



JANUARY

2025

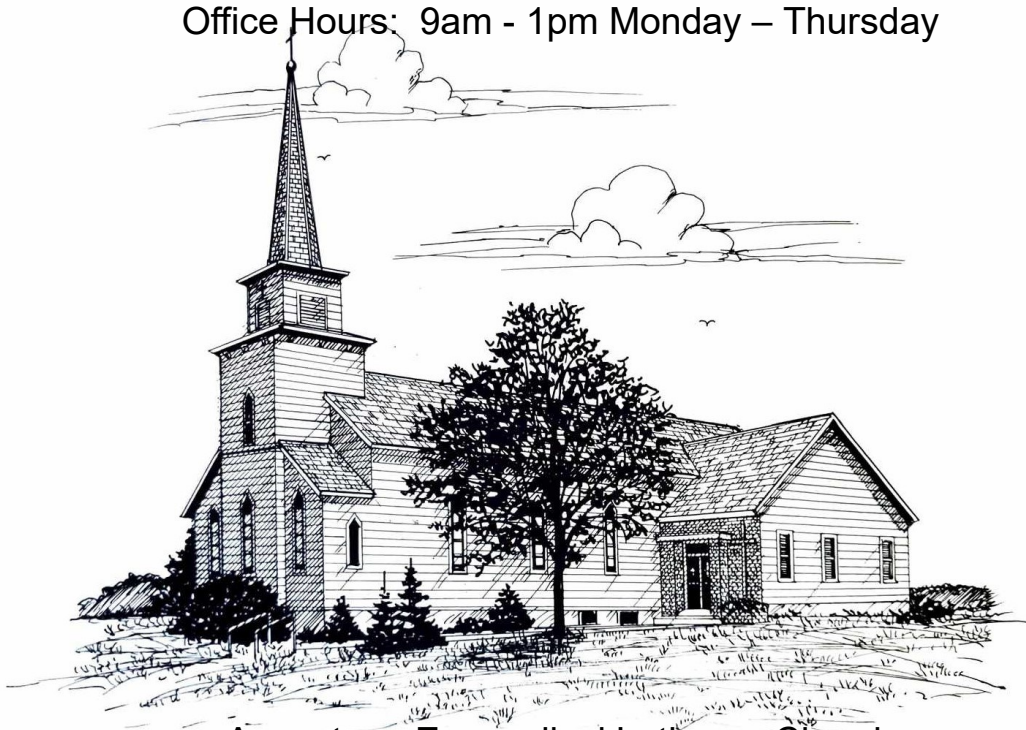
Augustana Lutheran Church Messenger

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



“...See, I am making all things new.” (Revelation 21:5)

The Bible has many different references to things that are new: new earth, new covenant, new selves, and all things new. Many of us find ourselves getting ready for the new year to begin by making lists of resolutions; things we want to change in our lives.

Many of us are looking for new ways to improve our own lives and maybe even the lives of other people. The idea of exchanging old habits and ways of doing things for new, hopefully improved ones has an almost irresistible appeal to us. We may often fall into the false belief that “new” is always somehow better than old. In our efforts to become new, improved versions of ourselves we frequently make lists of new year's resolutions. They usually begin with “This year I'm going to...” and might include some of the following: Exercise more regularly. Eat healthier or lose weight. Be more organized. Attend church more faithfully. Or sometimes they begin with “This year I'm *not* going to...” Watch so much TV. Share mean spirited gossip. Lose my temper so often.

While I believe that our impulse to improve ourselves, to be better Christians, can be a very good thing, I think expecting dramatic changes to take place with the changing of one year to the next is an invitation to disappointment and frustration. But here's the Good News for all of us: **God loves us just the way we are.** God's love is a free gift of grace and not something we have to earn. Certainly, it's important that we strive to do our best, but it's equally important that we remember to love ourselves each and every day. That self-care and self-love don't need to wait for some future date when we have achieved some kind of self-imposed goals.

So, here's my suggestion for a 2025 New Years Resolution. How about trying to start each day with the realization that you are a child of God, knowing that God loves you just the way you are and seeing what kind of difference that can make in each of your lives?

Also, I need to let each of you know how much it means to me to serve as your pastor. Your generosity and your love are daily reminders to me of what a privilege it is for me to serve Augustana Lutheran Church. Thank all of you for being exactly who you are.

Peace and Blessings,

Pastor Sharon



WELCA NEWS

WELCA NEWS

Happy New Year from the WELCA ladies. We invite all women from Augustana to join us on the third Tuesday of each month at 10:30 for our WELCA meetings. The HeadStart Visa cards were given to the HeadStart teacher to purchase items for the three classrooms. This allows the teacher an opportunity to purchase items needed for the classrooms. We are hoping to hear what items the teacher has selected that the children will be able to enjoy through 2025.

There will NOT be an WELCA meeting in January. Our next meeting will be **Tuesday, February 18 at 10:30** in the fellowship hall. Ladies, please plan to join us. We would love to see you there!



Gifts for Kids 2024

The annual Osceola Gifts for Kids event was held on December 14 and had 80 families registered. Gifts are donated by various churches and community organizations and families were able to choose toys for their children as well as mittens, gloves, and hats for the entire family. A bag of household items was also given to each and every family. Augustana once again provided board games and families were allowed to select one or two games depending on the size of their family. It is through the generosity of our congregation that we are able to participate each year in this event.

We had dry roads, no snow, and decent temperatures to transport our games to the Evert location. Augustana's inventory of games was very good so no games were collected this year. Thank you to those who regularly donate money to the games as this allows us to purchase games throughout the year hopefully at a sale price. We are already planning for next year. Also thank you to Mary Annette Gorden, Julie Seguin, and Terry Marckwardt for their help with this event. It is always rewarding to see the smiles from parents when they find that special toy or game for their children.

2025: Your year for abundant living

Many Christians think of “stewardship” only in financial terms, but money is only one of the gifts God entrusts us with – and it’s usually the one we value less than our gifts of time, relationships, faith and health.

Make 2025 your year for holistic stewardship - and abundant living – by taking steps to care better for ALL the gifts God entrusts to us, including our finances. Here are tips.

Health: Get a physical and ask your doctor to help you to form a strategy for better living. For most of us, the plan would include eating better, exercising more and practicing wellness.

Relationships: We not only share love and joy with family and friends, but also turn to and rely on them in times of trouble. Care for your relationships with honest and frequent communication, get-togethers and sharing. Renew and repair relationships that need it.

Time: Are you just mindlessly counting the hours and days? Take charge of your time by planning events and activities that enrich your life. Plan for health and relationships.

Faith: No matter where you are on your discipleship journey, all of us can draw closer to God and open ourselves more fully to the Holy Spirit. For 2025, commit to regular worship, prayer, Scripture reading, devotions, service and other faith practices.

Money: Get your finances in order. Consider the 10-10-80 plan, budgeting your income to save 10 percent, give away 10 percent, and living on 80 percent.

God has given us so much. Stewarding the most important aspects of our lives can bring us into the life of abundance that Jesus promises us in John 10:10.

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Giving your best

Like the Magi, we can respond with our best gifts — our industry, our devotion, our very lives. We disciples are Christ’s tangible presence in the world. That same Child whose light brought such joy to the Magi now, through us, offers his mercy to every person.

Through us, every day, Christ feeds multitudes; he heals, teaches and guides countless people. Through individual volunteers and major institutions, through simple acts of kindness or worldwide coordinated efforts, the world can encounter, through the Christian community, the enduring, tangible presence of Christ.

—Michael Simone

There was no WELCA & Council meeting in December. Approved minutes from the November, 2024 meetings will be published in the March & February, 2025 MESSENGER respectively.

MLK on what really matters

Exactly two months before his assassination, Martin Luther King Jr. preached his final sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. On February 4, 1968, the civil-rights icon spoke about how he wanted to be remembered at his funeral. He preferred that people recall not his education or achievements but that he “tried to give his life serving others” and “tried to love somebody.”



Adapting a 1952 homily by J. Wallace Hamilton, King decried the “drum major instinct — a desire to be out front, a desire to lead the parade.” Humans often want to be great and first, as evidenced by the disciples James and John requesting prime seats in paradise. But King urged listeners to focus on the “reordered priorities” of Jesus, who wants us to “be first in love.”

As Jesus showed, “everybody can serve,” King said. Your background or status doesn’t matter, as long as you have “a heart full of grace” and “a soul generated by love.”

All about attitude

“The way you say ‘representative’ to an automated system reflects the real you,” a friend told me. After we laughed at that truth, I realized *everything* I say matters. Someone is always listening, whether the words and tone are positive or negative.

Ephesians 4:29 (NLT) says our language shouldn’t be “foul or abusive” but good, helpful and encouraging. Whether I’m peaceful, hurried, joyful, empathetic, frustrated, celebrating or hurting, I can carefully choose my words (and the attitude behind them). When I’m not ready to speak wholesomely, may God shut my mouth. When a friend needs encouragement, may I listen to God’s prompting. When I need to confront, may I do so lovingly.

Changing how we think — that is, how we speak to ourselves — can be tough. But God wants to transform our reactions and motives, dispelling pride, a lack of confidence and anxiety. In this new year:

- *I’m alone* can become *God is with me*.
- *I can’t do this* can become *Anything is possible with God*.
- *I’m failing* can become *Just because I’m struggling, it doesn’t mean I’m failing*.
- *I’m not enough* can become *I’m God’s beloved child*.
- *I’m tired* can become *God will give me rest*.

Don’t stop there. Consider the concerns in your heart and let God give you new words and attitudes.

—Janna Firestone

January 2025 Assisting Ministers

Date	Projector Operator	Communion Assistant	Communion Preparer	Greeters/ Open/Close Church	Lector/ Prayer Leader	Tellers	Coffee Hour Host
January 5	Mike Barnes	Mike Barnes	Arv & Jeanette Otberg	Arv & Jeanette Otberg	Joan Swanson		Doreen Barnes
January 12		Sue Carmody			Jim Carmody		Sue Carmody
January 19					Connie Burgess & Ken Forsberg		Connie Burgess & Ken Forsberg
January 26					Harvey Miller		Jeanette Otberg

Upcoming Dates to Remember

- New Year's Day, January 1, 2025
- Epiphany, January 6, 2025
- Food Pantry, January 6, 2025 9-12pm
- Baptism of the Lord, January 12, 2025
- Council Meeting, January 19, 2025 10:15pm
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 20, 2025
- Deadline for February Messenger, January 29, 2025



PRAYER list...

PRAYER CONCERNS: Mark Krell; 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!

Ted Raven – Jan. 2

Berner Gorden – Jan. 22



Happy Anniversary

Mark and Heather Allen – Jan. 29

New Year's blessing

The eighth day of Christmas,
the eighth day of Creation,
the Next New Day,
New Year's Day.

May every day be a new year's day for you:
a chance to forgive and be forgiven,
to start again.

May you take courage to begin anew. ...

As you let go of the year past,
may you ... in your free fall find yourself held
by an eternal love that has come ages to be with you,
and will carry you all the way to the end. ...

Every day may you trust your belovedness,
your freedom from having to prove yourself,
and receive the grace that is given to you.

May this year be a year of grace and hope.

—Steve Garnaas-Holmes

A prayer for spiritual growth

When my spiritual vision is foggy, help
me to find my way.

When my understanding is incomplete,
open my mind and increase my patience.

When my indifference blocks my senses,
touch my heart.

When worry or fear raise their voices,
speak to my faith.

Let your Spirit permeate my longings as
well as my living and my loving. Amen.

—Peggy Ferrell, *Prayers and Poems*

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

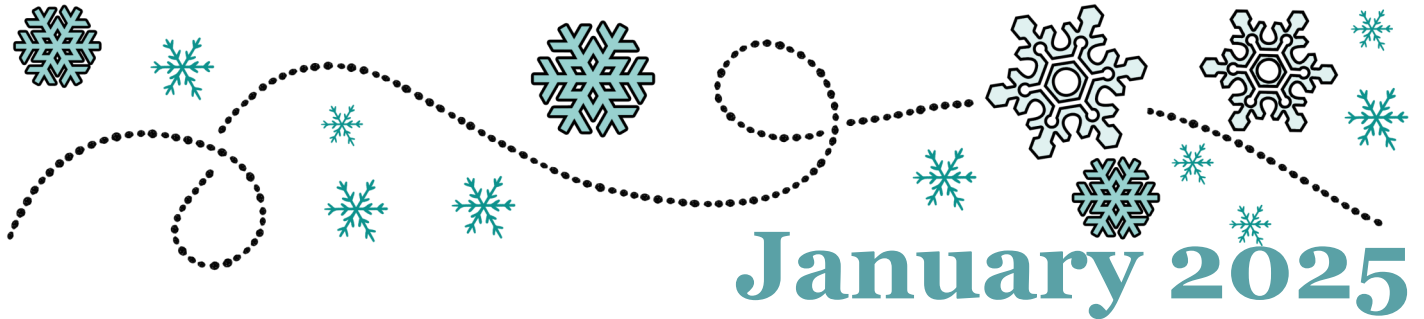
Secretary – Julie Seguin (Cell) 231-878-3119 email jkseguin@gmail.com

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



Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

		Quilting Club every Tuesday 1pm	1 Happy New Year Office Closed	2 Office Closed	3	4
5	6 Food Pantry 9-12pm Epiphany	7	8	9	10	11
12 Baptism of Our Lord	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 Council Meeting 10:15pm	20 MLK Day	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29 Newsletter Due	30	31	