

FEBRUARY

2026

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



“But I (Jesus) say to you; Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...” (Matthew 5:44)

I don't think it comes as much of a surprise that during the past year many of my clergy friends have had a difficult time. Many of them serve congregations that are deeply divided over a variety of issues. They are encountering heated arguments over political alliances, immigration policies, LGBTQ+ issues, health and welfare reforms to name just a few. Some of them are being criticized when they preach about a God of unconditional love. Others are told that Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is outdated and unrealistic. Many of my friends in Michigan spend sleepless nights worrying about how to protect the immigrant members of their congregations. Some are seriously contemplating leaving parish ministry. Others have already left. And so I would ask each of you to pray for them that they may have the strength and courage to continuing working to bring about God's kingdom here on earth.

When I contemplate the difficulties my sisters and brothers in ministry are experiencing, I cannot help but realize how truly fortunate I am in mine. I'm blessed to serve you, the good people of Augustana Lutheran Church. I began my ministry here 4 years ago on Palm Sunday. I immediately felt, not only welcomed, but at home. Granted the miles between Manistee and Tustin have been challenging; however, together we've all been able to make it work. A large portion of this success is the direct result of having Angela, our talented, creative, and dedicated secretary and our extraordinarily gifted musician Patty. Their support is invaluable to me. Additionally, as a congregation, you work together to take care of “running” the church, leaving me free to devote my time to ministry. I am especially proud of the ways you reach out to serve our committees with gifts of food, money, time and talent. I can't properly express how grateful I am for each and every one of you. Your support, encouragement and love allow me to continue even when times are difficult. I truly believe that being your pastor is exactly what God wants me to do.

In this new year, filled with anxiety, anger and uncertainty, let us remember the promise of Jesus to be always with us. Let us continue to find ways to share God's light and love with the world. May God's everlasting love continue to bless us all.

Peace and Blessings,

Pastor Sharon

AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

Approved Minutes

November 16, 2025



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

Devotional read by Heather – *Begin with God, so I can trust.*

Members: Jim Carmody, Heather Hammar, Kurt Hammar, Becky Miller, and Julie Seguin. Guests: Terry Marckwardt, Treasurer.

Agenda: Motion by Heather, to approve the agenda, with support from Kurt. Carried.

Minutes: Motion by Jim to approve the September 2025 minutes, with support from Heather. Carried.

Treasurer/Financial Secretary Reports: Heather made a motion to approve the Treasurer and Secretary reports, with Julie supporting the motion. Approved.

Old Business:

- Parsonage roof presentation and vote will take place 11/23/25. It is suggested that we use \$10,000 from the building fund, and the balance from the general fund to pay Bigelow Roofing \$16,690.
- Donation envelopes for the Food Pantry and Uplift are available and will be included in the bulletin.
- Outdoor sign – the part has been ordered and will be repaired as soon as possible.
- Poinsettias have been ordered to be picked up 11/22/25.
- The church will be decorated 11/23/25 after church. Council will provide snacks for coffee hour.
- Christmas Eve service will be at 7pm on 12/24/25.
- \$175 was given to the Quilting Group from Scrip fund.

New Business:

- Christmas Gift Cards will be given to 3 employees, and envelopes for Pastor.
- Snow removal – Nikki as shoveled around church in the past, so she'll be asked if she can continue that this year. Pantry/Uplift will shovel and salt if needed.
- It was decided that a decision about cancelling church due to bad weather will be made by 7am Sunday
- It was discussed to have the greeters lock the doors after the first hymn.
- Pastor requested we order a "head band" type mic that wouldn't interfere with her glasses. We'll have Angela check into options.

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am with the Lord's Prayer.

The next meeting will be held on Sunday, December 21 at 10:15 after church, with Becky reading the devotional.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Seguin



There was no WELCA meeting in January. Approved minutes from the November 2025, meeting will be published in the March 2026, MESSENGER.

Spring Cleaning for the Soul

Ash Wednesday is February 18, 2026, and it marks the beginning of the 40 days of Lent. Lent hints of spring, a time when the earth begins to awaken from a winter's nap, and new growth bursts forth all about us.

More personally, it is an opportunity to enter into a springtime for our spirit. For centuries Christians have used the 40 days of Lent to seek spiritual growth. Sincere repentance, a changing of heart, casting off old sinful practices and seeking to commune with our creator help us go in the right direction. Spending serious time in silence and prayer focuses our attention. Reading spiritual literature, becoming more knowledgeable about the New Testament, meeting in small groups with other Christians to share personal stories of faith can all be immensely stimulating. Joining with others to serve the helpless and hopeless can strengthen our spiritual life.

Lent is a time to let God do "spring cleaning" within us. It's our opportunity to allow God to help us toss out the "stuff" that hinders us and then freshen up the "new creature" we are meant to be as followers of Christ.

A Taste of Loving-Kindness

A Sunday school teacher once asked her class, "What do you think the Bible means when it speaks of loving-kindness?"

A young boy thought for a moment and replied, "Well, if I were hungry and someone gave me a piece of bread with butter on it, that would be kindness. But if they added a spoonful of jam, that would be loving-kindness."

Valentine's Day jokes for animal lovers

What did one sheep say to the other?
I love ewe!

And how did the other sheep respond?
You're not so baaa-d yourself.

Why do skunks love Valentine's Day?
They are very scent-imental creatures.

What did the enamored deer say?
I'm very fawn-ed of you!

What question did the penguin ask on February 14?
Waddle I do without you?

What do you call two birds in love?
Tweethearts!

What did one bee say to the other?
I love bee-ing with you, honey!

Northwest Osceola Food Pantry

Each month for our Fourth Sunday Food Pantry collection a different item will be collected. For the month of January the item was toothpaste and the response was very good. For the month of **February** we will be collecting **cereal**. Any size, any flavor will be appreciated. As usual if you are unable to shop, shopping can be done for you. Please talk with Jan if you need shopping help.

Open invitation

Come, sinners, to the gospel feast,
Let every soul be Jesus' guest;
Ye need not be one left behind,
For God hath bidden all humankind.

Sent by my Lord, on you I call;
The invitation is to all:
Come, all the world; come, sinner, thou!
All things in Christ are ready now.

Come, all ye souls by sin oppressed,
Ye restless wanderers after rest,
Ye poor, and maimed, and halt, and blind,
In Christ a hearty welcome find.

—Charles Wesley (18th century)

Beyond candy hearts and roses

The first half of February seems dominated by pink and red, cards and candy. But people not in a loving romantic relationship can sometimes feel left out of the festivities. Of course, all people need love — and certainly love is not limited to the romantic kind. Author Leo Buscaglia, who became known as "Dr. Love" for writing about the topic, said, "Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."



Jesus taught that loving one another is second only in importance to loving God (Matthew 22:37-40), and that when we love one another, God lives in us (1 John 4:12). There are so many ways to do that — beyond candy hearts and roses! But Valentine's Day is as good a reminder as any.

Friendship SOUP

Make jars of Italian barley soup to share love and warmth with friends.



What you need:

- 1 cup pearly barley
- ½ cup sundried tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp dry minced garlic
- 1 Tbsp dry minced onion
- 1 veggie bouillon cube
- Glass pint jars with lids
- Cardstock
- Scissors
- Pen

What you do:

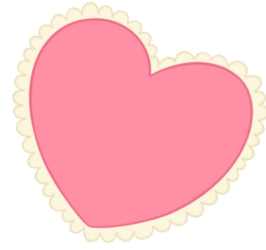
1. In order, layer the first five ingredients into the jar.
2. Trace the outline of the lid onto cardstock. Cut out.
3. On the card, write these directions: Remove wrapper from bouillon cube. Add contents of jar to saucepan. Add 4 cups water and a can of diced tomatoes. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce to low. Simmer about 20 minutes, until barley is tender. Serve with parmesan cheese.
4. Place the card atop the lid. Screw on the canning ring to keep it in place.

February 2026 Assisting Ministers

| Date | Projector Operator | Communion Assistant | Communion Preparer | Greeters/ Open/Close Church | Lector/ Prayer Leader | Tellers | Coffee Hour Host |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---------|------------------|
| Feb 1 | Julie Seguin | Sue Carmody | Sue & Geoge Klingler | Jan Marckwardt | Jim Carmody | | Sue Klingler |
| Feb 8 | Julie Seguin | Jim Carmody | | | Harvey Miller | | Heather Hammar |
| Feb 15 | | | | | Jim Carmody | | |
| Feb 22 Food Pantry Sunday | | | | | Harvey Miller | | |

Upcoming Dates to Remember

- Groundhog Day, February 2, 2026
- Food Pantry, February 2, 2026 9-11am
- New Member Welcome, February 8, 2026 9am
- Council Meeting, February 8, 2026 10:15am
- Valentine's Day, February 14, 2026
- Presidents Day, February 16, 2026
- WELCA Meeting, February 17, 2026 10:30am
- Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2026
- Lenten Bible Study, February 22, 2026 10:15am
- Food Pantry Sunday, February 22, 2026 –donations due
- Deadline for March Messenger, February 23, 2026



What We Really Need

Twelve ministers were on a flight headed to a conference in Seattle when the plane hit a fierce storm. Trying to calm their nerves, they told the flight attendant, "Let the pilot know everything's fine — there are twelve ministers on board!"

A few minutes later, the flight attendant returned from the cockpit.

"Well?" one of the pastors asked with a grin. "What did the pilot say?"

She smiled and replied, "He said he was glad to have 12 ministers aboard, but he would rather have four good engines."

Happy Birthday!

Yvonne Peterson—Feb. 2

Neil Christie— Feb.3

Kurt Hammar-Feb. 12

Pastor Phil Van Dam— Feb. 20



LENTEN BIBLE STUDY



An invitation to Lenten Bible Study **February 22** after coffee hour. In preparation for the season of Lent, a

discussion of Isaiah 58:1-12 led by Pastor Sharon. Everyone is invited. Mark your calendars and join us !

Happy Anniversary

Robert & Denna Light -Feb 29

PRAYER
list...

PRAYER CONCERNS: Jeanette Otberg; Kathy Tuttle; Lexi; Darren; Jim Caucherty; Byers Family; Ken Forsberg; Jaydon; Pat W.; Carlton; Ron & Candy Karr; Leta H; Anissa; Men and women serving in the military – Ian Little.

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


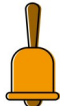


Brian Hammar (Cell) 231-920-4087 email: bhammar@att.net

Kurt Hammar (Cell) 231-578-1153 email:heatherhamar1@gmail.com



February 2026

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

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|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | 2 Food Pantry 9-11am Groundhog Day | 3  | 4  | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 New member welcome 9am Council Meeting 10:15am | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14  Valentine's Day |
| 15 | 16 President's Day  | 17 WELCA 10:30am | 18 Ash Wednesday | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 Bible Study Food Pantry Sunday | 23 Newsletter Due | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |