark time, united around the story of Jesus the Messiah—crucified and risen for the life of the world. Since this narrative is rooted in the Triune God’s love and grace for a fallen world, there is no sales pitch, no adversary to demonize. Instead, we share in the story of Jesus, which unfolds in our lives through faith communities such as Shalom.

With this perspective in mind, I have committed to writing a series over the next year that explores the lesser-known or lesser-attended feasts of the church year. To begin this series for 2026, I offer a brief reflection on the feast of Epiphany.

Epiphany is celebrated on January 6, immediately following the twelve days of Christmas. While “epiphany” is sometimes used in everyday language to describe an “aha” or “eureka” moment, this feast holds a deeper significance. It highlights a fundamental tenet of our faith: Jesus is the revealed God, not for just one group, but for all people—across every tribe, nation, and language.

Consider Matthew’s account: Herod the Great, the Jewish client king, is startled when several foreign visitors arrive unannounced, seeking the newborn King of the Jews.

Sunday Worship Service

in-person and online at 9:30
a.m.

Pastor David Fleener
pastor@shalomlutheran.org

Youth & Music Director- Sam Meehan

music@shalomlutheran.org
youth@shalomlutheran.org

Church Office:
Geri Rindahl
office@shalomlutheran.org

“We believe God is calling us to invite people into a deeper relationship with Christ, that they may discover true peace and be prepared to follow Him in compassionate service.”

Cont'd

Herod himself had not recently fathered a child and was notorious for his cruelty toward his own offspring—so much so that a saying circulated, “I would rather be Herod’s sow than Herod’s son.” According to Matthew’s Gospel, these visitors were magi, likely Zoroastrian priests and scholars from Persia (modern Iran). They did not worship the God of Israel but consulted the stars. Nevertheless, they undertook a long journey to honor the newborn King.

This story underscores that God in Christ reveals Himself to whomever He chooses. He is Emmanuel—God with us—not only for a select few, but for everyone. His mission encompasses all of humanity. Even Jesus expands His own understanding of this mission, notably after being challenged by a Gentile woman (Matthew 15:21-28).

This message is especially vital in an era marked by rising nativism, where it is claimed that one group is more deserving than others based on race or heritage. Even if we believe ourselves immune to such attitudes, it is worth reflecting on moments when we may look down on others. The story of Epiphany reminds us that no one is beneath God’s attention. No one is unworthy of love or life. God in Christ, through the Spirit, offers love and eternal life to all—not because we deserve it, but precisely because we do not. Jesus is for us. Jesus is for all. Jesus is for you.

Love to you all,

Pastor David





December 8, 2025

Shalom Lutheran Church WELCA
681 Voyager Dr
Alexandria, MN 563083099

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of those affected by food insecurity. Your donation supports our efforts to feed our neighbors in need.

Date	Type	Weight	Amount
12/3/2025	Check	0	\$1,000.00

We appreciate your contribution(s) to the Outreach Food Shelf.

Every month, hundreds of men, women and children look to Outreach Food Shelf to provide food for their next meal. Without your donations, we'd have to turn them away. We are grateful for your generosity as we work to close the hunger gap in our community. Your donation helps ensure that families who seek assistance at our food shelf have enough to eat. We could not continue our mission of relieving hunger without the help of donors like you. Your gift is appreciated by our Board of Directors, volunteers and most of all, by those we serve.

The Board of Directors
Outreach Food Shelf
1205 Lake Street
Alexandria, MN 56308
(320) 762-8411
www.outreachfoodshelf@gmail.com

No goods or services were provided in consideration for contribution.
Outreach Food Shelf is recognized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization by the IRS
Tax Identification Number: 20-2556435

SHALOM LUTHERAN CHURCH
COUNCIL MINUTES

November 17th, 2025

PRESENT: Carol, Ken, Kersten, Kim, Corey and Pastor

ABSENT: Grant

Meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm by President Carol.

Motion was made to approve agenda. Motion was seconded. Motion carried.

Motion was made to approve October minutes. Motion was seconded. Motion carried.

Prayer led by Pastor: Devotion from “The New Book of Festival and Commemorations.”

Reviewed reports by Pastor and Committees

****Pastor’s Report:** Report included in packet. We received 5 new members on November 2. Several others are interested in joining.

**** Staff:** Report in packet. Sam attended a meeting with other youth leaders hosted by Young Life.

**** Worship:** Report in packet. Advent Evening Services are on Wednesday December 3, 10 and 17th. Worship Committee will be going to quarterly meetings, rather than monthly. Christmas Tree will go up on the 25th of November. Advent wreath will be ready for November 30.

**** Finance:** Report in packet. Council will meet again on Thursday, November 17th at 5:30 pm to discuss budget presentation for Annual Meeting.

**** Y/ED:** Report in packet. Christmas Program will be on 12/21. This will be with congregation participation. Discussed programming and activities for the year.

****Outreach and Caring:** Report in packet. Looking for a padded chair to put in women’s bathroom. Continue to do visits with communion. No council action required.

****God’s Work Our Hands:** Report in packet. The Committee will be sponsoring a Christmas Tree for Viking Towers. Vic will work with the youth to create Christmas Angels for gas cards and other needed items. Advent offerings will be given to the following: December 3 – High School Food Shelf, December 10 – Someplace Safe, December 17 – ELCA Disaster Response. Lenten offerings will be given to the following: February 25 – Outreach Foodshelf, March 4 – Habitat for Humanity, March 11 – Love, Inc, March 18- ELCA World Hunger and March 26 – LutherCrest.

****Personnel:** Did not meet

****Endowment Fund:** Meeting December 8th Applications are being taken through the end of November for grants. LaTelle Bailey, Mike Priebe and Tam Bukowski will be joining the committee. Vic Dale, Ron Otterson and Charmaine Munt will be going off committee.

****Jeremiah 29 Project:** Report in packet. Pastor has been speaking with Julie Anderson about a resiliency network. This is a group of congregations and other organizations that can offer resources in case of disruption (weather, mass violence, etc).

**** Property:** Meeting on 11/17. Arvig has been out and fixed the camera for the entrance. Altar guild and property will be working on the tree on the 25th of November.

**** FM Radio:** Team met on Sunday. Temple Talk was done by Pastor Kathryn. Team would like to have something put on the Shalom website, under our Missions. Kersten or Pastor Kathryn would supply this to Sam, who would put in on the website.

****Tech:** Report in packet. We will be looking to get the office computer purchased around Black Friday when the items go on sale. This was a budgeted item in 2025. Team received several donations for needed equipment that was not in our budget. These items will now be purchased using those funds.

****Stewardship:** Report in packet. Generosity Campaign has been completed. Need to do a touch-base meeting to follow-up on the campaign.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Motion was made to adjourn. Motion seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted, Kim Casavan Council Secretary



Shalom Lutheran Financial Activity: Jan/Nov25

SHALOM LUTHERAN CHURCH STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITY: JAN/25 - NOV/25

General Fund Activities	Actual	Budget	Annual Budget	Variance
Revenues				
General Offerings	\$ 221,172	\$ 266,343	\$ 290,556	\$ (45,171)
Building Fund Offerings	57,759	78,584	85,728	(20,825)
Interest and Other	7,656	4,630	5,050	3,026
Total General/Bldg Fund Revenues	286,587	349,557	381,334	(62,970)
Expenses				
Office expenses and Wages/Benefits	190,900	194,930	212,642	(4,030)
Building and Grounds	41,066	46,766	51,260	(5,700)
Synod payments, Outreach, GWOH	10,166	8,987	9,800	1,179
Shalom programs (music, Ed, worship, Technology)	11,102	20,819	22,700	(9,717)
Total General Fund Expenses	253,234	271,502	296,402	(18,268)
Net Transfers in/(out) of General/Bldg Fund	9,151	(5,412)	(5,900)	14,563
Building Fund Mortgage Payments	(72,463)	(72,446)	(79,032)	(17)
Net General/Bldg Fund Surplus / (Deficit)	\$ (29,960)	\$ 197	\$ -	\$ (30,157)

Fund Activities	12/31/24 Balance	2025 Receipts	2025 Disbursed	Transfers between funds	11/30/25 Balance
General Fund (Unrestricted)	\$ 88,193	\$ 229,993	\$ 254,399	\$ 4,297	\$ 68,083
Bldg Fund (mortg pmt, debt reduction)	51,283	57,759	72,463	-	36,578
Restricted Funds - WELCA	37,413	13,329	2,660	-	48,081
Restricted Funds - Youth	18,224	7,377	12,896	825	13,529
Restricted Funds: Shalom internal use	84,196	31,700	17,624	(5,122)	93,150
Restricted Funds for Outreach use	3,886	2,666	5,471	-	1,081
Totals	\$ 283,194	\$ 342,823	\$ 365,513	\$ -	\$ 260,503

Summary: This Shalom reporting is through November with a combined General and Building Funds deficit of \$29,960. The deficit is primarily due to Jan-Nov offerings under-budget by \$65,996. The General/Bldg Funds balance is about \$105,000, down from \$139,000 at the end of December/24. Based on reported receipts and supply expenses at the end of September, the July BBQ grossed \$16,077 with net proceeds of \$9,707. Council approved transferring the BBQ net proceed 50% to Building Fund and 50% to General fund.

Notes:

- Cash & short term investment balances:

Cash	M Mkt
\$ 68,496	\$ 193,871

 Includes all Restricted Funds
- Restricted Funds: activities such as Memorials, Love Inc, Music, Youth, WELCA, World Hunger, etc
- Restricted Funds: not budgeted, but receive/use only money received for that specific purpose.

	Month	To-date	Budget
4. Offerings to-date are:	\$ 24,504	\$ 221,172	\$ 266,343
Building Fund Offerings:	\$ 4,653	\$ 57,759	\$ 78,584

- Building Fund receipts to-date are \$12,409 under funds needed to pay the mortgage.
- Mortgage balance at time of reporting is \$461,274. Our monthly payment is \$6,586.



Shalom is pleased to host the Runestone Chorus in concert on Sunday, January 18 at 2:00 pm here at Shalom Lutheran Church. This winter concert traces a musical journey from darkness to light, exploring themes of longing, hope, and joy through rich choral sound. This concert is free and open to the public, with a freewill donation welcome. Join us for an afternoon of reflective and uplifting music as we move together toward the light.



The Shalom Book Club Group enjoyed a holiday luncheon in December. We are a happy, loving group of women who share a variety of book titles, great conversations, laughter and fellowship.

If you enjoy reading join us the last Monday of each month at 1 o'clock in the community room. We hope to welcome you soon!





RUNESTONE CHORUS

Runestone Chorus: A New Musical Community in Alexandria

This fall marks the exciting beginning of a new musical journey in the Alexandria area! A community choir—**Runestone Chorus**—has begun meeting at Shalom Lutheran Church, under the direction of Sam Meehan. Rehearsals are held every Tuesday evening at 6:30 PM.

Open to all who love to sing, Runestone Chorus offers a welcoming space for anyone interested in making music together and connecting with others through song. Whether you're an experienced vocalist or just someone who enjoys singing in the shower, this group is about community, creativity, and the joy of shared music-making.

If you'd like to learn more, feel free to reach out to Sam Meehan via email at sam.meehan.sm@gmail.com, by phone at 4064809675 or better yet, come check out a rehearsal or two. You might just find your voice and your people!

REMINDER: Please continue to support our Coffee Fund with your donations. The donation box is located on the treat table in the Community Room!



BOOKWORM BUNCH

We meet the last Monday of each month at Shalom at 1 pm unless it is a holiday! If you enjoy reading and discussion, come join us sometime to see if you would enjoy our group! Contact Barb Beyer 952-297-2541 or Joann Garland 320-219-0810 if you have any questions!



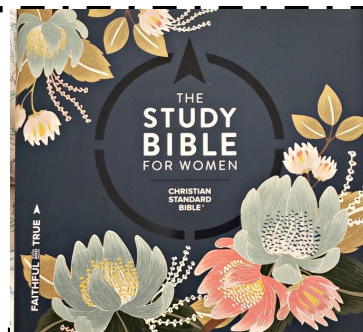
Following is the list of books selected for discussion.

January 26	The Book Club for Troublesome Women	Marie Bostwicki
February 23	Frozen River	Ariel Lawton
March 30	Wish you Well	David Baldacci
April 27	When The World Fell Silent	Donna Jones Alward



Adult Bible Study

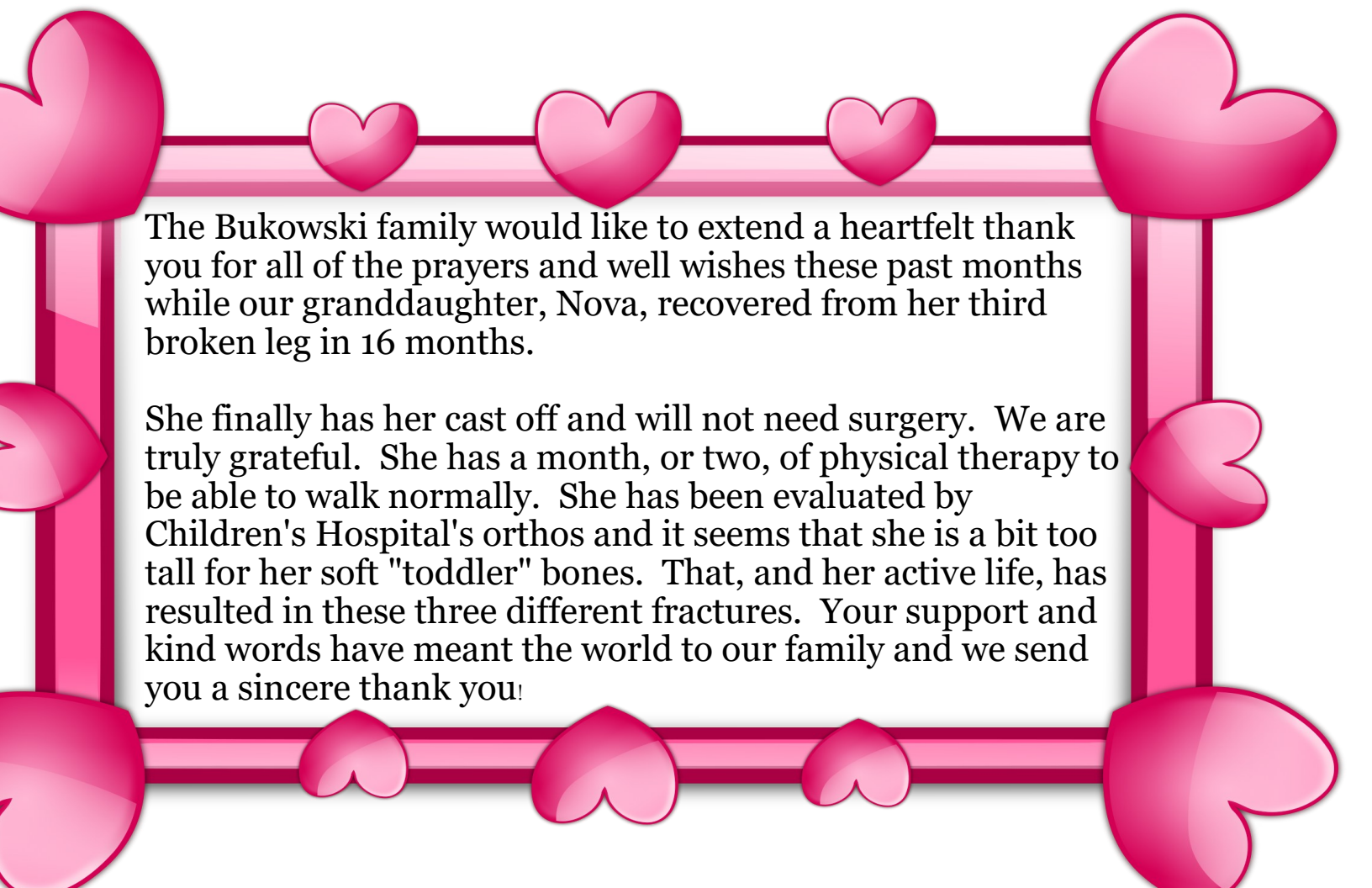
- First, the good news: God always speaks to us through the Bible.
- Second, the bad news: we don't listen or read the Bible as often as we would like.
- Third, the good news: we can share God's Word in inspiring ways. Come to our gatherings on Thursday mornings from 10-11:00 am.





On November 11th, Shalom supplied supper at Lake Community Church for graduates of the latest Love INC Transformational Tuesdays class. Classes are offered to Love INC clients that are looking to learn a new life skill and include courses on the bible, parenting, finance, and mental health.

To learn more about Love INC and the Transformational Tuesday program go to <https://www.loveincdouglas.org/transformational-program.html>

A decorative border made of pink hearts of various sizes, some solid and some outlined, arranged in a rectangular frame around the text.

The Bukowski family would like to extend a heartfelt thank you for all of the prayers and well wishes these past months while our granddaughter, Nova, recovered from her third broken leg in 16 months.

She finally has her cast off and will not need surgery. We are truly grateful. She has a month, or two, of physical therapy to be able to walk normally. She has been evaluated by Children's Hospital's orthos and it seems that she is a bit too tall for her soft "toddler" bones. That, and her active life, has resulted in these three different fractures. Your support and kind words have meant the world to our family and we send you a sincere thank you!

God
is good
all the
time



Dec 3 5:30-6:30
Grades 6-8 Confirmation
Pre-K-6th

Dec 10 5:30-6:30
Grades 6-8 Confirmation
Pre-K-6th

Dec 17 5:30-6:30
Grades 6-8 Confirmation
Pre-K-6th

Dec 24 5:30-6:30
No activities

Dec 31 No activities

Jan Shared Ministry

Shared Ministry

1/4/2026 0:00

1/11/2026 0:00

1/18/2026 0:00

1/25/2026 0:00

Acolyte	Olivia Flaten	Skylar Cadena		Mara Malvin
Assisting Minister	Dave Burbank	Cami Pexsa	Nola Smith	Carol Hedlund
Communion Assistants	Cheryl Burbank	Grant Pexsa	Angie Erickson	Dean Kliewer
Communion Assistants	Dave Morgan	Judy Hoffman	Sue Engstrom	Catherine Kliewer
Communion Bread/Month	Deb Hoven	Deb Hoven	Deb Hoven	Deb Hoven
Greeters	Connie Faciotto	Renae Hills	Amy Schlosser	Barb Beyer
Greeters	Linda Fenelon	Rachel Buse	Carolyn Carlson	Dave Beyer
Kitchen Monitor/Month	Carol Hedlund	Carol Hedlund	Carol Hedlund	Carol Hedlund
Lector	Sarah Fleener	Tam Bukowski	John Smith	Brian Casavan
Proclaim Slide Presenter	CJ/Kim/Julie	CJ/Kim/Julie	CJ/Kim/Julie	CJ/Kim/Julie
Usher	Lona Neubarth	Fritz Bukowski	Al Anderson	Sherri Endreson
Usher	Craig Neubarth	Dave Malvin	Dave Burbank	Sue Engstrom
Counter	Dave Harris	Renae Hills	Vic Dale	Derek Navratil
Counter		Dave Burbank	Charmaine Munt	

Training is available for serving. Let the office know and arrangements will be made for a training session.

If you are unable to be here for your Shared Ministry appointment, please try your best to find someone else to take your place. Then, let the church Office know who will be here.

Thank you to all who share their time & talents to bring God's word to our Shalom family and friends. We are always looking for more people who would like to share in this Ministry.

Jan Birthdays

01/01	Hoven	Brad
01/08	Paine	Corey
01/09	Bailey	James
01/10	Sukke	Della
01/11	Casavan	Brian
01/11	Navratil	Derek
01/12	Burbank	Dave
01/12	Rooney	Colleen
01/16	Evjen	Vivian
01/17	Abraham	Sidney
01/19	Meehan	Lucille



01/24	Drewes	Jaiden
01/24	Zarbok	Mya
01/27	Anderson	Bonnie
01/28	Erickson	Emily
01/28	Hermanson	Dan
01/28	Hills	Renae
01/28	Kappmeyer	Kersten
01/28	Kittleson	Dale
01/28	Klimek	Makayla
01/30	Hedlund	Carol
01/31	Kilgore	Bill
01/31	Nelson	Mariah

Your Shalom family rejoices with you as you celebrate the day God gave you life. Birthday Blessings! If we missed your birthday please let us know in the church office because we would like to include you in our thoughts and prayers on your birthday!

Hospitality Time

Hospitality treats will be served in the Community Room between 10:30 and 11:30 a.m. on Sundays.

The schedule Jan is:

<u>01-04-26</u>	<u>01-11-26</u>	<u>01-18-26</u>
Greg & Karen Toivonen Judy Radjenovich Mike & Sarah Flaten	Ed & Pat Arneson Roger & Eunice Shelstad Amy Schlosser	Al Anderson John & Nola Smith Grant & Cami Pexsa
	<u>01-25-26</u> Craig & Lona Neubarth Ron Samuelson John & Vic Dale	

If you are unable to make it, please call someone to replace you. Thank you



January



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec 28	29	30	31	Jan 1	2	3
9:30 AM 9:30 am worship (in perso) 🔗	1 PM Book Club 🔗	7:30 AM Men's Bible Study at Comm 🔗 6:30 PM Runestone Chorus 🔗		8 AM No LWR Quilting 🔗 10 AM 🔗 No Adult Bible Study 🔗 6 PM No Shalom Singers 🔗	8 AM 🔗 Office Closed	8 AM Pastor Rol Halvorson Funeral 🔗 9 AM SOS Rehearsal 9:00 am 🔗
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9:30 AM 9:30 am worship (in perso) 🔗 10:30 AM GWOH 🔗		7:30 AM Men's Bible Study at Comm 🔗 6:30 PM Runestone Chorus 🔗		8 AM LWR Quilting 🔗 10 AM 🔗 Adult Bible Study 🔗 11 AM Altar Guild 🔗 6 PM Shalom Singers 🔗		8 AM Funeral Pnyllis Strand
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
8 AM Judah Baptism 🔗 9:30 AM 9:30 am worship (in perso) 🔗 10:30 AM Radio Ministry 🔗		7:30 AM Men's Bible Study at Comm 🔗 11 AM Outreach 🔗 5 PM Youth/Ed meets 🔗 5:30 PM Property Meeting 🔗 6:30 PM Runestone Chorus 🔗		8 AM LWR Quilting 🔗 10 AM 🔗 Adult Bible Study 🔗 6 PM Shalom Singers 🔗	🔗 Newsletter items due 🔗	9 AM SOS Rehearsal 9:00 am 🔗
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9:30 AM 9:30 am worship (in perso) 🔗	5:30 PM 🔗 Council Mtg 🔗	7:30 AM Men's Bible Study at Comm 🔗 6:30 PM Runestone Chorus 🔗		8 AM LWR Quilting 🔗 10 AM 🔗 Adult Bible Study 🔗 1 PM Retired Pastors 🔗 6 PM Shalom Singers 🔗		
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
9:30 AM 9:30 am worship (in perso) 🔗	1 PM Book Club 🔗	7:30 AM Men's Bible Study at Comm 🔗 5 PM Newcomers 🔗 6:30 PM Runestone Chorus 🔗		8 AM LWR Quilting 🔗 10 AM 🔗 Adult Bible Study 🔗 6 PM Shalom Singers 🔗		9 AM SOS Rehearsal 9:00 am 🔗



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