



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



"... for we do not know how to pray as we ought..." (Romans 8:26)

Before my father's funeral, the minister who would be officiating asked the family if we would like to join in prayer. He was a friend of my father's who was the only preacher he allowed to pray around him. I was a newly

ordained Lutheran pastor, but most of my immediate family weren't regular church attendees. However, we all thought this would be an appropriate thing for us to do. So we gather in a private room, formed a circle, bowed our heads and listened to the preacher offer a prayer. Honestly, while I was appreciative of his pastoral care for us, I honestly can't remember a single thing he said. However, afterward, my granddaughter who was being raised as a faithful Roman Catholic was very upset. None of us, except for her, were holding our hands in the right position.

I was never taught that there was a "right" hand position for praying, but if there's a right way does that mean there's a "wrong" way to pray? Recently I've begun to wonder about the concept of right and wrong ways to pray. Many Christians have learned a whole list of "do's and "don't's involving prayer. Here's a list of some of the ones I grew up with.

You have to close your eyes when you pray.

Prayers have to end with "in Jesus name. Amen"

Always use Thees and Thous when praying.

Prayers work better if you pray on your knees.

Prayers shouldn't be too long.

Prayers shouldn't be too short.

Never pray in public.

I'm sure this sounds familiar to most of us, and many of us could add more prayer rules to the list. I think it's unfortunate that these rules often keep us from feeling comfortable when we pray, especially if we're invited to pray in public. These rules can keep us from understanding that prayer is really nothing more than having a conversation with God. Granted God is most often a silent participant, but we can rest assured that God is always ready to hear our prayers. In fact God wants to be in a relationship with us and we all know that relationships depend on communication.

As a pastor, I know how much joy I experience when I am privileged to hear lay people pray. It's like music to my ears and warmth to my heart. So my prayer for all of you is that you don't let rules get in the way of praying. God really doesn't care about how you hold your hands, the words you use, or whether or not your eyes are closed.

Peace and Blessings,

Pastor Sharon

**AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
APPROVED MINUTES**

October 21, 2024



The meeting was called to order by Becky at 6:30.

Devotional read by Julie.

Members: Mike Barnes, Connie Burgess, Jim Carmody, Ken Forsberg, Heather Hammar, Becky Miller, Julie Seguin. Guest: Terry Marckwardt, Treasurer.

Agenda: Motion by Heather to approve amended agenda as presented, with support from Jim. Carried.

Minutes: Motion by Heather to approve the minutes from the September 2024 meeting, with support from Mike. Carried.

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

Communications: A Swedish historian will be visiting Augustana on Wednesday 10/23/24 at 9:30 am.

Building/Grounds Report: Mike reports that the snowplowing will be the same as last year. The boiler will be inspected as needed in the future.

Old Business:

- A. Carpet cleaning is scheduled for 10/24/24. Sunshine Carpets in Cadillac bid \$476 for the fellowship hall, \$380 for the sanctuary, and \$20-\$30 for each pew. Council wants to have both basement stairways added to the job. The cleaning will be paid from the Building Fund.
- B. A donation for Uplift will be planned for January or February.
- C. Poinsettia orders are due November 1, and will be \$6.00 each.
- D. ALC 2025 Baseball trip - TBD

New Business:

- A. Computers: The sanctuary computer that runs Media Shout will need to be replaced soon. It cannot be updated to Windows 11. The Teller computer is no longer able to be updated. The desktop computer can be used for tellers, with training coming.
- B. Pastor Sharon and Angela are working on the Advent season programs.
- C. Christmas decorating of the church will take place on December 1 after worship.
- D. Christmas Eve service December 24 at 6:30pm
- E. 12/26/24 & 1/2/25 days requested off for Angela – approved.
- F. Debit card reporting was discussed, Terry and Angela are working on the process.
- G. Hurricane relief money was collected by 2 noisy offerings, and will be sent to help victims.
- H. Renucci House visit went well.

The next meeting will be November 18, 2024 at 6:30 – devotions will be read by Becky.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Seguin

WELCA Meeting

Approved Minutes

September 17, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by Joan Chave`.

Those present: Joan Chave`, Sue Klingler, Mary Annette Gorden, Jan Marckwardt, Barb Hazlett, and Jeanette Otberg.

A **devotional** was read by Joan Chave` titled "A Wonderful Explosion".

The Minutes from August 20, 2024 prepared by Jan Marckwardt were approved with a motion by Barb Hazlett and second by Sue Klingler.

The Treasurer's Report from August 2024 prepared by Jan Marckwardt was approved with a motion from Sue Klingler and second by Barb Hazlett. The balance in the account as of August 30, 2024 was \$756.12. Of this amount \$200 was a donation for our Head Start project and will be held in the account until needed.

OLD BUSINESS:

Visa cards have been ordered through Augustana's Raise Right (Scrip) program. These cards will be given to the Head Start teacher to be used for items she feels the program needs. A total of \$375 for three class rooms will be donated. The cards will be given to her at Christmas time. We will ask the teacher to report back to us what items have been purchased for Head Start. Options were again discussed regarding the best way to support Head Start. We will wait and get feedback from the teacher as to which method (gift cards or totes) we should use to donate for the 2025/2026 school year.

NEW BUSINESS:

Barb Hazlett reminded the group about the Fall retreat taking place at Emanuel Lutheran in Big Rapids on Saturday September 28. There has been a good response so far. She further indicated that nine churches have expressed interest with the Synod office regarding WELCA.

Barb will have a Human Trafficking table at the retreat with T-shirts, stickers, and pins.

Barb asked for two more quilts from Augustana for AARP's pot luck in December. Her request was cheerfully granted.

Joan Chave` informed the women that a couple who lost a child last year are asking for donations for cancer research and blankets to go to children in hospital. A motion by Barb Hazlett with second by Jan Marckwardt to supply one child and one adult tie blanket or quilt was approved.

NEXT MEETING: The next scheduled meeting will be October 15, 2024. There being no further business the meeting closed at 11:08 with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted
Jan Marckwardt



WELCA NEWS

We invite all women from Augustana to join us on the third Tuesday of each month at 10:30 for our WELCA meeting. One of our favorite projects is the Head Start program which is a Federal program held at Tustin Elementary School for 3-4-5 year olds who qualify for the program. This year due to a suggestion from the Head Start teacher, we will provide Visa gift cards for the three Head Start classrooms. This will give the teacher a chance to purchase items for the classrooms. We are excited to hear what items the teacher has selected that the children will be able to enjoy through the year.

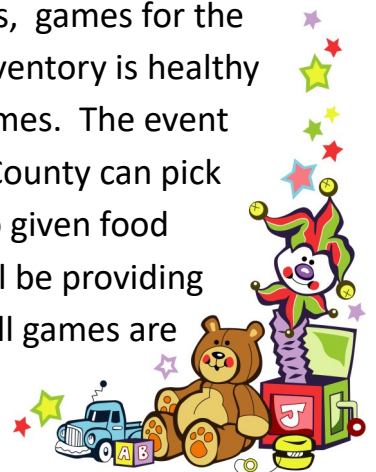
Our next meeting will be **Tuesday, December 17 at 10:30** in the fellowship hall. Ladies, please plan to join us. We would love to see you there!

OSCEOLA COUNTY RECYCLING AT LEROY VILLAGE GARAGE

Saturday December 7 is the last recycling for 2024. Recycling will take a “pause” during January and February 2025 but will resume on the first Saturday of March. As a reminder they take clear glass, tin cans, aluminum products, #1 clear plastic (no “clam” shell containers), #2 plastic, Styrofoam, newspapers, paper, magazines, milk jugs, and cardboard. Please crush as much as possible to conserve space on the trailer. New volunteers are always needed. Without volunteers the program will not be able to continue. Call Brian Cool to volunteer: 231-768-4624.

Gifts for Kids

As previously mentioned in the October and November Messengers, games for the Gifts for Kids event are not being collected again this year as our inventory is healthy and monetary donations have made it easy to purchase needed games. The event will be on **Saturday, December 14**. Registered families in Osceola County can pick out toys for their children as well as hats and mittens. They are also given food vouchers to local stores along with household items. Augustana will be providing one game per family. If you would like to check out the inventory, all games are stored in the church basement.





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.”

Registration for the 2025 Synod Assembly will open on February 15, 2025.

Synod Council has approved the following registration fees:

Early-Bird Registration (February 15 – March 17)

- Voting Members and Visitors: \$200
- Retired Rostered Ministers / Rostered Ministers on Disability: \$150

Regular Registration (March 18 – April 23)

- Voting Members and Visitors: \$225
- Retired Rostered Ministers / Rostered Ministers on Disability: \$165



TIME TO Decorate

Please join us!


December 1st after service to decorate for the holiday season. Cinnamon rolls will be provided.



Look upon love

Let us then meditate upon the Nativity just as we see it happening in our own babies. I would not have you contemplate the deity of Christ, the majesty of Christ, but rather his flesh. Look upon the baby Jesus. Divinity may terrify people. Inexpressible majesty will crush them. That is why God took on our human **flesh** and blood, that God should not terrify us but rather that with love and favor God would console and comfort us.

—Martin Luther



Volunteers needed

The December Assisting Ministers calendar is nearly blank!

Can you help? Please sign up for any and all opportunities that you are able to fulfill.

What a wonderful way to serve our Lord!

Have yourself a Holy little Christmas

The “Christmas season” seems to begin earlier every year. Some stores had Christmas stuff on the shelves weeks before Halloween. What madness! We go dashing through the stores to the beat of *Jingle Bells*; and we go “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree” until we crash from exhaustion.

Revelry and gift-giving are fine and fun, but if we’re not careful they can snowball out of control. Stewarding a Holy and meaningful Christmas means balancing the commercial with the spiritual. Here are some tips:

Observe Advent: The four weeks *before* Christmas Day comprise the Advent Season, a time to *prepare* for Christmas through prayer, song, worship, and spiritual disciplines. Lean into the spirit of Advent. Advent devotionals can help (I recommend Richard Rohr’s *Preparing for Christmas*).

Observe the Christmas season: The church calendar lists the *season* of Christmas from Dec. 24 to the feast of Epiphany on Jan. 6. Until the 20th century, these 12 Days of Christmas were the time for celebration and partying. Make them special in your life and family.

Cut the consumerism: Limit your shopping and spending by setting a strict budget or gifting the people in your life with homemade presents, favors, or ways to spend time together.

Party hardy: For some, Christmas is an excuse to overeat and drink to excess. Moderate your consumption.

Most importantly, pray: Ask God to help you and your family craft a meaningful and joyful Advent and Christmas. Ask God to send you wisdom, resources, and people who can journey through the spiritual season with you.

By carefully stewarding your faith life, Advent and Christmas can be a time for real spiritual growth.

--Rob Blezard

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Christmas crackups

Enjoy these kid-friendly holiday jokes!

What did Adam say the day before Christmas?
It's Christmas, Eve!

What does the gingerbread man put on his bed?
Cookie sheets.

What do you sing at a snowman’s birthday party?
“Freeze a jolly good fellow!”

What is a Christmas tree’s favorite candy?
Ornamints.

What goes “Oh, Oh, Oh”?
Santa walking backward.

Why did Rudolph get a bad report card?
Because he went down in history.

What is an elf’s favorite kind of music?
Wrap music!

How much did Santa pay for his sleigh?
Nothing. It was on the house!

What kind of photos do Santa’s helpers take?
Elfies.

December 2024 Assisting Ministers

Date	Projector Operator	Communion Assistant	Communion Preparer	Greeters/ Open/Close Church	Lector/ Prayer Leader	Tellers	Coffee Hour Host
December 1	Becky Miller	George Klingler	Ruth Hammar	Ted & Mary Raven	Harvey Miller	Ruth Hammar	Heather Hammar
December 8	Mike Barnes	George Klingler	Becky Miller	Mike & Doreen Barnes	Joan Swanson	Doreen Barnes	Doreen Barnes
December 15	Mike Barnes	Sue Carmody	Becky Miller	Doug & Becky Miller	Harvey Miller	Doreen Barnes	Ted & Mary Raven
December 22				Arv & Jeanette Otberg	Ken Forsberg		Ken Forsberg & Connie Burgess
December 24 Christmas Eve 6:30pm	Mike Barnes	Sue Carmody			Jim Carmody	X	X
December 29		X	X				

Upcoming Dates to Remember

- *First Sunday of Advent, December 1, 2024 Decorating after service*
- *Food Pantry, December 2, 2024 9-12pm*
- *Second Sunday of Advent, December 8, 2024*
- *Third Sunday of Advent, December 15, 2024*
- *Council Meeting, December 15, 2024 10:15pm*
- *Food Pantry, December 16, 2024 9-12pm*
- *WELCA Meeting, December 17, 2024 10:30am*
- *First day of winter, December 21, 2024*
- *Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 22, 2024*
- *Christmas Eve Service, December 24, 2024 6:30pm*
- *Christmas Day, December 25, 2024 Office Closed 'til 30th*
- *Deadline for January Messenger, December 30, 2024*
- *New Year's Eve, December 31, 2024*
- *New Year's Day, January 1, 2025 Office Closed 'til 6th*



PRAYER list...

PRAYER CONCERNS: Tobias; Hanna; Jasmine; Pat Dougherty; Dave Hougland; Heather M.; Candy Karr, DeVere & Marian Byers; Linda; Pat Gustad; The Goddards, Janice Peterson; Anissa; Carlton Plyler; Jack Forsberg; Katy Draper; Men and women serving in the military – Ian Little.

Happy Birthday!

Mary Raven – Dec. 11
Jim Carmody – Dec. 11
Holly Miller – Dec. 13
Henry Christie-Dec .18
Carlton Plyler – Dec. 20



Happy Anniversary

Tim and Julie Seguin – Dec. 29



Holiday Hours

November 28th
Office Closed
Happy Thanksgiving

December 24th
Open 6:30pm
Christmas Eve Service

December 25-26th
Office Closed
Merry Christmas

January 1-2nd
Office Closed
Happy New Year

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



December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Decorating after service	2 Food Pantry 9-12pm	3 Quilting Club every Tuesday 1pm	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 Council Meeting 12:15pm	16 Food Pantry 9-12pm	17 WELCA 10:30am	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 Christmas Eve 6:30pm	25 Merry Christmas Office Closed	26 Office Closed	27	28
29	30 Newsletter Due	31	1 Happy New Year Office Closed	2 Office Closed		