

The Vasa Voice



VOLUME 60 No. 12



DECEMBER 2024

What's Happening This Month at Vasa

December 11— Vasa Family Fun Night 5:30 PM

See page 5 for details!

December 15—Children's Christmas Program

The 2024 Children's Christmas program will be held at the Lutheran Center at 10:00am. Dress Rehearsal will be that same morning at 9:00am. Remaining practices are on Sunday Dec 1 and Dec 8 during Sunday School.

Following the program there will be a meal. Vasa will supply the Main Dish. Families with last names A-L are encouraged to bring a pot luck side or salad. Families with last names M-Z are invited to bring a dessert.

December 24—Christmas Eve Worship

Christmas Eve Worship services will be held at 2:00pm and 5:00pm on December 24, with coffee and Christmas treats between services.



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

P. 2 Worship volunteers, December Birthdays

P. 3 Thoughts from Pastor Maureen

P. 4 Vasa Endowment Team Gifts

P. 5 December Vasa Family Night, Women's Bible Study, Vasa Advent Celebration: Rejoice in Hope, Goodhue Christmas Tree Project

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

P. 8 Mark's Meditation

P. 9 Advent Meditation

P. 10 Vasa Bazaar update, Confirmation and All Saints Photos

P. 11 December Calendar



Worship Volunteers for DECEMBER

USHER

December 1	Duane Hanson
December 8	Tim Carlson
December 15	Barry Skog
December 22	Bruce Tilderquist
December 24	Bruce Tilderquist (5:00)
December 29	volunteer needed

READERS

December 1	Melanie Carlson
December 8	Sid Fetherstone
December 15	CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
December 22	Mo Hauck
December 24	Mo Hauck (2:00) Mike Bauch (5:00)
December 29	Barry Skog

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

December 1	Tim Carlson
December 15	Barry Skog
December 24	To Be Announced

HOSPITALITY

December 1	Audrey Rosener
December 8	Kent Volz
December 15	CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
December 22	Mo Hauck
December 24	Mo Hauck
December 29	Kent Volz



2	Nikki O'Connor
8	Andrea Gillis
9	Dahmon Romness Chris Weigman Iris Volz
12	Samantha Wetzstein Ashton Anderson Weston Anderson
13	Boedy Sense
14	Deb Donath Dustin Lindstrom
15	Melanie Carlson
16	Randy Klein Shirley Hedeem
19	Sandy Wollschlager
20	Sharon Olson
21	Andrea Mandelkow
22	Mark Hagen Hailie Lindblom
23	Duane Lindstrom
27	Katie Featherstone
28	Joe Wollschlager Audrey Hyllengren Samuel Gesme
31	James Josephson Bruce Olson Jerry Rietmann Stuart Samuelson



Thoughts from Pastor Maureen

Esther is an interesting book in the Old Testament. Just 10 chapters long it tells the story of a beautiful young woman who becomes queen to Xerxes I, king of Persia. Esther is a Jewish orphan who was raised by her uncle Mordecai in the city of Susa. When a pogrom (an effort to exterminate all Jews in the country) is decreed she is called upon by her uncle to go to the king and ask for him to stop the massacre. She is very reluctant for in going before the king uninvited she is literally putting her life on the line. The word that she receives from her uncle is, "Who knows? Maybe you were made queen for just such a time as this." (Esther 4:14 from *The Message*) Mordecai is basically saying that the situation is desperate and Esther is the only person who might possibly save the Jews.

This verse has always stirred something within me because it brings a word of encouragement to the faint-hearted. How many of us have faced a deeply challenging situation, so challenging that we find it difficult to see beyond or through? Most of us have. But when I'm feeling overwhelmed I find these words running through my head, "for just such a time as this."

The idea "for just such a time as this" can be applied not just in our personal lives but also in the life of Vasa Congregation. I will mention two current challenges (although there are several others). Vasa is facing a challenge as our current insurance carrier has chosen not to renew our insurance policy. Fortunately we have Kent Volz, as a retired insurance professional, to help us navigate these rough waters. Vasa also needed a second person to help with management of the parsonage as a rental property. Along comes Sasha Diercks who worked in property management before moving to Vasa.

These two folks are just two of many who have come forward "for just such a time as this" in

the life of Vasa. Now they likely don't see their work as being "of God." These skills are just who they are. But I see it differently: this is God at work in very subtle and almost unnoticeable ways for the benefit of this congregation. As I have said many times, God isn't done with this congregation. God will provide people and open pathways that allow us to continue to do whatever it is that God places in front of us.

If you have never read the book of Esther, I would encourage you to do so. It's only 10 chapters long. Interestingly, there is no mention of God in the entire book, yet it is included in the Bible and regarded with respect by Jewish people to this day. If you find yourself in a challenging situation try telling yourself that you are here "for just such a time as this." God will see you through it.

With a grateful heart for God's provision,
Pastor Maureen



VASA ENDOWMENT TEAM MAKES GENEROUS GIFTS!



It is with joy that the Endowment team voted at their late October meeting to send financial support to three outside organizations.



\$500 went to the Feed My Starving Children food pack campaign. Vasa had 10 members participating in the event.



\$1000 went to Hope & Harbor an organization that provides overnight shelter to homeless persons in Red Wing from Nov. 16th to March 8th.



\$2000 went to Faith Family Foundation, the US name for the Luketekelo Foundation of Zambia.

This is the organization headed by Memory Grace Hector and her husband David Hector.



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Vasa Family Night

Wednesday, December 11th
5:30-7:00pm

Pizza Dinner at
Vasa Lutheran Center

Christmas Caroling at the Gazebo

All Are Welcomed



THE GOODHUE COUNTY CHRISTMAS TREE PROJECT

Christmas gift tags can be found on the Christmas Tree in the Gathering Space of the Sanctuary. Please return your gifts and cards to the marked basket in the Lutheran Center or up at church by no later than Wed., Dec. 8th.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please tape the original gift tag back onto gift or card so that we can match it easily with the family. Many, many thanks!

Parish Life Committee



The Ages and Stages Women's Bible Study group will meet on December 4 from 9:30-11:00, in the fellowship room of the Lutheran Center. We will meet again on December 18, same place and time, but at this meeting we will have a Christmas party with a small gift exchange. Please bring a wrapped "white elephant" gift to share! All are welcome!

CHRISTMAS
Joy

SUNDAY
DECEMBER 8 3 PM

REJOICE IN HOPE

An Advent Celebration
with carols and hymns by
The Cannon Valley Ensemble--a group of musicians sponsored by the Cannon Falls Senior Center
and festive desserts

Vasa Lutheran Church
15235 Norelius Rd
Welch, MN



VASA LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

October 14, 2024 @Lutheran Church

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:12 pm by Randy Klein, Vice President

Devotions: Barbara Weigman

Members present and absent:

Present: Pastor Maureen Hagen, phone in for new business; Randy Klein, Vice President; Kent Volz; Barbara Weigman; Ben Norman; Kevin Eckblad; Mo Hauck; Roger Guttromson; and Andrew Featherstone, Secretary;
8 voting members present

Unable to attend: Bryan Diercks, President; Chris Finne; Tim Carlson; and Missy McCann;

Also Present: Kathy Tilderquist

Adoption of the Agenda:

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda for the October 14, 2024 council meeting.

MOTION CARRIED

Approval of Minutes:

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2024 council meeting as written.

MOTION CARRIED

Reports Reviewed and Accepted:

Treasurer's Report (Attached)

Fuel fund has over \$10,000 in it. We needed \$9,000 for winter fuel. Kathy paid for the winter fuel.

General fund is lower due to giving going towards the fuel fund.

Finance Report (Attached)

The egg and veggie money is now up to \$1,276.50. Money will go to towards windows.

The unrestricted fund is 61% of the targeted amount; the goal is 75%. The financial position of the church remains strong.

Parish Life (Attached)

November 3rd All Saints Sunday

November 10th Gather at flag pole for veterans.

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)

Bob Joseph will shovel sidewalks again. Kyle Gillis will plow for the winter.

John Hauck is fixing the teeter totter.



VASA CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
(CONTINUED)

- Cemetery Board (NA)
- Executive Board Report (NA)
- Pastor's Report) Attached)

Pastor Maureen will send out written notification to all members a minimum of 2 weeks before scheduled Congregational meeting.

The total for the painting and the flooring is \$70,000.

- Museum Board (NA)
- Endowment Board Report (NA)

Tabled Business:

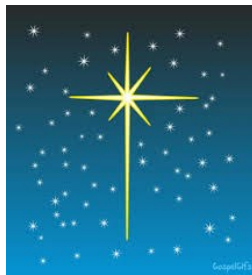
New Business: Possible Congregational Meeting- It was moved and seconded to have a congregational meeting on Sunday Nov 10th after the service. We are asking for \$100,000 from Mission Endowment Fund to go towards the painting and flooring in the Sanctuary. The remaining balance will be used towards windows in the Sanctuary.

MOTION CARRIED

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 7:15 PM.

MOTION CARRIED

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer
Report submitted by: Andrew Featherstone, Secretary



CHURCH COUNCIL

- President:** Bryan Diercks 507-259-3909
- Vice President:** Randy Klein 651-212-8045
rdklein@mmm.com
- Secretary:** Andrew Featherstone 651-470-9823
rwfeatherstonepainting@gmail.com

- Tim Carlson 651-442-5066
- Chris Finne 651-380-3690
- Roger Guttromson 651-308-6349
- Maureen Hauck 651-331-8593
- Missy McCann 651-307-2274
- Ben Norman 651-208-7124
- Kent Volz 651-402-0942
- Barbara Weigman 507-202-7880

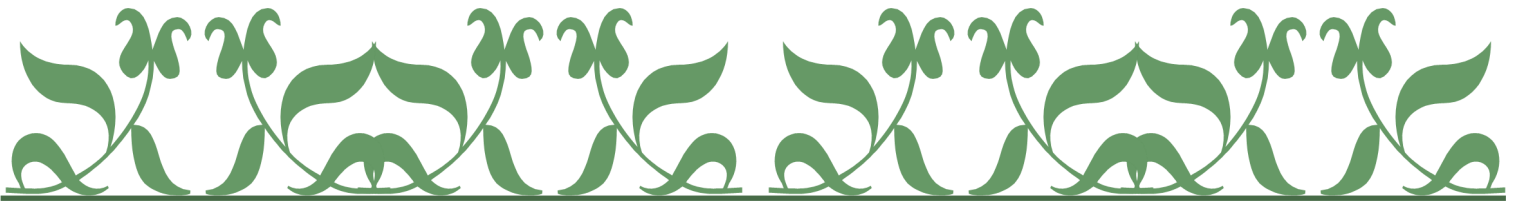
WHO TO CONTACT IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

- Indoors:** Jim Hedeem 651-380-6054
- Kitchen:** Sue Hedeem 651-380-6270
Faye Drewianka 651-212-3209
- Outdoors:** Duane Hanson 651-380-1763
Steve Hyllengren 651-258-4338

VASA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

For the Month of October 2024

Checkbook Balance, October 1, 2024	\$ 58,665.73
General Fund Contributions:	15,486.33
Total Funds Available	74,152.06
Budget Approved Monthly Expenses:	(16,551.50)
Checkbook Balance, October 31, 2024	\$ 57,600.56



MARK'S MEDITATION
BY MARK HAGEN

THE TYRANNY OF MERIT

December 2024

We have endeavored to construct American society to be a *meritocracy*. That means our political goal is a system in which economic good and political power is vested in individuals based on ability and talent, rather than inheritance or social class. For the most part, we have succeeded in this endeavor. Yet, what has resulted is less than we had hoped for. Statistically, there is less poverty in America than at any point in history. But wealth inequality grows larger every year; as does dissatisfaction with our institutions.

In broad terms, we want a society based on merit. Being rewarded for our skill and merit brings satisfaction and meaning to our lives. But meritocracy causes problems at the ends of the wealth spectrum. Those without much wealth are effectively excluded from the education and family structure that is necessary to build merit. As a result, they become receptive subversive voices. Such as a demagogue who offers a scapegoat. "Yes, you are disadvantaged, but those guys over there are corrupt." Eric Hoffer argues in his 1951 book "The True Believer" that this is the message that draws people to fascism. Meanwhile, those with wealth and parents who support them, received elite health care, education, and opportunity. Having perceived that they worked hard to obtain these things, elites come to believe that their accrued merit is of their own doing. Those without merit must be lazy. They don't deserve support.

The resulting discontent, at both ends of the wealth distribution, is due to our ego. It takes an extraordinary amount of self-confidence to rise above either of these rationalizations. Most people need a guide to see beyond what their ego sees. This is where the church comes in. The Christian message is one of *hope* and *grace*. We need hope to rise above the hand we have

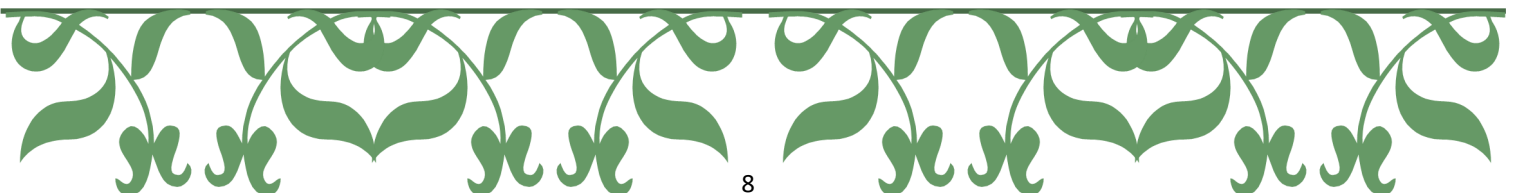
been dealt; and we need to recognize God's grace to humble our ego so that we can get comfortable with being generous.

The word "grace" in our Bible is translated from the Greek word *charis*, from which we get the word *charisma*, which means "gracious gift." As Christians, we understand grace to be free and *unmerited*; bestowed on us through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. As Lutherans, we see expressions of this grace in the sacraments that are carried out and participated in during worship. For me, this is the strongest argument for gathering on a Sunday morning. It is a time to get our bearings. To humble our ego and recognize the role grace plays in our lives.

After all, everyone falls short (literally the definition of "sin"). We cannot earn salvation; only graciously accept it. Because of this, the Apostle Paul argues that when you contemplate the grace bestowed on you by Jesus Christ, you will be compelled to bestow grace on others. Now that is *meritocracy*.

"There but for the grace of God go I"

is an idiom that means you could be in the same bad situation as someone else. The phrase is attributed 16th century English Reformer John Bradford. Bradford reportedly said this as he watched people led to execution for their crimes.



ADVENT

Meta Herrick Carlson

Speak it plain: words for worship and life together

The sacred call "Prepare!"
Does not ask for lists or logistics.
We do not "Keep Awake!" only to ensure
We are not forgotten at the rapture.
Nor is the stillness sedentary.

So do not simply go looking
For a candle scent to capture
What it means to Ponder,
Or a gift to prove your Love,
Or a tall tree to announce,
"Joy to the World!"

Advent lays bare visions of time bending
Into already and not yet,
By the God who tears apart
The hustle, the heavens, the temple curtain!
With no intention of mending
Back together our favored boundaries.

This is the thin space where
Stillness is powerful and God is changing our
hearts,
So sacred Ponder, Love, and Joy
Can birth and shelter.

The miracle grows with slow strength
In the one place we have all called home
Where we do not yet know another way,
While our fullness is being prepared,
Carried, and nourished by
The One who says, "Yes."





All Saints
NOV. 2024



Thank You!


To all of the people who donated baked goods to the Vasa Bazaar, we offer heartfelt thanks for your efforts! Your contributions generated \$1,113.00, nearly half of our total profit of \$2,600, all of which will go to the Stained Glass Window Repair/Restoration project.



CONGRATULATIONS TO :
Connor Hyllengren, Brenner Pagel, Nick Weigman, Max Fredin, Alivia Schaffer and Julia Fleming, who affirmed their faith on November 17!



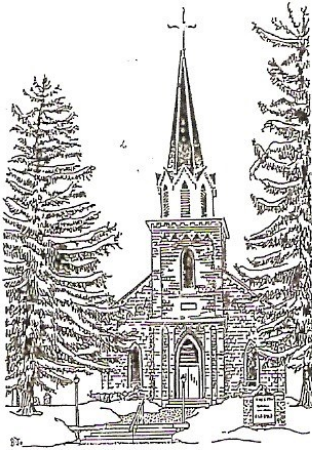
you
make a
A DIFFERENCE
Life

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9AM First Sunday of Advent worship with Holy Communion (Sunday School @ Lutheran Center –Christmas Program rehearsal)	TEAM MEETINGS 4PM Property 5PM Finance	 9:30 Coffee and Conversation	6:30pm Wednesday Eve Worship	 Poinsettia Orders Due by NOON	Pastor's Day Off	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9AM Second Sunday of Advent Worship (Sunday School @ Lutheran Center – Christmas Program rehearsal)	5PM Parish Life 6PM CHURCH COUNCIL	 9:30 Coffee/ Conversation	VASA FAMILY NIGHT! 5:30PM Christmas Carols and Hot Chocolate at the Gazebo		Pastor's Day Off	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
10:00AM Third Sunday of Advent worship— Children's Christmas Program at LC		 9:30 Coffee and Conversation	6:30pm Wednesday Eve Worship		Pastor's Day Off	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Fourth Sunday of Advent Worship 9:00AM <hr/> 29 9AM Service of the Word	<hr/> 30	 Christmas Eve Worship 2:00 & 5:00 PM <hr/> 31	THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS	NO SCHEDULED EVENTS AT THE LC	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!