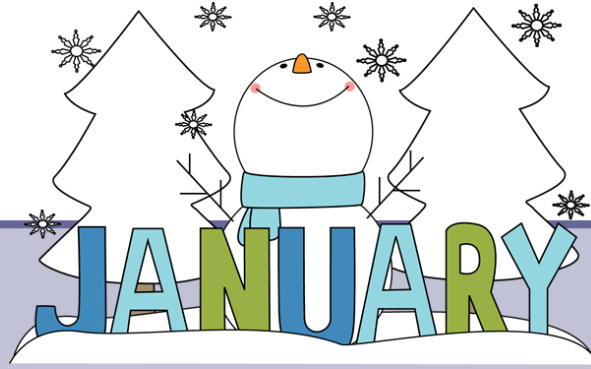


The Vasa Voice

VOLUME 61 No. 1

JANUARY 2025



What's Happening This Month at Vasa

January 5th—Sunday School resumes at 9:00am in the Lutheran Center.

January 8th—Confirmation classes for 7th / 8th graders resume at 5:45pm in the Lutheran Center. Over the next 9 weeks we will study The Lord's Prayer.

January 8th—Vasa Family Night!

January 19th—Annual Reports due

All committees, teams and boards should have their reports turned into the Church Office for the 2024 Annual Report by Sunday, January 19th. Auditors will need all Financial books at this time as well, in order to complete their audits. Your cooperation with this deadline is greatly appreciated.

January 21st — American Red Cross Blood Drive

Vasa will host the next Blood Drive at the Lutheran Center on Tuesday, January 21st from 9:00AM 7pm, and on Friday, January 19th from 9am—1pm. Stop in, give blood and save lives. Refreshments will be available for all donors!

Here's what's on the inside...

P. 2 *Worship volunteers, January Birthdays ,*

P. 3 *Thoughts from Pastor Maureen,*

P. 4 *Faith Formation info, Women's Bible Study*

P. 5 *Blood Drive reminder*

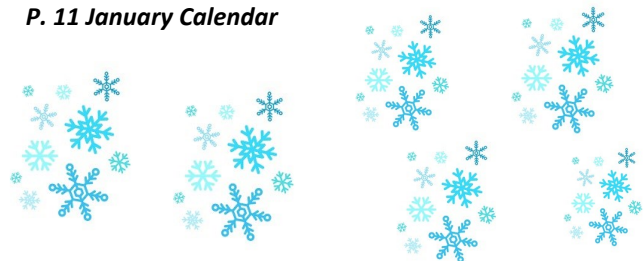
P. 6-7 *Church Council Highlights, Treasurer's Report*

P. 8 *Mark's Meditation*

P. 9 *The Work of Christmas (by Howard Thurman)*

P. 10 *Vasa Family Night, Volunteer Request*

P. 11 *January Calendar*



Worship Volunteers for JANUARY

USHER

January 5	Ben Norman
January 12	Marv Fredrickson
January 19	
January 26	Volunteers needed!!

READERS

January 5	B-J Norman
January 12	Sasha Diercks
January 19	Mark Hagen
January 26	Geri Lindholm

HOSPITALITY

January 5	B-J Norman
January 12	
January 19	Volunteers needed!!
January 26	

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

January 5	Megan Carlson
January 19	Geri Lindholm



7th	Jay Mikaelson
9th	LaVonne Carlson Jordan Fredin Kennedy McCann Kaelie Nelsen
11th	Max Evanson
12th	Ellie Gardiner
13th	Paul Mikaelson
14th	Marissa Mandelkow Tegan Nelsen
16th	Sherri Broin Andy Nelson
17th	Amber Gesme Terry Mandelkow
18th	Vicki Weckerling Gary Samuelson
19th	Nathan Lindholm Gracie Featherstone
21st	Gail Strusz-Klein Sara Parker
23rd	Wally Gardiner
24th	Ava Stehr
25th	David Broin Hettie Carlson
28th	John Featherstone Randy Lindholm
29th	Sue Hedeon Hailey Mann Jason Pagel
31st	Courtney Hovel

Volunteer

A New Year's Challenge

Try saying this silently to everyone and everything you see for 30 days and see what happens to your soul:

“I wish you happiness now and whatever will bring happiness to you in the future.”

(Joan D. Chittister)

Thoughts from Pastor Maureen

As I write this column it is late December and the weather is cloudy, foggy, and damp. Such weather certainly can put a damper on one's joy during the holiday season. We assume that this season is one of joy but I am acutely aware that many of our congregation are struggling with grief. It is not a time of joy for them as they ache with memories of loved ones that have died over the last couple of years. Like the clouds, our grief seems to be wrapped around us and shows little sign of lifting. Very little light is filtering through the gloom.

Isaiah was called by God to speak as a prophet to the people Israel at a time of deep and dangerous conflict. That's when he wrote the inspiring and hopeful words in chapter 9: 2-7. Two verses stand out at this moment:

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined (V. 2)

For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (V. 6)

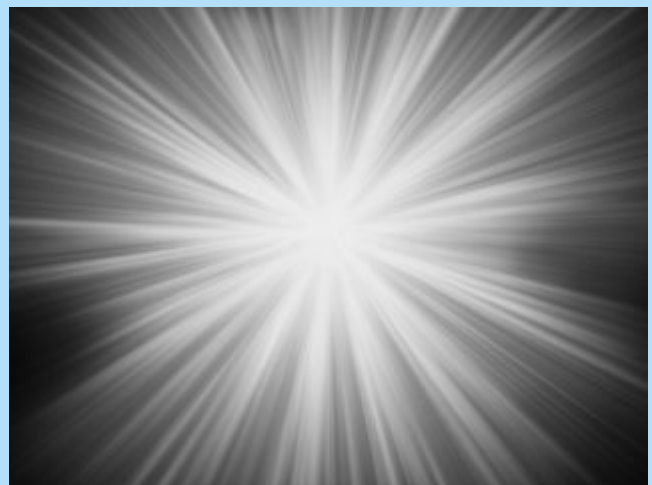
Isaiah's words are in the past tense and imply that the people Israel have already seen a great light. I cannot speak to that specific time or situation. Undoubtedly these words provided hope as they continued through difficult times.

Isaiah's words can speak to us for we are also a people who have been walking in darkness. Perhaps not physical darkness as such, but certainly emotional and mental darkness as we stumble through periods of deep grief. I encourage you to rewrite the tense of Isaiah's words into future tense and allow them to encourage you as he proclaims that we *will* see a great light and that light *will* shine upon us.

Who is that light? The one who proclaims, "*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.*" (John 8:12) Yes, Jesus, the child born in Bethlehem and the Savior of the world is the one that we look to for light even in the midst of great darkness. Those that we have lost carried the light of life within them and we grieve their passing. But the promise of the resurrection that Jesus brought to us means that we will be reunited with them someday. When that happens light will shine in the darkness of our lives once again.

As best you can, turn toward the light of Jesus in this new year.

Pastor Maureen





Faith Formation

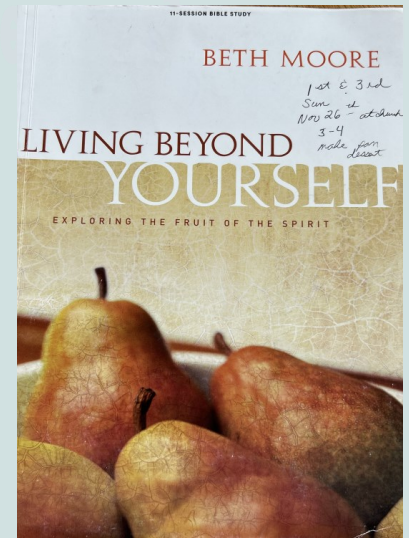


Sunday School resumes on Sunday January 5th at 9:00am in the Lutheran Center. We will return to the Friends and Heroes curriculum featuring the animated adventures of two friends, Macky and Portia.

7th/8th Grade Confirmation Classes resume on Wednesday evening January 8th at 5:45. We will study The Lord's Prayer.

First Communion classes for current 5th graders begin March 23rd at 10:15am at the Lutheran Center. Mark your calendars!!

Bible Study for women



Using the Workbook, *Living Beyond Yourself*, Vasa Women of All Ages and Stages are discovering how the Spirit of God lives within everyone and, more importantly, how cultivating the fruits of the spirit is dependent on one's relationship to God. Beginning in January, the focus will be on the gift of Faith.

This Bible Study meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of every month from 9:30-11:00 at the Lutheran Center. All are welcome.

A note of appreciation...



To All of You at Vasa Lutheran,

Thank you so much for your generous donation of \$300 to the Cannon Valley Senior Center. We are a non-profit organization and without the support of the community, it would be difficult to meet our goals in serving our aging population. Your donation will help the center with its yearly programs and events. One hundred percent of our budget comes directly from the Cannon Valley area, and we thank you for giving back to our seniors.

Our programs are designed to help seniors with their physical, social, and emotional well-being, all of which are essential to the quality of life. We are continually looking into the development of new programs and opportunities as we adapt to the growing needs of our senior population in an environment where they feel welcome and safe. In addition to our programs, we connect seniors to vital community and county services, when needed, to help them stay healthy.

For tax purposes, your gift is tax-deductible to the extent of the law since we provided no goods or services to you in relation to your contribution. On behalf of the Cannon Valley Senior Center, we thank you again for your generous gift and support.

Sincerely,

Lora Bremer

Lora Bremer
Executive Director

*The Gift of Love,
The Gift of Peace,
The Gift of Happiness,
May All These Be Yours
at Christmas!*
*Thank you for supporting our
music department!*
Lora



**Welch Blood Drive
Cross of Christ**

Hall
24036 County 7 Blvd
Welch, MN 55089

**Thursday, January 2, 2025
12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Friday, January 3, 2025
8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: welchmn to schedule an appointment.



**Vasa Lutheran Center
Blood Drive**

Gym
15235 Norelius Rd
Welch, MN 55089

**Tuesday, January 21, 2025
9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: vasa lutheran to schedule an appointment.



Come give Jan. 1-26 to automatically be entered for a chance to win an exciting trip for you & a guest to Super Bowl LIX in New Orleans! Includes travel, hotel, \$1,000 gift card, pre-game activities & more! Terms apply; visit RedCrossBlood.org/SuperBowl.





VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

November 11, 2024 @Lutheran Church

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:10 pm by Bryan Diercks, President

Devotions: Mo Hauck

Members present and absent:

Present: Pastor Maureen Hagen, Pastor; Bryan Diercks, President; Kent Volz; Ben Norman; Missy McCann; Tim Carlson; Mo Hauck; and Andrew Featherstone, Secretary;
8 voting members present

Unable to attend: Roger Guttromson; Kevin Eckblad; Barbara Weigman; Chris Finne; Randy Klein, Vice President;

Also Present: Kathy Tilderquist

Adoption of the Agenda:

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda for the November 11, 2024 council meeting.

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes:

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the October 14, 2024 council meeting as written.

MOTION CARRIED

Reports Reviewed and Accepted:

Treasurer's Report (Attached)

Vasa received its last bill it will receive from Church Mutual.

The checkbook balance is \$57,600.56. The financial position of the church remains strong.

Finance Report (Attached)

The price to maintain website will increase to about \$500.00.

Discussion was had around possible new and potential expenditures for the upcoming 2025 budget- replacing windows in the bathrooms at the Lutheran Center, as well as updates to the electrical panel in the Lutheran Center (fuse boxes & wiring).

Parish Life (Attached)

November 13 Family Night

November 17th Six confirmation students. Kathy will order full sheet cake and Mo will pick it up. Gowns will be rented. There will be a vase with red roses and each confirmation student will receive a rose

Nov 24th Thanksgiving service, Nick's Diner will supply bars. No Sunday School.

December 8th Cannon Valley Ensemble Concert.

December 15th will be the Christmas Program.

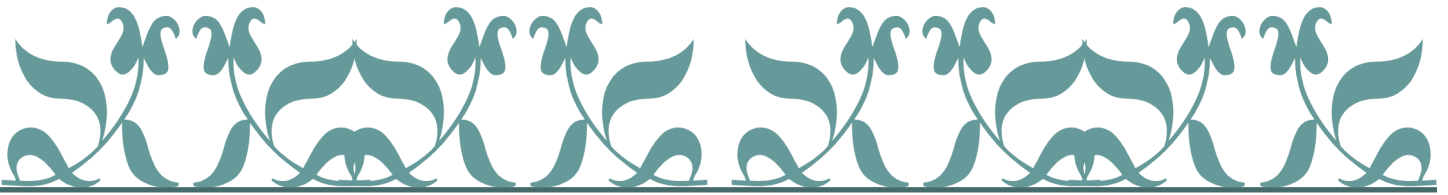
Property Team Report (NA)

East door threshold is loose and is a tripping hazard.

Church redecorating will start to take place the end of December after Christmas.

Cemetery Board (NA)

Executive Board Report (NA)



MARK'S MEDITATION

By Mark Hagen

THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

January 2025

Our earliest written account of Jesus is provided by Paul's epistles; written twenty years after Jesus' execution. Paul gives almost no details about Jesus' life and ministry; his primary interest was the significance of His resurrection. Twenty years later, the author of Mark wrote an account about Jesus that focused on his ministry, starting with Jesus' baptism. About twenty years later, the authors of Matthew and Luke, expanding on Mark, wrote an account that includes many more sayings of Jesus, and a birth narrative. (Though those two narratives are quite different.) Clearly there was great demand to know Jesus.

To meet this demand, many accounts about Jesus were written. The author of Luke alludes to this in the first paragraph of his gospel. However, besides the canonical gospels, many of these accounts were lost. Then, in 1945, near Nag Hammadi, Egypt, a cache of scrolls was discovered containing a number of these gospels. Several of which included stories of Jesus' childhood.

So, what do we know about Jesus' childhood? Luke gives an account of how, when Jesus was twelve, they lost track of him in Jerusalem. "⁴⁶ Three days later they finally discovered him in the Temple, sitting among the religious teachers, listening to them and asking questions. ⁴⁷ All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers."

The Infancy Gospel of Thomas tells a fanciful story of Jesus' education from the age of five. It ends at age twelve with a retelling of Luke's episode in the Tem-

ple. In this gospel Jesus learns to use His supernatural powers; at times being malevolent. (Including killing other children that cross him.) As the story unfolds, he learns to use his power for good. (Our first reference to this work is by Irenaeus around 180CE, who rejected it as apocryphal.)

There have been numerous other written accounts of Jesus' early life, including a 2004 book by Christopher Moore entitled "Lamb: The Gospel According to Biff; Jesus' Childhood Pal." This is a humorous exploration of what Jesus' childhood might have been like. In this account, Moore has Biff and Jesus travel east to visit the three wise men who teach Jesus what is necessary to be the Messiah. Such as how to multiply food, resurrect the dead, and the reason rabbits are associated with Easter. (The book is a great read.)

For 2000 years we Christians have gathered on Sunday mornings to worship our Messiah. To a large extent, the goal of these gatherings is to "know" Jesus. We do this by telling stories. Although these stories are often not literal history (The conflicting genealogies in Matthew and Luke cannot both be true.), they contain deep truths that allow us to better know our savior, Jesus Christ.



THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,

The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among others,
To make music in the heart.

(Howard Thurman)

Howard Washington Thurman (1899–1981) was an American author, philosopher, theologian, mystic, educator, and civil rights leader who played a leading role in many social justice movements and organizations of the twentieth century. He was **one of the principal architects of the modern, nonviolent civil rights movement and a key mentor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**



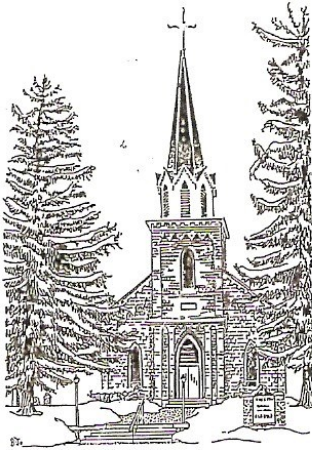
ALL HANDS ON DECK!! Volunteers are needed to help “strip down” the sanctuary after worship on December 29th! All Christmas decorations, pew Bibles, and Hymnals need to be removed. The “Flower Room” and “Pastor’s Office also need to be cleaned. All of this is in preparation for the re-painting/recarpeting of the sanctuary. A light soup lunch will be provided for everyone who can stay to help! Worship services will move to the Lutheran Center during the restorations.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						
<p>5</p> <p>9AM</p> <p>Service of Holy Communion AT THE LUTHERAN CENTER</p>	<p>6</p> <p>TEAM MEETINGS</p> <p>4PM Property</p> <p>5PM Finance</p>	<p>7</p>  <p>9:30</p> <p>Coffee and Conversation</p>	<p>8</p>  <p>5:30-7:00PM</p>	9	10	Pastor's Day Off
<p>12</p> <p>9AM</p> <p>Service of The Word (with Sunday School at the Lutheran Center)</p>	<p>13</p> <p>5:00PM Parish Life</p> <p>6PM CHURCH COUNCIL</p>	<p>14</p>  <p>9:30</p> <p>Coffee and Conversation</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Ages/Stages Bible Study 9:30AM</p> <p>Faith Formation 5:30-6:30</p> <p>5:45—6:45 7th/8th Confirmation</p> <p>6:30pm Wednesday Eve Worship</p>	16	17	Pastor's Day Off
<p>19</p> <p>9AM</p> <p>Service of Holy Communion (with Sunday School at the Lutheran Center)</p> <p>ANNUAL REPORTS DUE</p>	20	<p>21</p>  <p>9:30 Coffee and Conversation</p>  <p>American Red Cross</p> <p>9:00AM –7:00PM</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Faith Formation 5:30-6:30</p> <p>5:45—6:45 7th/8th Confirmation</p> <p>6:30pm Wednesday Eve Worship</p>	23	24	Pastor's Day Off
<p>26</p> <p>9AM</p> <p>Service of the Word (with Sunday School at the Lutheran Center)</p>	<p>27</p> <p>7:00PM ENDOWMENT TEAM</p>	<p>28</p>  <p>9:30</p> <p>Coffee and Conversation</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Faith Formation 5:30-6:30</p> <p>5:45—6:45 7th/8th Confirmation</p> <p>6:30pm Wednesday Eve Worship</p>	30	31	Pastor's Day Off

VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH

15235 NORELIUS ROAD (in Vasa)

WELCH, MN 55089



Historic Vasa Lutheran Church Built in 1869

(Vasa Drawing by B-J Norman)

Worship Schedule

9:00AM Sundays (also live-streamed)

Wednesday Evening Worship

6:30pm Holy Communion + Everyday Bible Conversation
(Fellowship Room of Lutheran Center)

Executive Team

Bryan Diercks, Council President 507.259.3909

Randy Klein, Council Vice President 651.212.8045

Andrew Featherstone, Council Secretary 651.470.9823

Pastor Maureen Hagen

pastor@vasalutheran.org

(Cell)507.251.5270

Church Office

651.258.4327

Church Staff

Kathy Tilderquist, Treasurer

Emily Peterson, Office Administrator

Melissa McCann, Custodian

Anne Anderson, Worship Accompanist

Gail Strusz-Klein, Wedding Coordinator

Paul & Jay Mikaelson, Missionaries in La Paz Bolivia
Contact: pmikaelsen@gmail.com

Website: www.caranavi.net/rtc.htm

Vasa Mission Statement

We, the Vasa Congregation,

Called by God, commit to:

Worshipping together,

Growing in Faith,

Serving Others, and

Welcoming and loving all!