

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

BY PASTOR DAVID FLEENER



Pastor David Fleener

Another wave of end-times fervor is sweeping through public life. Warnings about AI and its destructive potential dominate our newsfeeds. Another war in the Middle East continues with no end in sight. Public figures are routinely compared to the Antichrist, as though the world has become a twisted game of *Guess Who?*—the popular board game from my childhood. A few months ago, tech billionaire Peter Thiel added fuel to the fire with a series of lectures about the end times, including speculation about the Antichrist's possible identity.

But end-times fear is nothing new. It has haunted humanity for centuries. Wikipedia's "List of dates predicted for apocalyptic events" catalogs numerous predictions of the world's end. Such claims endure because they play on our most primal fears: Will I be safe? Will I be cared for? Will anything be waiting for me? Have I been good enough to have a place in God's kingdom?

Evangelical author Hal Lindsey capitalized on those fears in *The Late Great Planet Earth*. He treated the Bible as a roadmap to the end times, matching current events with biblical prophecy. The book became a massive bestseller and strongly influenced the American public, especially white evangelical Christians. Lindsey's theology also reached the Reagan administration, including the president himself; Reagan's description of the Soviet Union as the "evil empire" in a speech to evangelicals reflected that influence.

But mapping current events onto the Bible is harmful and does violence to the text. September 11, 2001, the Chernobyl disaster, and Y2K are among the many events that failed to align with biblical texts as doomsayers predicted.

Rather than reading Scripture as the story of God's judgment and mercy toward us—revealed in perfect love through Jesus—Lindsey and other false prophets treat it as a codebook with little or nothing to do with Christ. In the film *The Late Great Planet Earth*, based on the book, Jesus is often treated one prophet among many. Little is said about salvation through the cross, and even less about the invitation to trust God through Christ.

By intensifying fear, this approach makes people more vulnerable to manipulation by bad actors and religious charlatans. Instead of trusting God, people are encouraged to trust the gurus who promote alarming predictions—and profit from them. Even after Lindsey's prophecies were discredited by the end of the 1980s, he remained on television as a "prophecy expert." Jim Bakker, Pat Robertson, and Tim LaHaye offer other examples of teachers who made bank by spreading fear.

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."

The overarching message of Revelation is not that we should panic, but that we should trust: Things may be bad, and they may get worse, but God is faithful. Whatever we face, suffer, or endure, God in Christ remains faithful—even and especially when human beings are not.

Love to you all,

Pastor David

Jeremiah 29 Update

Last summer, the Jeremiah 29 Project began with a series of one-to-one conversations. At the time, you may have wondered what the project would become, whether it would move forward, and how it might benefit our congregation and community. You may also have been concerned that we were taking on more than we could manage.

I'm happy to report that the project has borne fruit: the Runestone Kids Chorus begins regular rehearsals on Tuesday, October 6 at Shalom. On Tuesday, September 22, and Thursday, September 24, we registered 39 children for the chorus.

The adult Runestone Chorus has also nearly doubled in size, with about 50 people attending its first rehearsals this September. This is a wonderful use of our space and will enrich both congregational and community life.

We began to see these benefits last year, when several Runestone Chorus members joined the Shalom Singers for the Easter cantata. Through these partnerships, Shalom continues to build its reputation as a congregation open to the community and to live into our stated value: "Shalom encourages a life of worship through music."

The project has also expanded through the creation of the Runestone Music Community, a new organization that will administer both the Kids Chorus and the adult Runestone Chorus. Four of its nine board members are Shalom members.

If you'd like to help, we need volunteers at Kids Chorus rehearsals to help children find the bathroom, get water, and meet other needs as they arise. If you're interested, please talk to Sam for more information.

Most of all, thank you for supporting the Jeremiah 29 Project at Shalom.

Pastor David

ATTENTION COMMITTEES

Please submit budget request for 2027 to Grant Pexsa by September 30th.

Submit annual reports to Geri in the Office no later than October 20th as she has to have the Annual Report out two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting which will be held on Sunday, November 22.



Wednesday Programming

As we have in years past, we're looking for members of the congregation who would be willing to **host a meal or donate toward the youth meal fund**. Providing a meal is a wonderful way to support our youth and help make Wednesday nights a welcoming time of fellowship. If you'd like to host a meal or contribute to the meal fund, please reach out to Sam. There is a sign-up sheet in the community room where folks can sign-up to provide meals.

Family Nights

Family Nights will be held on the second Wednesday of each month. Bring your friends and family! We will serve a meal starting at 5 p.m. with a different event/activity each month from 5:30-6:30 p.m. This is a great time to come together and connect with others in our community. There is no cost to be a part of this. We do ask that if you know you are coming, to let us know so we have a rough idea of how much food/supplies we need to provide. You can email Sam at youth@shalomlutheran.org with how many you plan on bringing.

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



BARBEQUE FINANCIALS

While the income from the 40th Annual Barbecue was very similar to last year and door sales were a bit less the expenses were more. We are able to transfer \$7,500 to the Building Fund to pay down the debt in addition to paying the \$300 Bread for the World dues. At the follow-up meeting several items were discussed in an effort to make adjustments to be more profitable. The BBQ committee will reconvene in January to discuss those adjustments and to decide if we will continue to have a Barbeque in July. Anyone with a suggestion to improve the bottom line or perhaps a different kind of fund raiser to pay down the debt is welcome to put a note in Carol Hedlund's mailbox. Thank you.

SHALOM LUTHERAN CHURCH
COUNCIL MINUTES
August 17th, 2026

PRESENT: Ken, Carol, Julie, Sherri, Grant, and Pastor David

ABSENT: Corey

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.

Motion was made to approve agenda with amendment by Ken, seconded by Sheri, and carried unanimously. Motion was made to approve the July 20th, 2026 Council minutes by Ken, seconded by Sheri and carried unanimously.

Pastor David read a short devotional from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Life Together* and opened the meeting with prayer.

Reviewed reports by Pastor and Committees:

****Pastor's Report:** Report included in packet. Pastor shared that the Runestone Children's Chorus would start meeting in October.

**** Staff:** Report in packet from Youth and Music Director.

**** Worship:** Report in packet

**** Finance:** Report in packet from Treasurer. General fund giving dipped slightly this month and the total for the year is behind budget. Building fund giving is also below budget. 2027 budget activities will begin soon, reports will be sent to committees for their review.

**** Stewardship:** Report in packet. Still planning for the Generous Mindset initiative with Thrivent at Shalom.

**** Y/ED:** Report in packet. Will start off service work by volunteering with Love Inc.

****Outreach and Caring:** Report in packet on outreach activities. 2 Prayer sessions were held for Shalom members struggling with health concerns. Feedback was positive so will likely hold future sessions as well.

****God's Work Our Hands:** Report in packet on committee activities.

****Personnel:** No report. Staff reviews will be forthcoming.

**** Property:** No report

**** Technology:** Report in packet. It had been reported that the outdoor chimes were not playing at the 6 o'clock hour, but they did play during the council meeting.

**** FM Radio:** No report. Ken reported that the FCC license had been officially cancelled.

Old Business: None.

A closing prayer was offered by Julie.

With no other business before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Grant Pexsa, Council Treasurer



Shalom Lutheran Financial Activity: Aug/26

SHALOM LUTHERAN CHURCH STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITY: JAN/26 - AUG/26

General Fund Activities	Actual	Budget	Annual Budget	Variance
Revenues				
General Offerings	\$ 171,409	\$ 198,203	\$ 297,303	\$ (26,794)
Building Fund Offerings	44,143	52,688	79,032	(8,545)
Interest and Other	6,432	4,038	6,050	2,394
Total General/Bldg Fund Revenues	221,984	254,929	382,385	(32,945)
Expenses				
Office expenses and Wages/Benefits	144,320	145,735	218,553	(1,415)
Building and Grounds	34,131	38,840	58,245	(4,710)
Synod payments, Outreach, GWOH	8,070	6,542	9,800	1,528
Shalom programs (music, Ed, worship, Technology)	10,018	13,281	19,855	(3,263)
Total General Fund Expenses	196,538	204,398	306,453	(7,860)
Net Transfers in/(out) of General/Bldg Fund	4,414	2,064	3,100	2,350
Building Fund Mortgage Payments	(52,714)	(52,688)	(79,032)	(26)
Net General/Bldg Fund Surplus / (Deficit)	\$ (22,854)	\$ (93)	\$ -	\$ (22,761)

Fund Activities	12/31/25 Balance	2026 Receipts	2026 Disbursed	Transfers between funds	8/31/26 Balance
General Fund (Unrestricted)	\$ 68,527	\$ 178,814	\$ 197,408	\$ 4,414	\$ 54,346
Bldg Fund (mortg pmt, debt reduction)	39,300	44,143	52,714	20,500	51,229
Restricted Funds - WELCA	38,579	1,227	1,118	-	38,687
Restricted Funds - Youth	13,740	7,271	8,189	(1,585)	11,237
Restricted Funds: Shalom internal use	96,581	45,737	9,116	(23,329)	109,872
Restricted Funds for Outreach use	2,126	2,539	3,554	-	1,112
Totals	\$ 258,853	\$ 279,730	\$ 272,099	\$ (0)	\$ 266,484

Summary: This Shalom reporting is through August with a combined General and Building Funds deficit of \$22,854; primarily due to below-budget General fund offerings and Annual ELCA dues paid in July. Spring/26 Bldg Fund receipts reflect a large 1-time offering. The General/Bldg Funds balance is \$105,576; about \$2,252 below Dec/25; mostly due low below-budget offerings offset by a recent \$20k estate gift that was transferred into the Building fund from Memorial Funds. See Note 7 below for BBQ sales.

Notes:

1. Cash & short term investment balances:

Cash	M Mrkt
\$ 58,703	\$ 209,029

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

	Month	To-date	Budget
4. Offerings to-date are:	\$ 17,247	\$ 171,409	\$ 198,203
Building Fund Offerings:	\$ 3,012	\$ 44,117	\$ 52,688

5. Bldg Fund offerings are \$8,545 under budget ytd.

6. Mortgage balance at time of reporting is \$418,591. Our monthly payment is \$6,586.

7. BBQ Receipts at 8/31 are \$16,573, Total 2025 all BBQ receipts were \$16,107.



Growing
in Faith.
Serving in
God's Love.

FALL BAZAAR

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2026

9:00 AM – 1:30 PM



RAFFLE



CRAFT SALE



BAKE SALE



SOUP, SANDWICH
& PIE À LA CARTE
Lunch



TAKE-OUT
Available!

Homemade. Delicious. Made with Love. ♥

Call **320-762-8641**
or **703-585-8810**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

God's Work Our Hands News

September 13 was designated ELCA Day of Service. Congregations across the country were engaged in projects that reflect service to others.

THANK YOU to all who joined us at Shalom as we assembled Newborn Kits to donate to Global Health Ministries. 😊





ENDOWMENT FUND

What is Shalom's Endowment Fund?

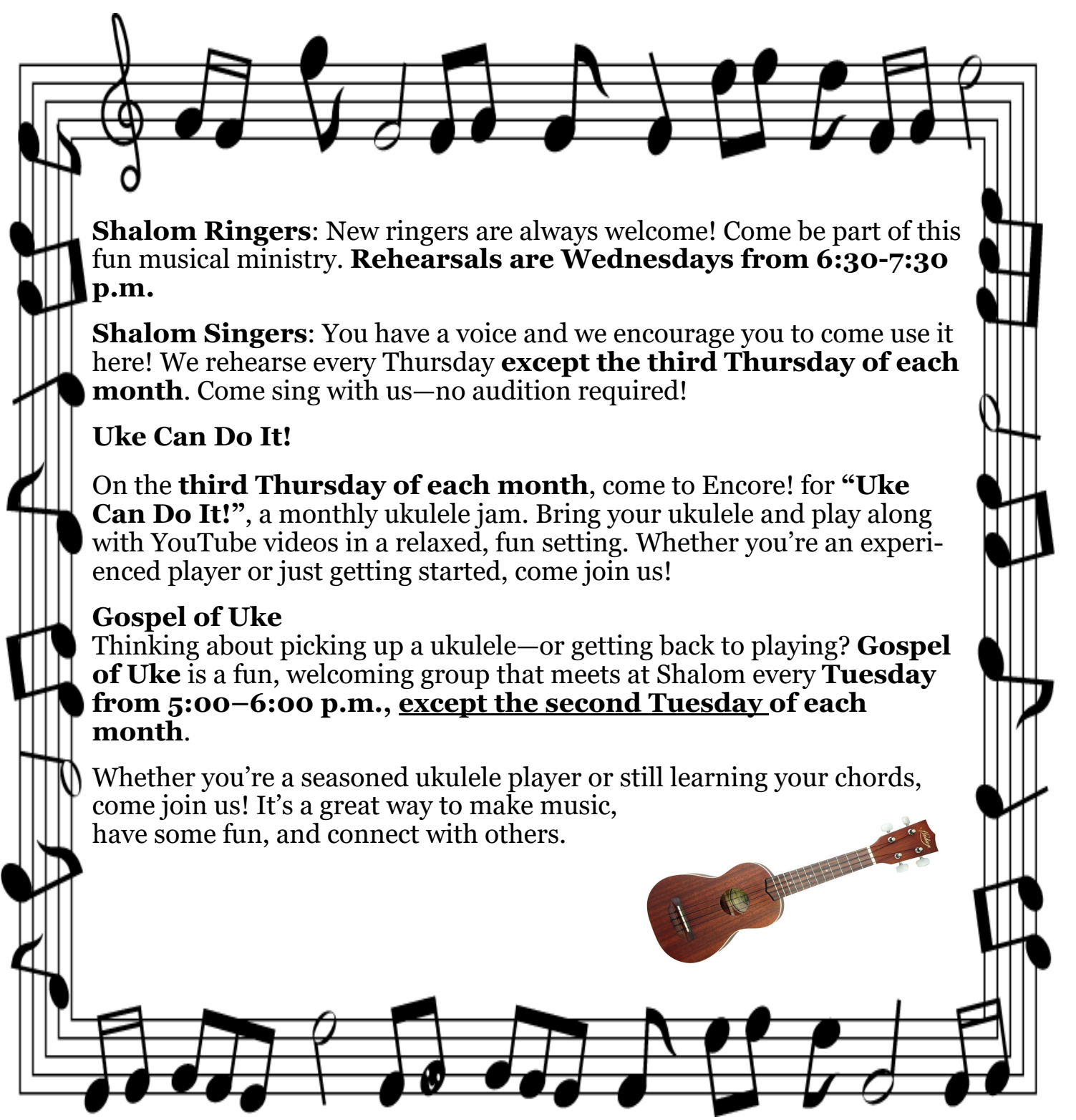
It is a gift of money, from all individuals and sizes, which are put into a principal fund with the investment income to be used towards making impossible mission opportunities possible.

Shalom's Mission Endowment Fund specifications are that 90% of the previous year earnings are awarded to grant recipients in conjunction with the pre-approval of the Council or committee to ensure it is in the scope of the future plans of the church. All Shalom members can apply through the various church committees to help with an activity or project that is not already being supported by the church budget. The controlled spending ensures that the endowment can continue to grow and provide funds far into the future.

The first Mission Endowment Fund grant was paid out in the fall of 2022. The Fund has paid out \$12,528.65 in grants to date, based on the 90% rule of fund earnings. This year, the Fund has \$8,830.33 available for grants, based on the fund earnings during 2025.

The Endowment Fund may receive funds from sources such as gifts, memorials, donations, and bequests. Memorials and donations received by the Endowment Fund in 2025 and 2026 totaled \$1,461.23. Memorials gifted during this time honored the lives of Marilyn Meyers, Shirley Engeldorf, Joyce Thompson, Pastor Rol Halvorson, and Jim Schlosser. These gifts are true living memorials because only 90% of the investment earnings on these gifts are available to be used for endowment grants.

Endowment Fund Grant Application Forms will be available in the church office by the first Wednesday of September. Application forms must be submitted to the office by the second Monday of October.



Shalom Ringers: New ringers are always welcome! Come be part of this fun musical ministry. **Rehearsals are Wednesdays from 6:30-7:30 p.m.**

Shalom Singers: You have a voice and we encourage you to come use it here! We rehearse every Thursday **except the third Thursday of each month.** Come sing with us—no audition required!

Uke Can Do It!

On the **third Thursday of each month**, come to Encore! for “**Uke Can Do It!**”, a monthly ukulele jam. Bring your ukulele and play along with YouTube videos in a relaxed, fun setting. Whether you’re an experienced player or just getting started, come join us!

Gospel of Uke

Thinking about picking up a ukulele—or getting back to playing? **Gospel of Uke** is a fun, welcoming group that meets at Shalom every **Tuesday from 5:00–6:00 p.m., except the second Tuesday of each month.**

Whether you’re a seasoned ukulele player or still learning your chords, come join us! It’s a great way to make music, have some fun, and connect with others.



BOOKWORM BUNCH

“SO MANY BOOKS-SO LITTLE TIME”!! Enjoy reading??? Great Discussions???. Come join us at one of our monthly gatherings. We meet the last Monday of each month (unless it is a holiday) at 1 pm at Shalom. If any questions, call Barb at 952-297-2541 or Joann at 320-219-0810.



Following is the list of books selected for discussion.

October 26	Theo of Golden	Allen Levi
November 30	Whatever Happened to Lori Lovely	Sarah Mc Coy
December 14	Luncheon (Tentative Date)	



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.



Oct Shared Ministry

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Dvvlwlgj#P lglwlu#	Vkdung#Khu0 p dqvrg#	Gdg#Khu p dqvrg#	F dp lSh{vd#	F durc#Khgαgg#
Frp p xqlrq#Dvvlv0 wdqw#	Dp ehul#Z kls0 nh #	F durc#Khgαgg#	Mxg #Kriip dg#	Dqj lh#Hulfnvrg#
Frp p xqlrq#Dvvlv0 wdqw#	Dp #Ndp hn#	Fruulqh#yhuvrq#	J udqw#Sh{vd#	Gdyh#P rujdq#
Frp p xqlrq# Euhdg2P rgwk#	Y lf#G dch#	Y lf#G dch#	Y lf#G dch#	Y lf#G dch#
J uhhwhuv#	Sdp #P fFru0 p lfn#	Vkhuul#Hq0 guhvrq#	Gdyh#Urjrvkhvnh#	F durc q#F durc vrq#
J uhhwhuv#	Idlk#Vwkhvv #	Dp #Vfkαvvhu#	Mr fh#Urjrvkhvnh#	Mxg #Jdgmqr0 ylfk#
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Ohfwr#	Qrαd#P lk#	Vdudk#dnhghu#	Vxvdq#Schwfkh#	Mrdgq#J duαdg#
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Xvkhu#	Gdyh#P rujdq#	Fkhu αExuedqn#	DαDqghuvrg#	Gdyh#P dαylq#
Xvkhu#	Duylg#Schwfkh#	Uhqdh#K lαv#	Wrgg# duern#	Vxh#Iqjvwurp #
Frxqwhu#	Y lf#G dch#	Ghuhn#Q dyudwα#	Gdyh#K duulv#	Y lf#G dch#
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**Women of the ELCA
NW MN Synodical Women's Organization
2026 Conference 8 Fall Gathering**

***Women of Grace Lutheran Church
205 Central Ave N
Brandon, MN 56315***

Saturday, October 24th



INTERNATIONAL HEALTH PARTNERS, U.S. & IHP-TZ
To Improve Healthcare in Tanzania

**Theme: “Bringing Hope and Healing to God's People
James 2:17 Faith without works is dead**

Guest Speaker: Paula Lofstrom

Grace Women are requesting us to bring donations to International Health Partners Tanzania
You can do cash or make check to Grace with note in memo IHPTanzania

There will be tables of items made by Tanzania artists for sale that day also.

Registration and fellowship: 8:15-9:00 am

Noon Lunch: Cost is \$ 20.00 per person

Registration Deadline: Friday, October 9th

Send registration and fees to: **Grace Lutheran Church**

P. O Box 7

Brandon, MN 56315

Attn: Kelli Wendel

Phone: 320-824-4873 Email: grace@gctel.com

MAKE CHECKS OUT TO: WOMEN OF THE ELCA

WOMEN OF THE ELCA
Northwestern Minnesota Synodical Organization

Conference 8 Fall Gathering

Saturday, October 24th, 2026

Grace Lutheran Church

**205 Central Ave N
Brandon, MN 56308**

The following people from the _____ Congregation will be attending the Fall Gathering. The cost is \$ 20.00 per person.

Please print attendees' names:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

(Attach another page for additional names)

Total number listed _____ X \$ 20.00 = _____ enclosed.

Congregation Unit Assessment of \$25.00. An offering will also be received at the Gathering

Grace WELCA is requesting us to bring donations to International Health Partners Tanzania. You can do cash or make check to Grace with note in memo IHPTanzania

There will be tables of items made by Tanzania artists for sale that day also.

Registrations with a check to cover the fees must be received by October 9, 2026. This is very important as the lunch count is based on this and paid accordingly. Send your list of attendees and check to cover your women's fees to:

Grace Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 7
Brandon, MN 56315
Attn: Kelli Wendel

Phone: 320-824-4873 Email: grace@gctel.com

Make ALL checks to "Women of the ELCA"

If your church is hosting any events this year, let us know and we can include in handouts.

October Birthdays

10/02 Kappmeyer Andrew
 10/03 Fleener Sarah
 10/03 Samuelson Tyler
 10/03 Zarbok Emmott
 10/04 Munt Charmaine
 10/07 Visser Joyce
 10/10 Berger Lloyd
 10/13 Malvin Chad
 10/14 Jensen CJ
 10/17 Dale Blake
 10/18 Neubarth Craig



10/23 Carstens Barb
 10/23 Granning Christi
 10/23 Whipkey Daisy
 10/24 Dale Josh
 10/24 Shelstad Eunice
 10/27 Priebe Norm
 10/29 Drewes Corey
 10/30 Klimek Clem
 10/31 Buse Rachel
 10/31 Drewes Tammy

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 for Oct is:

10-04-26

Brian & Kim Casavan
 Corey & Tammy Drewes
 Clem & Ginny Klimek

10-11-26

Grant & Cami Pexsa
 Gavin & Jaiden Pexsa
 Dave & Joyce Rogosheske

10-18-26

Barb Carstens
 Sharon Hermanson
 Charmaine Munt

10-25-26

John & Nola Smith
 Joann Garland
 Judy Hoffman

If you are unable to serve on the date you are scheduled please change with another family unit. If you have any problems, questions or concerns, or if you have an idea which would make this Sunday Hospitality more effective, please contact Geri at the church office.

Thanks for your ministry in this area.

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

The schedule Oct is:



October



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sep 27	28	29	30	Oct 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 ↗ 5 PM Gospel of Uke ↗ 5:30 PM Children's Chorus ↗ 6:30 PM Runestone Chorus ↗	5 PM Meal ↗ 5:30 PM Programming ↗ 6:30 PM Shalom Ringers ↗	8 AM LWR Quilting ↗ 10 AM Adult Bible Study ↗ 5:30 PM Tech Team meets ↗ 6 PM Shalom Singers ↗		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 ↗ 5 PM Gospel of Uke ↗ 5:30 PM Children's Chorus ↗ 6:30 PM Runestone Chorus ↗	5 PM Meal ↗ 5:30 PM Programming ↗ 6:30 PM Shalom Ringers ↗	8 AM LWR Quilting ↗ 10 AM Adult Bible Study ↗ 6 PM Shalom Singers ↗		9 AM SOS Rehearsal 9:00 am ↗
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9:30 AM 9:30 am worship (in perso ↗)		7:30 AM Men's Bible Study at Comm ↗ 11 AM Outreach ↗ 5 PM Youth/Ed meets ↗ 5:30 PM Children's Chorus ↗ +2	5 PM Meal ↗ 5:30 PM Programming ↗ 6:30 PM Shalom Ringers ↗	8 AM LWR Quilting ↗ 10 AM Adult Bible Study ↗	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 ↗ 5 PM Gospel of Uke ↗ 5:30 PM Children's Chorus ↗ 6:30 PM Runestone Chorus ↗	5 PM Meal ↗ 5:30 PM Programming ↗ 6:30 PM Shalom Ringers ↗	8 AM LWR Quilting ↗ 10 AM Adult Bible Study ↗ 1 PM Retired Pastors ↗ 6 PM Shalom Singers ↗		9 AM SOS Rehearsal 9:00 am ↗
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 Gospel of Uke ↗ 5 PM Newcomers ↗ 5:30 PM Children's Chorus ↗ 6:30 PM Runestone Chorus ↗	5 PM Meal ↗ 5:30 PM Programming ↗ 6:30 PM Shalom Ringers ↗	8 AM LWR Quilting ↗ 10 AM Adult Bible Study ↗ 6 PM Shalom Singers ↗		9 AM SOS Rehearsal 9:00 am ↗



Shalom Lutheran Church, ELCA
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Alexandria, MN 56308

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office@shalomlutheran.org



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