



## Augustana Lutheran Church Messenger

Pastor - Sharon Van Dam

Secretary - Angela Christie

Pianist - Patty Surguy

Office Hours: 9am - 1pm Monday – Thursday



Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church

18499 Twenty Mile Rd.; P.O. Box 198

Tustin, MI 49688

Sunday Worship: 9am

Phone: 231-829-3837 Pastor's Phone: 740-296-9176



*"We are called through Jesus the Christ to nurture spiritual growth,  
welcome all into worship and serve the needs of others."*

Church Mission Statement

## Pastor's Message

*"I am about to do a new thing. . ."* (Isaiah:43:19)



It's been my experience that while some people are eager to try new things, many are reluctant to explore things that are different. They can be both exciting and challenging; however, they often lead to much needed improvements. However, I also find myself wondering how often my laundry detergent needs to be new and improved. That being said, I'd like to propose a change to the way we have traditionally observed the season of Lent.

For centuries Lent has been a time of penitence and self denial. Once upon a time a majority of people would dramatically alter their daily diet completely eliminating meat, sugar, and fat. Additionally many people also gave up foods or other things that they really enjoy like sweets, alcohol, or favorite activities. In more recent years alternatives such as daily Bible readings, doing good deeds, spending more time in prayer, etc. have been suggested. I think all of these disciplines can be helpful, but this year in 2025, instead of finding ways to deprive ourselves, I suggest that we find creative ways to add more joy to our lives, ways to be good to ourselves.

The underlying reason why Christians have been encouraged to observe Lent sacrificially is to remind us of the suffering of Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Savior. He suffered for us. Right now I don't think we really need that reminder. Right now many of our families and friends are worried and anxious. Some of them have unexpectedly lost their jobs. Others are concerned about losing their health insurance. Farmers worry about losing their farms. Members of the LGBTQ+ community worry about their safety. Many people are engaging in heated arguments and useless finger pointing. We don't have to look very hard to see the suffering right around us.

As Christians we are told it's our responsibility to care for those in need, but when this task seems overwhelming it's easy to become discouraged. We can start to believe that nothing we can do will make things better. Because as your pastor I really care for each and everyone one of you, this Lent I want to see you focus on being good to yourself. Maybe instead of deny yourself chocolate, you might indulge in some decant treats. The most important thing is to find ways to be good to yourself. Remember that God is right here with all of us. If we are kind to ourselves, we will have the energy to be kind to others. And kindness is really just sharing God's love with everyone.

Peace and Blessings,

*Pastor Sharon*

# AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

## APPROVED MINUTES

January 19, 2025



The meeting was called to order by Becky at 10:30 a.m.

Devotional read by Heather – Lutheran Women in Worship/Quiet Home

Members: Mike Barnes, Connie Burgess, Jim Carmody (via phone), Ken Forsberg, Heather Hammar (via phone), Becky Miller, Julie Seguin, and Terry Marckwardt, Treasurer.

Agenda: Motion by Mike to approve the agenda as presented, with support from Connie. Carried.

Minutes: Motion by Connie to approve the November 18, 2024 minutes, with support from Mike. Carried.

Financial Reports: Motion by Mike to approve the treasurer/financial secretary reports, supported by Julie. Carried.

No communications.

Building/Grounds Report – Mike replaced the light at the east entrance to the church and repaired the door latch. He has ordered an intercom to try out at the entrance(s). George and Mike have been doing some work at the parsonage.

Old Business:

Media Shout computer is okay for now per Angela. We will update the computer when needed.

Teller training will be scheduled for those who would like to volunteer for duties.

The new vacuum has arrived and in use. Mike put a new cord on the old vacuum, and it is in the basement available to be used when needed.

Thank you to all who led the service on 12/29/24 when Pastor Sharon was gone.

New Business:

There will be a noisy offering February 9 for the Renucci House. We will send a gift card for them to order a meal this winter. A meal will be provided to the Munson Manor in Traverse City this spring.

Script account balance of \$373.74. Mary Annette has requested donations for Head Start. Motion by Heather, with support from Becky, \$250 was approved to give again this year.

Brotherhood Mutual Policy will now be served by Lightwell Insurance Advisors of Indiana, our insurance policy will remain the same. Angela received a call from another insurance company wanting to speak about our liability coverage. Becky is waiting for a call back and may set up a meeting.

Bank Accounts – Mary Raven, Terry Marckwardt, and Doreen Barnes are currently on the signature cards for Augustana. Mike made a motion, supported by Connie, to change the names on the General Fund, Building Fund, Endowment Fund and CD's, to Terry Marckwardt, Rebecca Miller, and Julie Seguin. Motion was approved. Approved minutes will be taken to Lake Osceola Bank after February's meeting.

Media Shout – Angela will provide a hard copy of the next week's service for Pastor's review. Pastor will contact Angela by Tuesday of each week with any changes. Patty also receives a copy.

Becky will check with Mary Raven about lilies for Easter Services. Also, Pastor would like to have a bible study after the last Sunday in Lent.

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:15 with the Lord's Prayer.

The next meeting will be held after church on February 23, with Connie reading the devotional.

Respectfully submitted,  
Julie Seguin

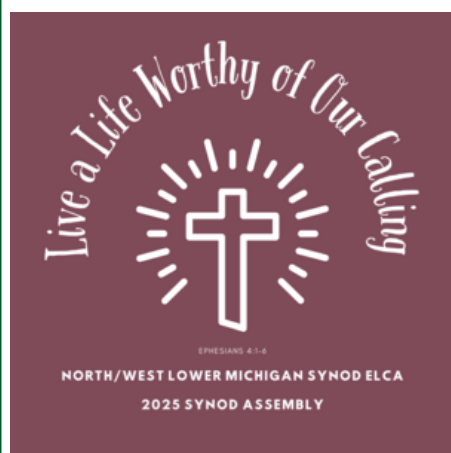
## A blessing or a curse?

Holocaust survivor and devout Christian Corrie ten Boom recounts how her sister Betsie thanked God for the fleas infesting their packed barracks. When Corrie resisted the idea, Betsie pointed out that 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says to “give thanks in all circumstances.”

Still, Corrie wasn’t convinced — until the sisters realized the infestation kept the guards away, giving prisoners in those quarters freedom to worship and pray. The biting pests, which seemed like added misery, became a blessing.

Anger and bitterness sometimes cloud our vision, causing us to forget to thank God *in* all situations, though not necessarily *for* them. Other times we don’t wait long enough for blessings to be revealed. But faith is like waiting through a storm, knowing a rainbow is coming eventually. Meanwhile, the Lord holds an umbrella for us, and the closer with him we walk, the less wet we’ll get.

—Julie Lee



## Synod Assembly 2025

The 2025 North/West Lower Michigan Synod Assembly will be held in-person on May 18-20, 2025 at the Comfort Inn & Suites in Mt. Pleasant, MI under the theme “Living a Life Worthy of Our Calling.” another by the Spirit.

[Learn more about the 2025 Synod Assembly theme.](#)

In the coming months, updates and resources will continue to be posted on this website. Additional questions should be emailed to [assembly@mittensynod.org](mailto:assembly@mittensynod.org).

**Let a council member know if you would like to go.**

### Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- March 17: Early Bird Registration Ends
- March 21: Resolutions, Memorials, and Nominations Due
- March 31: Materials for the Assembly Book Due
- April 23: Synod Assembly Registration Deadline
- April 28: Assembly Book Published

## The comfort connection

Amid suffering, we might feel alone and wonder what good can come of it. But later we may discover ourselves equipped to serve precisely because of what we experienced.

Writer and civil rights activist James Baldwin stated: “You think your pain and heartbreak are unprecedented ... but then you read. [Books] taught me that the things that tormented me the most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive or who had ever been alive.” Whether through books or direct human interaction, we often learn that our suffering connects us to other people and that our pain gains meaning by moving us to support someone else who’s hurting.

Paul writes of such connection: “Praise be to ... the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4, NIV). May you share the comfort you have received from God with others in pain. As a bonus, along the way you’ll realize you’re not — and never have been — alone.



## Canned Chicken Drive

Now through **April 20th**, we're hosting a drive for Uplift featuring 12.5oz cans of chunk chicken breast. Drop off here at church or with any Uplift volunteer. Can't shop? Monetary donations are always welcome and Sue Carmody or Jan Marckwardt will happily shop for you. Thank you for your continued support of our kids.



**April 13th** Bible study to begin with Pastor Sharon after Palm Sunday coffee hour.



## Shut-ins & homebound-

If you have anyone in mind that needs a visit, please let a council member know.

## New Doorbells

A new doorbell/intercom system has been installed outside the north and east doors of the church. Pressing the bell icon will ring at the receiver on the secretary's desk. There's also the option to talk. That button must be pushed and held just like a Walkie-talkie and released to receive a response. The indoor receiver is rechargeable and most importantly portable. So if you're a little late on Sunday, and the doors are locked, do not hesitate to ring! It will not disrupt service.



**Osceola County recycling** in LeRoy resumes March 1st, and is open the first Saturday of the month 9:00 AM-11:00 AM, at the Village Garage, 220 Kent Street in LeRoy. They accept:

Cardboard (not waxed), newspaper, glossy magazines, all paper, books with covers removed, most #1 plastic (clear only, no clear produce containers), most #2 plastic (separate milk jugs, please), aluminum cans, tin cans, Styrofoam (not packing peanuts), clear glass (but not window pane glass). Please remove lids/caps. If you have any questions, call Brian Cool at 231-768-4624.





## March 2025 Assisting Ministers

Date	Projector Operator	Communion Assistant	Communion Preparer	Greeters/ Open/Close Church	Lector/ Prayer Leader	Tellers	Coffee Hour Host
March 2	Michael Barnes	Kate Miller	George & Sue Klingler	Michael & Doreen Barnes	Harvey Miller	Julie Seguin	Kate & Aaron
March 9	Julie Seguin			Ted & Mary Raven			Ted & Mary Raven
March 16							
March 23							
March 30							

## Upcoming Dates to Remember

- Transfiguration Sunday, March 2, 2025
- Food Pantry, March 3, 2025 9-12pm
- Ash Wednesday, March 5, 2025
- World Day of Prayer, March 7, 2025
- Daylight saving time begins, March 9, 2025
- Food Pantry, March 17, 2025 9-12pm
- WELCA Meeting, March 18, 2025 10:30am
- First day of spring, March 20, 2025
- Council Meeting, March 16, 2025 10:15am
- Deadline for April Messenger, March 26, 2025



## PRAYER list...

**PRAYER CONCERNS:** Jeff Keith; Family of DeVere Byers, Randy Holmes; Liam Chavé; Charles Fines; Ritter Family; Anna; Family of Jim McMurray; Mark Krell; Hanna; Jasmine; Pat Dougherty; Heather M.; Candy Karr; Linda; Pat Gustad; Sandy Goddard, Janice Peterson; Anissa; Carlton Plyler; Jack Forsberg; Katy Draper; Men and women serving in the military – Ian Little.

### Happy Birthday!

Megan Hammar – March 7  
Ruth Hammar – March 19  
Terry Marchwardt – March 24  
Jan Marckwardt – March 25  
Becky Miller – March 28  
Kate Miller – March 30  
Ken Goddard – March 30  
George Klingler – March 30

### Happy Anniversary

Carlton and Shelby Plyler – March 6



*Spring Forward*

Remember to turn  
your clocks forward  
March 9th

### **That's the point!**

If prayer stands as the place where God and human beings meet, then I must learn about prayer. Most of my struggles in the Christian life circle around the same two themes: why God doesn't act the way we want God to, and why I don't act the way God wants me to. Prayer is the precise point where those themes converge.

--Philip Yancey

## *Your Council Members*

President - Becky Miller (Cell) 231-920-7883 email beckymiller81@live.com

Vice President – Heather Hammar (H) 231-629-2359 email: heather.hammar@gmail.com

Secretary – Julie Seguin (Cell) 231-878-3119 email jkseguin@gmail.com

Members: Michael Barnes (Cell) 231-884-7128 email birdhunterup@gmail.com

Jim Carmody (Cell) 231-288-0731 email sjcarmody85@yahoo.com

Ken Forsberg (Cell) 517-525-6336 email kenforsberg@outlook.com

Connie Burgess (Cell) 517-256-4923 email dancingdep12@yahoo.com



# March 2025

**Sun      Mon      Tue      Wed      Thu      Fri      Sat**

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2	3 Food Pantry 9-12pm	4	5 Ash Wednesday	6	7	8
9 Daylight Savings Begins	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 Council Meeting 10:15pm	17 Food Pantry 9-12pm	18 WELCA Meeting 10:30am	19	20 Spring Begins	21	22
23	24	25	26 Newsletter Due	27	28	29
30	31					