



DECEMBER 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

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

I was unfamiliar with Advent and its many traditions until I joined the Lutheran Church.

Consequently, I have no childhood memories of Advent calendars or the lighting of the candles on Advent wreaths. Being unfamiliar led to one of my early mistakes as a new pastor. Before worship on the second Sunday in Advent, someone asked me if they should light the pink candle. Thinking it wouldn't make any difference I told them to go ahead. After the service my mistake was pointed out to me by many members of the congregation; almost as many as when I didn't include "A Mighty Fortress" on Reformation Sunday! I learned how important traditions are to Lutherans.

The celebration of Advent dates back over 1,500 years. It was originally intended to be a season of fasting and preparation. It was viewed as a counterpart to Lent and the color purple was associated to both. Over time the fasting part became less important and more emphasis was placed on the coming birth of Jesus. Wanting to emphasize the joy filled anticipation of the season, the Swedish Lutheran Church, along with many others, encouraged the use of blue instead of purple. Another newer addition was the addition of a pink candle of the third Sunday, representing joy.

During my early years of ministry in Pennsylvania, I became acquainted with a number of other traditions. The Lower Susquehanna Synod had some strict guidelines. They discouraged having decorated Christmas trees until Christmas Eve and suggested "Jessie Trees" instead. Also, Christmas hymns were only to be sung on Christmas Eve and the one or two Sundays afterwards. Even though I truly missed singing those beautiful hymns and I didn't understand the point of a "Jessie Tree," I did my best to respect and follow these Lutheran traditions.

However, over the years I became much more flexible. It seems to me that insisting on a solemn observation of Advent while living in a society fully embracing the Christmas season, is an exercise in futility. Additionally, we're living through times that are rife with anxiety and uncertainty, I believe it's critical that we take every opportunity to experience the joy of Christmas. So, let's join together in singing the hope of Christmas and the joy of God's love.

Merry Christmas,

Pastor Sharon

AUGUSTANA LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
APPROVED MINUTES
OCTOBER 26, 2025



The meeting was called to order by Heather.
Devotional read by Jim

Members present: Mike Barnes, Jim Carmody, Brian Hammar, Heather Hammar, Kurt Hammar, Becky Miller and Julie Sequin (via phone)

Agenda: Motion by Mike and support from Kurt to approve the amended agenda.

Minutes: Motion by Becky and support by Jim to approve August minutes. No meeting in Sept.

Treasurer/Financial Secretary's report: Mike made a motion with support from Jim. Motion carried

Building/Grounds report: Mike calling Durant's to fix kitchen sink in parsonage. Shingles on the roof of church were fixed.

Old Business:

Terry sent Renucci \$200 that was collected.

Envelopes for NW Osceola Food pantry and uplift will be available to distribute.

Outdoor sign – we are waiting for a part. Mike will make sure mowers are taken care of for winter. Julie and Tim S. will handle the flower pots.

Poinsettia orders will be taken care of by Heather. Sign up sheet available for members

Christmas decorating will take place on 11/23 after service with cinnamon rolls provided.

New Business:

Mike presented 3 bids for the parsonage roof project. Mike made a motion to use Bigelow roofing with support from Jim. Motion carried. This will be announced at service and also presented in the bulletin for 2 weeks. Vote will be 11/23; since we anticipate several members to be gone on 11/15.

Christmas Eve Service will be at 7 pm on 12/24.

Pastor wanted us to consider using wafers vs bread for communion. Council felt the bread was more symbolic. We thank Mary Raven for making the bread.

Quilters are welcoming donations for purchasing batting to finish quilts. Council agreed to donate the monies that were made from the script program. Becky will obtain a money order for the quilters.

Food Pantry: Discussion over the possible loss of the SNAP program and the need for food. Sue Carmody agreed to help with the food drive. We will wait to hear from Melissa and or Julie for a list of food needed.

Comments: guest joined

With no further business to be discussed, the meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.
The next meeting will be held on Sunday, November 16, 2025 – Devotions Julie

Respectfully submitted,
Becky Miller

WELCA Meeting

Approved Minutes

October 21, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by President Joan Chavé at Green Acres in Cadillac. Thanks to Shelby for providing cookies, coffee, and lemon water for the meeting.

Those present: Joan Chavé, Jan Marckwardt, Sue Carmody, Barb Hazlett, Ruth Hammar, Jeanette Otberg and Shelby Plyler. Special guest Carlton Plyler.

The Prayer was given by Shelby Plyler.

The Minutes from September 16, 2025 prepared by Jan Marckwardt were approved by a motion from Barb Hazlett and second by Jeanette Otberg.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's report for September 30, 2025 prepared by Jan Marckwardt was approved by a motion from Shelby Plyler with support by Sue Carmody. The balance as of September 30, 2025 is \$647.66.

President's Report: Joan Chavé mentioned that her granddaughter Grace was honored with "Teacher of the Month".

OLD BUSINESS:

The second kitchen cleaning went very well but more work needs to be done. Barb H. mentioned that Brother's Keeper was very pleased with the dishes we gave them. We may have more to donate. Pastor Appreciation Sunday also went well. The Sunday to recognize Sandy Leach's retirement is set for October 26 with cake, fruit, and cheese and crackers. Quilts will also be blessed that Sunday.

NEW BUSINESS:

Jan updated the ladies regarding Gifts for Kids. The event will be held on Saturday December 13. No games will be required from the congregation this year as the game inventory is good. Barb Hazlett has been asked to speak at the Triennial next year regarding human trafficking.

NEXT MEETING: The next scheduled meeting will be on November 18 at 10:30 a.m. There will not be a meeting in December. There being no further business the meeting closed at 11:06 with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted
Jan Marckwardt





Holiday Hours

November 26th & 27th

Office Closed

Happy Thanksgiving

December 24 & 25th

Office Closed

Merry Christmas

December 24th

Open 7:00pm

Christmas Eve Service

December 31 & January 1

Office Closed

Happy New Year

In October we celebrated the retirement of local librarian and our congregant, Sandie Leach (on right).

We also were able to have the quilts blessed that our sewing ladies work on every Tuesday for local charities. (on left) Pictured are Sue C., Pastor Sharon, Joan Chavé, Sue K, and Jeannette Otberg seated.



WELCA News

The WELCA ladies will take a break in December and not meet again until
January 20, 2026.

Two Opportunities For You to Help

UPLIFT

Augustana along with Covenant will be conducting a soup drive for Uplift. Uplift has a need for Chicken Noodle soup (10.75 oz.) and Vegetable soup (10.5 oz.) in cans. Soup will be collected November 30 through December 25. If you can't get out to shop, monetary donations will be accepted and the shopping will be done for you. For more information please talk with Jim and Sue Carmody.

NORTHWEST OSCEOLA COUNTY FOOD PANTRY

Augustana is pleased to announce that once again Food Pantry Sunday will be initiated. The food pantry housed in our basement is in need of food. You will be able to purchase food and bring it to church on the fourth Sunday of the month. A specific food will be asked for each month. **The December food item is 18 ounce quick cooking oatmeal in a canister.** Monetary donations will be accepted and the shopping will be done for you. For more information or to give a monetary donation please talk with Jan Marckwardt. Watch the January Messenger for the January featured food item.



Gifts for Kids

Gifts for Kids annual event is set for Saturday, December 13. Our game inventory is very good as funds have allowed for the purchase of games throughout the year when they are on sale. Augustana has always been very generous with donations of games and funds for this project.

GFK is under the authority of Michigan Department of Health & Human Services. Beginning January 2026 Angels of Action will take over the overseeing and structure of GFK. The future of the event is unknown but Augustana is committed to helping those in need and will continue with the event if possible.



Canned Soup Drive

November 30th-December 25th

Chicken Noodle –10.75oz

Vegetable - 10.5oz

Drop off at:

Augustana Lutheran Church of Tustin

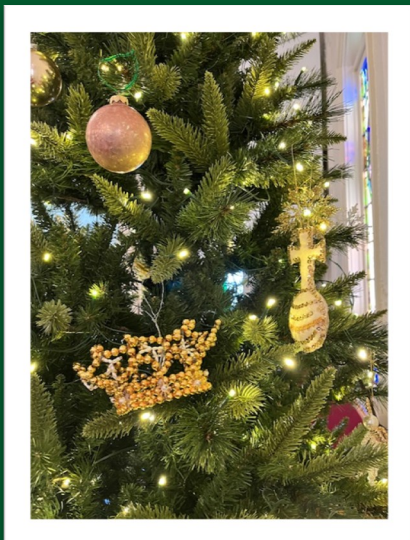
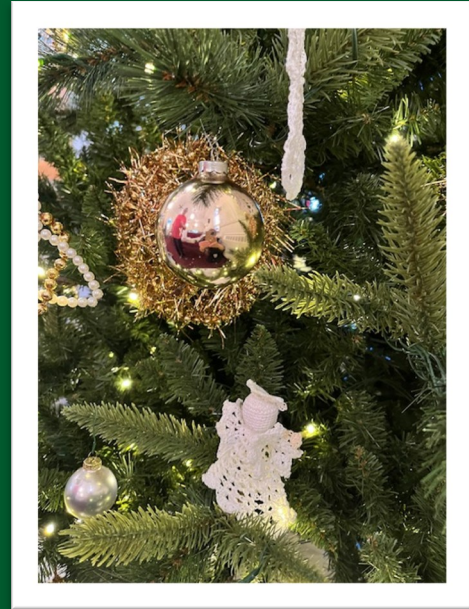
Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm

Covenant Church of Tustin

Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9am-3pm

or with any UpLift Volunteer

We decorated for Advent on November 23rd
Here's what you missed:





December 2025 Assisting Ministers

Date	Projector Operator	Communion Assistant	Communion Preparer	Greeters/ Open/Close Church	Lector/ Prayer Leader	Tellers	Coffee Hour Host
Dec 7							
Dec 14					Harvey Miller		
Dec 21			Ruth Hammar		Joan Swanson	Ruth Hammar	
Dec 24 Christmas Eve 7pm						X	X
Dec 28							

Upcoming Dates to Remember

- *First Sunday of Advent, November 30, 2025*
- *Food Pantry, December 1, 2025 9-12pm*
- *Second Sunday of Advent, December 7, 2025*
- *Third Sunday of Advent, December 14, 2025*
- *Food Pantry, December 15, 2025 9-12pm*
- *Council Meeting, December 21, 2025 10:15am*
- *First Day of Winter, December 21, 2025*
- *Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 21, 2025*
- *Christmas Eve Service, December 24, 2025 7:00pm*
- *Christmas Day, December 25, 2025 -office closed*
- *Deadline for January Messenger, December 29, 2025*
- *New Year's Eve, December 31, 2025 -office closed*



Heartfelt Christmas Quotes

"Because of his boundless love, Jesus became what we are that he might make us to be what he is."

—Irenaeus, third-century Christian apologist

"Christmas, my child, is love in action. Every time we love, every time we give, it's Christmas."

—Dale Evans

"Christmas is not as much about opening our presents as opening our hearts."

—Janice Maeditere

"Jesus did not come to make God's love possible, but to make God's love visible."

—Author unknown

"Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas." —Calvin Coolidge

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

PRAYER
list...

PRAYER CONCERNS: Jaydon; Carol L.; Family of Vicky; Pat W.; Family of Sawyer; Diane Westfall; Steve Sadler; Jeff; Annie; Carlton; Scott M; Jill G; Mary B; Amy Brown; Pat O; Ron & Candy Karr; Leta H; Stephanie G; 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



December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Food Pantry 9-11am	2 	3 	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 Food Pantry 9-11am	16 No WELCA	17	18	19	20
21 Council Meeting 10:15am	22	23	24 Christmas Eve 7:00pm Office Closed	25 Merry Christmas! Office Closed	26	27
28	29 Newsletter Due	30	31 New Year's Eve Office Closed	1 Happy New Year! Office Closed	2	3