

February 2026 Cross Beams



Baptism on January 4, 2026
Vallie Marie Stephens



Kingdom Kids-January



Children's Sermon



What's Inside:

- † Pastor's Article
- † Church & Youth News
- † Financial Update
- † Council Minutes
- † Endowment Information
- † S.W.O.T Analysis-Threats
- † Prayer List
- † Church Calendar
- † Events
- † Miscellaneous

February 2026

Siblings in Christ,

I am so excited for the start of Lent!! Yes, I said that. I AM excited for the start of Lent. As far as church holidays go, Easter is the biggest one, even though Christmas also gets a ton of attention. I really enjoy the Easter season, but the time that I enjoy the most is the season that leads up to it, Lent. Don't get me wrong, it is a ton of work, and I am completely exhausted by the time we get to Easter morning, but there is a richness and depth to the season of Lent that is unmatched by any other. It is just so spiritually meaningful for me.

I love it anytime we gather for a meal, and during Lent, we do it every single Wednesday night! There is something about breaking bread with our neighbors. It is a time not only to nourish our bodies but to nourish our souls. Food is vital for our survival, but it tastes so much better when we eat with others. In our world, so many of us rarely slow down to enjoy a meal. We grab some fast food or a snack from the gas station to scarf down quickly while we move on to our next activity. During Lent, on Wednesday nights, we get to slow down and enjoy some food. Even more importantly, we get to enjoy each other's company. This year, I offer you a challenge: "Dine with someone new." Eating together is a great way to create community, and it is a great way to get to know people, so I challenge you to sit at a different table with people that you may not know so well. Who knows, by the end of the meal, you might find a new friend!

Also on Wednesday nights, during Lent, we have an evening worship service after the meal. It is a little different from a normal Sunday morning. The music is usually a tad more subdued and contemplative. It helps to set the tone for a time of peace, which we need more than ever today in our world. It is also a time to dwell in the Word of God, to slow down for a bit and listen to how God speaks to us. This year's theme will be "Conversations with Jesus", where we will explore the conversations that Jesus has with both friends and adversaries. And we will explore how Jesus speaks to us in our daily lives. So it will be a time of reflection and peace.

Lent is a time for us to refocus our spiritual lives, and it begins on Ash Wednesday. This year that will be on Wednesday, February 18th. By now, we have hopefully recovered from the Christmas season and gotten through the long, cold month of January. Spring is just around the corner, and with it the Easter flowers, but for now, we are still in the dead of winter. Let's take some time to refocus our spiritual lives on the one who gave himself for us, the one who redeems us from our sins and gives us life. Let us focus on Jesus Christ and discover how he is still moving through our lives today. Join us in the Lenten season as we talk with Jesus and listen to his Word.

Our schedule for Wednesdays in Lent will be supper at 5:30 pm, followed by worship at 6:30 pm. I look forward to seeing you, and we will update you next month with the Holy Schedule. Peace! Pastor Pete

P.S. Easter will be on Sunday, April 5th!

CHURCH NEWS

Women's Brunch & Bible Study

Wednesday, February 11
9:30 a.m.

Pastor Pete will prepare a brunch, and following the brunch, we will have the second session of a two-part Bible Study, "Embodied Prayer" by the Rev. Liv Larson Andrews. All women of the church are invited to participate in this fellowship time. (A \$5.00 donation is appreciated to help cover the cost of the brunch.)

Please join us in the Fireside Room. Please contact Melba Smith at 641-740-7855 with any questions or for more information.

We look forward to seeing you.

Baptism January 4, 2026

We had the honor of Vallie Marie Stephens being baptized on Sunday, January 4, 2026 in our church.

Her parents are Camp & Kelsey Stephens and sponsors are Kennedy Schommer & Kaden Schommer.

Please join us as we celebrate this baptism.



English Lutheran Church has an Endowment Fund and a committee that keeps tabs on the fund and makes decisions on any requests to utilize that funding. If your ministry has a funding need, please submit a request to the Endowment Committee. Examples of requests we have provided funding for in the past include: Thanksgiving baskets full of food for community members, purchasing greeting cards for the deaconess ministry to send to members of our church and community, vacation bible school for our children, quilting supplies for our graduate quilt ministry, supplies for Kingdom Kids program for elementary age children in our church and community, serving a meal at Minneapolis based Sharing and Caring Hands, supplies for the Sharing Shed in the back parking lot to support the community, and support for the Heart program.

We meet quarterly to review these requests. Request forms can be found on the forms shelf outside of the office or on our website. Contact the office if you need assistance in getting a form. Contact a member of the Endowment Committee if you have any questions about our ministry or a fund request.

Please submit your request for our February meeting by Wednesday, February 4.

Endowment Committee members: Gary Brown, Traci Maxwell, Trina Groen, Diane Wiskerchen, Kip Gore, Warren Johnson, and Dixie Basch.

random
Acts of kindness

There are baskets located by the front and back doors of the church for donations of nonperishable food items to support the **Pierce County Food Pantry**.

The Food Pantry is in need of the following items:
Flour, Oatmeal, Sugar, Baked Beans, Dry Soup Mix, Ramen Noodles, Cereal, Canned Meats, Vegetable Oil, Dish Soap, Laundry Soap, Paper Towels

To donate money online:
hungerpreventioncouncil.com, click on Give
Thank you for your "kindness".

2026 Random Acts of Kindness Drive-Thru Steak Dinner

This year, the Steak Dinner will again be served Drive-Thru style.

February 14th, 2026, from 4 p.m. - 8 p.m. Tickets are \$15.00
Dinner includes: Grilled Steak, Salad, Baked Potato, Special Green Beans, Homemade Bun, and Dessert.

St. Paul's United Church of Christ, W5706 State Road 72, Ellsworth, WI 54011

See website for online ticket ordering

Tickets must be purchased in advance in person or online.

Online ticket sales include a \$0.75 processing fee.

Proceeds spread kindness through outreach ministry.



LENTEN SUPPERS - STARTING FEBRUARY 18

Please see the sheets at church for the sign-ups to bring soups and desserts. We also need volunteers to assist with the clean up. The food is always delicious! Join us as we honor the season.

Lent 2026

Lent starts on Wednesday, February 18, 2026.
Easter is Sunday, April 5, 2026

Feed My Starving Children

On February 11, 2026 we will be going to Feed My Starving Children in Eagan.
Supper at church at 5:00 p.m.
Bus leaves the church at 5:30 p.m.
Our shift is 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Please let us know if you are interested in joining us for this fun and rewarding event.
There is a sign-up at the church or call the office to get registered.



CHURCH NEWS

English Lutheran Church Roast Beef Dinner

"Drive up for a carry-out version of the summertime favorite you love from our fair stand and support our kitchen renovation!"

Date: Saturday
February 21, 2026

Time: 4:00 PM – 6:30 PM

Location:
English Lutheran Church
229 W Main St.
Ellsworth WI. 54011

Cost: \$12 Includes

- Slow-Roasted Beef over Bread
- Mashed Potatoes & Gravy
- Corn
- Homemade Dessert



All proceeds go to benefit our kitchen renovation.

For more information, please contact us at (715) 273-4617 or email office@englishlutheranchurch.org

Men's Breakfasts—Thursdays at 8 a.m. We look forward to seeing you! The suggested donation is \$5.00 to cover the cost of food.



A poster for the "WALKING TOGETHER Church Without Walls" event. It features a large white circle in the center with the text "WALKING TOGETHER" in bold, sans-serif font, and "Church Without Walls" in a script font below it. The background is a collage of various images. At the bottom, it says "March 21, 2026", "8:00 - 4:00", "\$25 Per Participant", "Bethany Lutheran Church - Rice Lake, WI", and "Keynote Speaker: Natalia Terfa". There is a QR code and a link to "https://nwswi.org/walking-together-event". The Northwest Synod of Wisconsin logo is also present.

S.W.O.T Analysis - Threats

We invite each member of the English Lutheran Church community to lend their unique insights as we continue on this exciting S.W.O.T. Analysis journey together! Your participation is not only easy and accessible—scan the QR code (or click on the link) to access the S.W.O.T. Form-Threats, or feel free to share your thoughts on Post-It Notes at the table at the back of the church. Every individual voice matters, and your contributions will play a crucial role in strengthening our mission. We are immensely grateful for your ongoing support and active participation, as your perspectives are the heartbeat of our growth and vitality. Let's envision a vibrant future for our church, one that is beautifully shaped by your collective wisdom and insights! Thank you for being such an integral part of our church family!

[Link - Threats](#)



Heart-Touching One Life at a Time

Mission Statement: To reach children and families in tough financial situations. We can assist with basic needs by providing clothing, shoes, coats, toys, or other essential items to help alleviate the challenges faced in these difficult situations.

Heart is here to lend a helping hand to families who need support during tough times. We have access to furniture, school supplies, laundry soap, coats, bikes, toys, and an array of other items. Recipients will be vetted to confirm the needs. There are limits to what we can offer. We can help families at Christmas with gifts for children, and we work with the Gift Box Program as well as Basics for Kids with donations of coats and boots.

We are here to help change lives and improve the quality of life for those who need a helping hand. We are not allowed to help with things like rent, utility bills, etc. If you are in need or know someone else in need, please reach out to Cindy at 715-307-9615 or Donna at 715-307-2213.

Church Calendar

February 2026 English Lutheran Church Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
9am - Worship 9:45am - Sunday School 10am - Fellowship Hour 10:15am - Choir Practice	1pm - Pool Players (Sr.)					Feb 2026 (Central Time - Chicago)
	2	3	4	5	6	7
		3:30pm - Kingdom Kids 5pm - Family Supper 6:30pm - Confirmation		8am - Men's Breakfast 8pm - Habitat for	1pm - Pool Players (Sr.)	
	8	9	10	11	12	13
		11am - Discovering 6:30pm - Finance Meeting	9:30am - Women's Brunch 5:30pm - Confirmation 6:30pm - Endowment 7:15pm - Volunteer at	8am - Men's Breakfast 1pm - Euchre (Sr. Center)	1pm - Pool Players (Sr.)	
	15	16	17	18	19	20
		9am - St. Croix Valley 6:30pm - Church Council	Ash Wednesday 6:30pm - Ash Wednesday	8am - Men's Breakfast	Deadline for Newsletter 1pm - Pool Players (Sr.)	
	22	23	24	25	26	27
		1pm - Pool Players (Sr.)		8am - Men's Breakfast 6:30pm - Lenten Suppers 6:30pm - Lenten Service	1pm - Pool Players (Sr.)	
	28					



See the church website for the most up-to-date calendar

English Lutheran Church Council Minutes

November 18, 2025

Members Present: Pastor Pete, Mark Groen, Mike Harris, Cindy Baird, Danielle Chollette, Paul Tonsager, and Jill Hague

1. President Mark called meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

- a. Mission statement was read by all.
- b. Pastor Peter gave the devotions and led us in prayer.
- c. Motion was made by Mike to accept tonight's agenda with a correction to the date and to accept last month's minutes. 2nd was made by Paul.

2. Reports

- a. Finance report was given by Paul. The church received a large donation this month that helped to balance our budget. The bill from the fair stand has been paid to Riester's Refrigeration. They were able to adjust our bill, so it was less than quoted. Ava has put together a proposed budget for 2026. The bank CDs that are coming due will be renewed for 7 months at a rate of 3.7%. Motion made by Mike to accept the Finance report and was 2nd by Jill.
- b. Property report was given by Mark. Curt has looked into the drinking fountains. One is working and the other needs some parts that will be ordered. It was brought to our attention that a railing should be installed on the steps by the pulpit to make them more accessible.
- c. Children Youth and Family report. The Endowment committee meets next week so anyone who has something for them to consider should bring it to their attention. The confirmation class went to 150 homes and gave out pamphlets. There are 58 requests for Thanksgiving baskets. That number is down some from last year. The baskets will be assembled on Saturday.
- d. Pastors report. The Pastor is back to work as of Monday and thanked everyone who assisted in his absence. There was a conference meeting at the Rush River Lutheran Church. The speaker was from the Campus Ministry at the UW River Falls. He said last year they only had 2 students and this year they have 15 so the program is expanding.

3. Old Business

- a. The Strategic plan is still in progress. The next step of Opportunities has been sent out. More responses are still needed. The final step of Threats to our church will begin in January.
- b. Budget. The big change is the Pastor will be going on the Health Insurance offered by the School district for Kim. This will save the church \$39,000 for the year. The savings will be figured into the new Pastor salary package.
- c. It was discussed the locking of the church. It will be unlocked when the Pastor is here but if the office staff is alone they will keep the door locked. There is a message in church bulletin and online to call for an appointment to make sure someone is here.
- d. The Hot Beef dinner will be held on February 22nd of 2026. It was decided that we can cut back on the amount of beef ordered as there was a considerable amount left over last year.
- e. The date of the Advent Social was set for December 16th, and flyers will be made up to let people know. This date conflicts with our December council meeting so that was changed to Thursday December 18th instead. The January council meeting will be moved up a week ahead to give everyone time before the Annual Meeting.
- f. There has been no more information on the Kitchen Remodeling. A call will be made to Sheila to get an update.

4. New Business

- a. Piper Van Nocker gave a report on her annual bake sale to raise money for Children's hospitals. She asked for permission to use the kitchen and will be selling on Sunday November 23rd. She will also be selling at Nilssen's foods. Motion was made by Jill to donate \$200 for supplies for the bake sale and was 2nd by Paul.
- b. Piper gave a report on behalf of her Mom about a community recycling project for plastics. Renee's previous church has been involved with the project. Mike made a motion to go ahead with the project with Renee in charge of it. Motion 2nd by Cindy.

5. All joined in reciting the Lord's Prayer together.

6. Motion was made to adjourn by Danielle and 2nd by Cindy. The next meeting to be held December 18th.

Fill out this form or scan the QR Code and fill in the form at that link. You can also provide input at the back of the church.



S.W.O.T. “Threats” questions

Note: Threats are external factors. Threats may endanger our church’s “competitive advantage” or our church’s ability to operate.

1. Why have we lost members to other churches?

2. What local demographics are affecting our church?

3. What are the obstacles we are facing with our current mission?

4. What have we done (if anything) that causes negative impressions in the community?

5. What changes do we see in our members’ preferences?

6. How are local politics affecting our church?

7. What does a contemporary worship service look like to you?



Prayer requests:

Janet Arndt
Max Beck
Tomi Erlandson
Matt Feuerhelm
Julie Gore
Dean Mewes
Judy Morrow

Steve Pieczykolan
Darren Place
Greg Place
Melba Smith
Sophia Sokolik
Elaine Wegerer

Military service prayers:

Josh Bechel
Jonathan Bergman
Kohl Flock



Financial Update

December 31, 2025 Cash Balances
General Fund = \$94,726.34
Dedicated Fund = \$103,447.83
Total = \$198,174.17
Thrivent = \$119,232.70

December General Fund Balance
Income = \$13,867.90
Expenses = \$20,240.18

The next finance meeting:
February 10 at 6:30 p.m.

English Lutheran Church
229 West Main Street
Ellsworth, Wisconsin
Phone: 715-273-4617

Church Website:
www.englishlutheranchurch.org
Find us on Facebook!
EnglishLutheranEllsworth

Office Hours

Please contact the office for an appointment

office@englishlutheranchurch.org
715-273-4617

Deaconess

The role of the Deaconess consists of sending thoughts, well wishes, and congratulations to members of our church to let them know we are thinking of them. Please notify the church office or any deaconess worker with prayer requests.

The Deaconess for February is Bev Greeley.



Staff

Pastor Pete Warren

pastorpete@englishlutheranchurch.org
Cell: 218-760-6974 Office: 715-273-4617

Communications Coordinator: Julie Winger
office@englishlutheranchurch.org
Office: 715-273-4617

Finance Administrator & Accompanist: Ava Maxwell
finance@englishlutheranchurch.org

Music Director: Missy Kowalchyk
music@englishlutheranchurch.org

Custodian: Tami Place