

**AUGUSTANA
LUTHERAN
CHURCH**

**Special points of
interest:**

- Annual Meeting
- Food Pantry
Sunday
- Can you help?
Assisting Minister
Sign-up
- Upcoming Dates
to Remember
- Independence
Day

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The Messenger

Volume I, Issue 5

July 2026

Pastor's Page



"Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope..." (Zechariah 9:12)

Sometimes I find myself wondering about a particular term used in a verse from the Bible. Currently I've been thinking about the term "prisoners of hope." Like many other human beings, I find myself a trifle uncomfortable with the term "prisoners." It comes up pretty regularly at the Van Dam household since my husband is a

prison chaplain, but it's very rarely used as something positive. In fact, I think most of us don't ever want to be called any type of prisoner. Even when I get over my reluctance to being a prisoner, I still remain a bit uncertain about what being captive to something positive, like hope would look like.

Often people equate "having hope" with having an almost Pollyanna view of life. I believe that it is very common for some church people who think that being anything less than positive is somehow a failure of their own faith. People who "keep a stiff upper lip" in tragic circumstances are frequently

praised for being faithful and brave. I once encountered a Sunday School song that went something like this. *"If you chance to meet a frown. Do not let it stay. Quickly turn it upside down and make the world a better place by smiling all the while."* It reminds me of my angry words "quit crying or I'll give you something to cry about!" I wonder what a world where smiles were mandatory would look like! Knowing the reality of human pain and suffering I don't think I would enjoy living there.

Several years ago, I was blessed by friends of mine who were truly "prisoners of

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They Walked Everywhere

When a teenager earned his driving permit, he approached his father, a minister, to discuss using the car. His dad replied, "I'll make you a deal. Raise your grades, spend some time in your Bible and get your hair cut. Then we'll talk."

A month later, the young man came back. "Son, I'm proud of you," his father said. "Your grades are up, and you've been faithful in your Bible study. But you didn't get your hair cut."

The teenager paused. "Well, Dad, I've been thinking. Samson had long hair. Moses had long hair. Noah had long hair. Even Jesus had long hair."

His father nodded. "That's true. And they walked everywhere they went."

AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
APPROVED MINUTES
April 19, 2026

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

Devotional read by Kurt

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

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

Minutes: Motion by Heather to approve the March 2026 minutes, with support from Jim. Carried.

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

Building/Grounds Report: The storm damaged trees are being removed. The parsonage roof project will be completed soon. The parsonage ceiling will need some repair.

Old Business:

- May 3, both Pastor Sharon and Pastor Phil will be gone. Jim Carmody will lead our service with help from council members

New Business:

- April 26, Patty will be gone, Ron Curtis will play the organ for service.
- May 10, Mother's Day – Men will make breakfast.
- May 16, Ken Benkert's funeral. Visitation at 10, funeral at 11 with lunch following. Set up for 75 people.
- June 21, Father's Day – brunch
- May 3 after service will be the road pick up.
- Consider having a mowing service this year. Quotes will be gathered.
- Clean up day for the church grounds will be scheduled.
- Church Insurance will be renewed
- Council will meet every other month, but have special meetings as needed going forward.
- Annual Meeting will be August 16 following the service.

I

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, June 14 at 10:15 after church, with Julie reading the devotional.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Seguin



WELCA Meeting
Approved Minutes

May 19, 2026

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

Those present: Jan Marckwardt, Barb Hazlett, and Sue Carmody.

The Devotion was read by Barb Hazlett titled "Within Reach of our Prayers".

The Purpose Statement was read by Sue Carmody.

The Minutes from April 21, 2026 prepared by Jan Marckwardt were approved.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's report prepared by Jan Marckwardt for April 30, 2026 was approved. The balance in the account as of April 30 was \$762.66.

Old Business:

Food Pantry for April was canned fruit.

Father's Day menu is set: casseroles, fruit, juice, biscuits and gravy.

Benkert funeral went well.

Our June 16 meeting is set for Green Acres.

Barb Hazlett reported that the St. Ann human trafficking event was very good. The speaker was a victim and very moving.

New Business:

Christmas in July will be on July 21 at Big Boy.

NEXT MEETING: The next scheduled meeting will be on June 16, 2026 at 10:30 a.m. at Green Acres. There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:00 with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted
Jan Marckwardt

WELCA NEWS

Ladies! WELCA will be celebrating "Christmas in July" once again at Big Boy in Cadillac. The fun begins at noon on July 21. Bring a friend, bring a relative, bring a neighbor, bring a \$5 gift to pass. **All** women are welcome. A sign-up sheet is on the table. Car pooling can be available. There will not be a business meeting in July. Next business meeting is **Tuesday, August 18, 10:30 at Augustana.**

Still Worth More Than You Know

A speaker opened his seminar by holding up a \$20 bill and asking a crowd of 200 people, "Who would like this?"

Nearly every hand went up.

"I'll give it to one of you," he said. "But first..." He crumpled the bill tightly in his fist. "Who still wants it?"

Hands remained in the air.

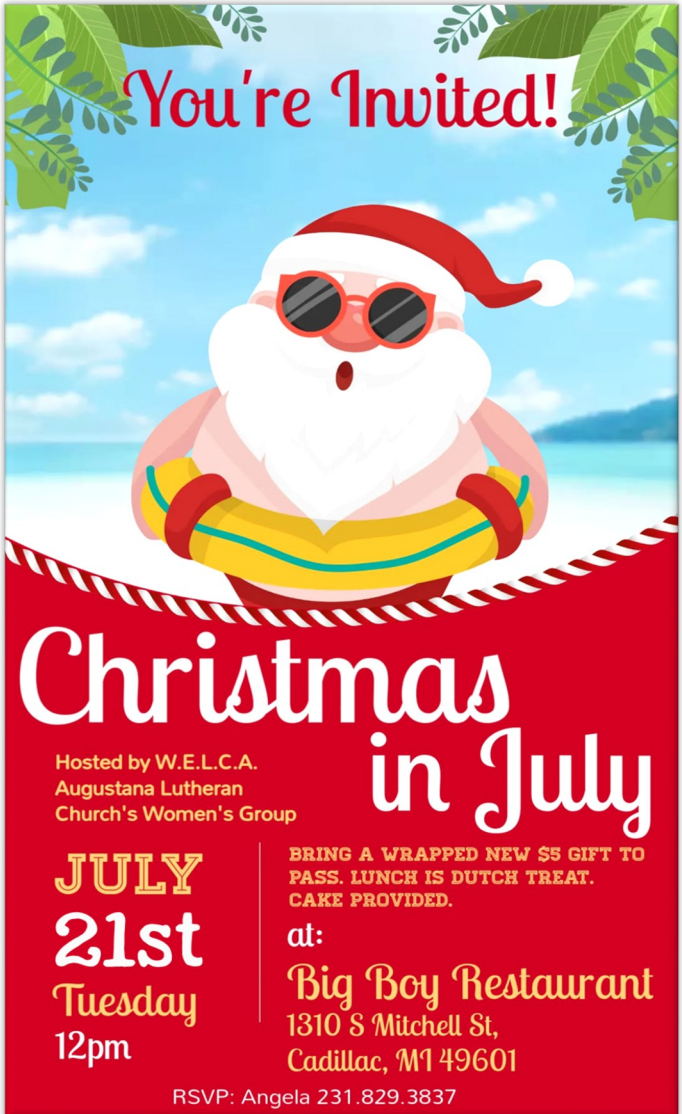
He dropped it to the floor and ground it under his shoe. Then he picked up the wrinkled, dirty bill.

"How about now?"

The hands rose again.

"My friends," he said, "you've just learned an important lesson. No matter what I did to the money, it never lost its value. It was still worth \$20." Life can feel the same way. We are dropped, crumpled and ground down by our choices and by circumstances beyond our control. At times, we may even feel worthless. But our value does not change.

In God's eyes, you are never less than priceless. Clean or dirty, wrinkled or whole, you remain precious to Him. As Isaiah 43:4 says in the NIV, "You are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you."



You're Invited!

Christmas in July

Hosted by W.E.L.C.A.
Augustana Lutheran
Church's Women's Group

JULY 21st
Tuesday
12pm

BRING A WRAPPED NEW \$5 GIFT TO PASS. LUNCH IS DUTCH TREAT. CAKE PROVIDED.

at:
Big Boy Restaurant
1310 S Mitchell St,
Cadillac, MI 49601

RSVP: Angela 231.829.3837

Northwest Osceola Food Pantry

Our collection of food for the food pantry continues. Each month we collect a food or personal item recommended by Food Pantry personnel. We collect this food/product by the 4th Sunday of each month. Once again Augustana did an outstanding job of collecting food in June.

This month's food suggestion is **CEREAL**.

Spoiler Alert: Next month (August) we will be asking for deodorant.

As always if you are unable to shop, the shopping can be done for you. Please let Jan Marckwardt know and she will be happy to purchase items on your behalf.

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hope.” Phil and I met them for dinner at our favorite Chinese restaurant. We hadn't seen them for quite a while, so they shared a new cancer diagnosis. Once again breast cancer had reared its angry head. They were both preparing for fighting this deadly disease. They also knew that this time the cancer might win. But they both were bold to share their belief that **'what ever happened, they would be fine.** Eventually my friend lost her battle, but because we had become prisoners of hope, **we were all fine.**

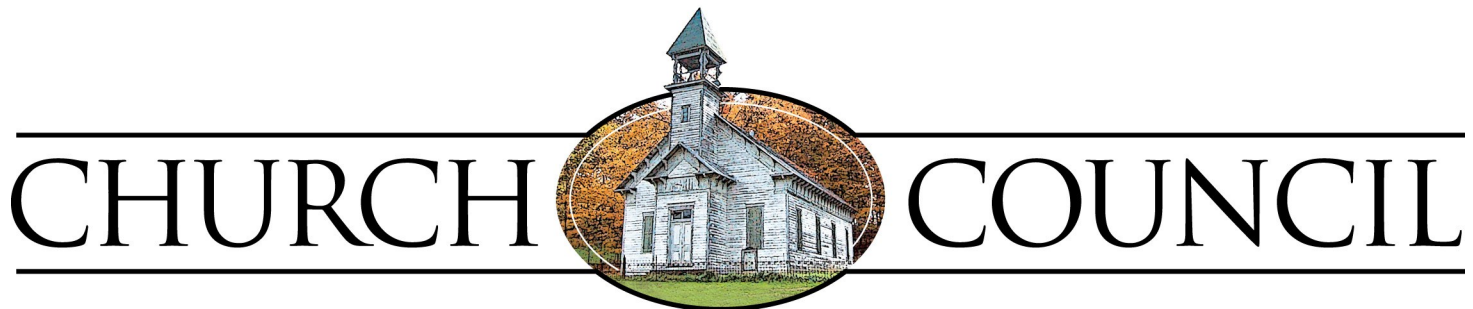
Peace and Blessings,

Pastor Sharon



Church Mission Statement

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



Title	Name	Phone	Email
President	Becky Miller	231-920-7883	beckymiller81@live.com
Vice-President	Heather Hammar	231-629-2359	heather.hammar@gmail.com
Secretary	Julie Seguin	231-878-3119	jkseguin@gmail.com
Treasurer	Terry Marckwardt	231-872-0149	etmarck@sbcglobal.net
Members:	Michael Barnes	231-884-7128	birdhunterup@gmail.com
	Jim Carmody	231-288-0731	sjcarmody85@yahoo.com
	Brian Hammar	231-920-4087	bhammar@att.net
	Kurt Hammar	231-578-1153	heatherhamar1@gmail.com

July 2026 Assisting Ministers

Date	Projector Operator	Communion Assistant	Communion Preparer	Greeters/ Open/ Close Church	Lector/ Prayer Leader	Tellers	Coffee Hour Host
July 5	Julie Seguin	Sue Carmody			Jim Carmody		Sue Carmody
July 12	Becky Miller		Sue & George Klingler		Joan Swanson		
July 19							
July 29 Food Pantry Sunday		X	X	Doug & Becky Miller			



August 16th, after Sunday service, the annual meeting & pot luck will take place. Please submit your reports by **August 3rd**!



Prayer
LIST

PRAYER CONCERNS: Reketa; Eva; Laurie; Pat O; Jeanette Otberg; Lexi; Jaydon; Carlton; Ron & Candy Karr; Anissa; Men and women serving in the military – Ian Little.

Upcoming Dates to Remember

- U.S. Independence Day, July 4, 2026
- Food Pantry, July 6, 2026 9-11am
- Council Meeting, July 12, 2026 10:15am
- Food Pantry, July 20, 2025 9-11apm
- WELCA Christmas in July, July 21, 2026 12pm at Big Boy
- Deadline for August Messenger, July 28, 2026
- **Committee Reports Due, August 3, 2026**
- Annual Meeting, August 16, 2026 10:30am



On June 21st we celebrated Pastor Phil's 25th Ordination Anniversary (on left) and Father's Day-pictured below is Harvey Miller with his daughters. Harvey celebrates 90 years this July.

Office Hours

Monday – Thursday

9am - 1pm

e-mail: azlcp@att.net

www.augustanatustin.com

Happy Birthday!

Sandie Leach – July 4

Harvey Miller – July 6

Heather Hammar – July 7

Shelby Plyler – July 17

Ken Forsberg – July 18

Jeanette Otberg – July 28





Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church
 18499 Twenty Mile Rd.; P.O. Box 198
 Tustin, MI 49688
 Phone: 231-829-3837
 Pastor: 740-296-9176

Please kindly deliver to:



July 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4  Independence Day
5	6 Food Pantry 9-11am	7	8	9	10	11
12 Budget Mtg 10:15am	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 Food Pantry 9-11am	21 WELCA 12pm 	22	23	24	25
26 Food Pantry Sunday- Cereal	27	28 Newsletter Due	29	30	31	