



January Cross Beams

www.englishlutheranchurch.org

Our Vision: A Christ-centered, serving community.



**Sunday School
Christmas Party**



**Annual Meeting
January 28th after
Morning Worship**



**No Practice Christmas
Pageant**



What's Inside:

- † Church News
- † Pastor Article
- † Upcoming Events
- † Prayer List
- † Council Minutes
- † Financial Update
- † Church Calendar



Christmas Cantata

Do Kindness



Greetings,

The other morning, as I was waking up, I was scrolling through Facebook on my phone, and I came across a notice from Merriam-Webster. Most of us have used their dictionary a time or two in our lives looking the definition of an obscure word that we do not know. In addition to dictionaries, they pick a "Word of the Year" each year and that was the topic for this Facebook post that I saw through blurry eyes on an early Friday morning. They were announcing that the Word of the Year for 2023 is authentic. Merriam-Webster gives a number of definitions for the word authentic and two of them are:

1: not false or imitation

2: true to one's own personality, spirit, or character

According to Merriam-Webster, authentic was one of the most searched words on the internet this year. It shows us that we are searching for something that is authentic in our world.

In our world today, it is so hard to find out what is true. With the advancements made in Artificial Intelligence, Computer Graphics, and sound, it is easier than ever to make something fake look real. We are shown two different pictures of America, depending on where you decide to get your news from. And unscrupulous people are using technology to give us fake information that we cannot help but believe because we are seeing it with our own two eyes. Then again, this is nothing new for us. Magazines and advertisers have been altering photographs for years to show us what we should look like so that we will buy the magic potion that they are selling so we can look better, more beautiful, more handsome, more, more, more. And yet, in the end, we are still left holding a bag full of empty promises that do not bring us more joy, happiness, peace, contentment, or love. We are still empty because we have been chasing inauthenticity. We have been chasing something that is not authentic.

And chasing inauthenticity has led to a multitude of problems in our world. It leads us to greed, anger, jealousy, depression, and all other things that are wrong with the world. We put on "make-up" to cover up our warts and try to make us look how we think the rest of the world wants us to look. And the unfortunate thing is that every single person does this. We do not know one another because we are unable to be authentic with one another. Even worse, we cannot be authentic with ourselves.

In reality, there is only one person who has ever been truly authentic and that is Jesus Christ. But we can strive to be like him. We can try to be as authentic as possible. We can strive to be real and honest with ourselves and each other. In Romans 3:23, the Apostle Paul says, "... for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." We are all broken, we are all sinful, and we are all human, which means that we have been given the gift of being authentic. When we gather at church, we do not need to put on airs and try to impress someone else, we can simply be ourselves. We can be open, honest, and vulnerable with each other because when we do that, we find our authentic selves. When we do that, we become the human beings that God created us to be, joyful, loving, and best of all, forgiving!

My hope for this new year is that we can be authentic with one another and with God. God already sees us, warts, and all, but God also sees the beauty within us. Let us strive to see the beauty within each other by not covering up who we are. Let us be honest with each other. Let us be open with one another. Let us be authentic. Have a Happy New Year and God Bless!!

Pastor Pete

CHURCH NEWS

Women's Bible Study

Women's Bible Study will meet at 9:30 am on Wednesday, January 10th, 2024 at 9:30 a.m. Hostess is Jeanette Wright. We will use the Gather magazine. Our winter/spring study is on "Scripture and Nature" Teachers of Faith. Jesus invokes nature in his teachings. Consider joining us. You don't need the magazine in order to come to bible study.

Please consider joining us.

Hope to see you there!

-Nancy Ellefson



Sharing Shed

Please remember English Lutheran's Sharing Shed for your extra or no longer needed winter jackets and coats, warm hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, and boots.

Drop off directly into the Sharing Shed, just outside the south door of the church.

Thank you!

New Office Staff

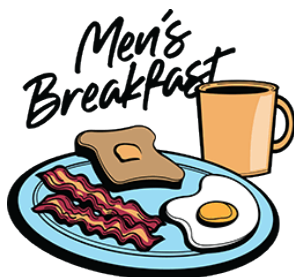
We welcome two new office staff—Ava Maxwell who will take on the Finance Administer position and Tammy Rieck who will be our new Communications Coordinator! Congratulations and Welcome!



Men's Breakfast

Pastor Pete will be cooking breakfast on Thursday mornings for the guys. We will gather in the church kitchen at 8:00 am for a breakfast with a rotating menu and fruit with coffee and orange juice.

The suggested donation is \$5.00 to help cover the cost of food.



Planning for Next Steps Luncheon

Wednesday January 31 at 11:30

English Lutheran Church and O'Connell Funeral Homes will host a luncheon at English Lutheran Church that will discuss the importance of planning for the last stages of your life, including the funeral or memorial service. This is a free event and lunch will be provided!

Contact the church to RSVP.



Annual Meeting

Join us for the annual meeting of the congregation!

It will take place on **Sunday, January 28th at 10:00 am.** It will be right after the worship service.

We look forward to seeing everyone!



Prayer Shawls

If you have a loved one who is going through a tough time and could use the comfort of being wrapped in prayers with a blanket/shawl, please take a prayer shawl for them.

We have a rack of prayer shawls outside the office door available for anyone at no cost, just take one.

Thank You Notes

Gift Box Program

Thank you to those who purchased gifts for the Gift Box Program! Thank you also to our Random Acts of Kindness team for organizing.

Altar Guild

Thank you to everyone on Altar Guild and everyone who helped decorate the sanctuary for the Christmas season. It looked beautiful, and the congregation appreciates it!

Piper's Bake Sale

Thank you to everyone who assisted with Piper's bake sale! Whether you donated baking supplies, purchased treats, or donated your time helping her bake, your help is greatly appreciated!



ChristmasCantata

Thank you to the Ava, Missy and the entire ELC Choir for the beautiful Choir Cantata, your time and talents are appreciated!

Annual Reports Due

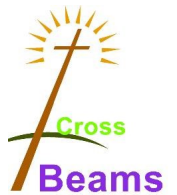
If you have not done so please submit your Annual Reports for the Annual Meeting being held on January 28th.

Thank you!

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ANNUAL
Committee
REPORTS
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Deadline for Newsletter Articles

Please submit articles for the February Crossbeams by January 19th.



Choir

Choir resumes after the Christmas break and new members are encouraged and welcome to join! No experience necessary... on the job training will be provided!

Rehearsals are Sunday after church. If you can't make all the practices, don't worry! Hope to see you there!

New format for Kids choir:

Missy and Ava will meet on the first Wednesday of the month starting in October to familiarize the kids with the song of the month they will be singing for service.

During Sunday School, the teachers will lead the kids in practicing the song.

Kids choir is scheduled to sing the Sunday following the first Wednesday of the month.



Kingdom Kids

Kingdom Kids is for Elementary age students on the first Wednesday of the month after school 3:30 to 5:00 PM.

We will have a bus bring the EES kids right from school. We will have a snack, sing songs, play games and learn about God!

Dates: January 3, February 7, April 3, May 1

Confirmation

Classes: Our lessons will be based on the Old Testament. It is a 3-year rotation where everyone learns the same thing each year, Old Testament, New Testament and then the Small Catechism. We will also have a discussion guide for the small groups each week. Our schedule for class times is below:

Schedule - 6:00 Meal
6:20 Announcements
6:30 Whole Group Lesson
6:45 Small Group Time
7:00 - 7:30 Activity/Game

Dates -

-January 3 & 17
-February Feed My Starving Children Date TBD



Sunday School

Sunday School has started! Children ages 3 through 6th grade can join us on Sunday mornings following communion during the worship service for about 30 minutes. Times will be 9:45 to 10:15 am. Children will worship with their families and then when they go up for communion or a blessing with their families they will be dismissed with their teachers to classrooms. Class times will include some large group lesson time, large group activity, and music.

Important Dates:

-Sunday School: January 3, 7, 21 and 28



December Council Meeting

- † Continued discussion on automatic door opener for the two front doors.
- † Finalized annual meeting date: January 28th, 2024.
- † Continued discussion of empty lots adjacent to the church, the potential sale will be reviewed and voted on at the Annual Meeting.
- † Council was asked to provide the Nominating Committee with potential interested Council volunteers.
- † *The next council meeting will be **January 16th at 6:30 pm.***

Financial Update

November 30th, 2023 Cash Balances:

General Fund = \$121,129.15
Dedicated Fund = \$84,092.18
Total = \$205,221.33
Thrivent = \$92,235.63

November General Fund:

Income = \$32,273.56
Expenses = \$15,913.58



*The next finance meeting will be **January 9 at 6:30 pm.***

January 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 News Years Day	2	3 3:30pm Kingdom Kids 6pm Confirmation	4 8am Men's Breakfast	5	6
7 9:00 am Worship 9:45 am Sunday School 10:00 am Fellowship	8	9 6:30pm Finance Meeting	10 9:30am Women's Bible Study	11 8am Men's Breakfast	12	13
14 9:00 am Worship 9:45 am Sunday School 10:00 am Fellowship	15	16 9am Conference gathering at English 6:30pm Church Council Meeting	17 1:30pm & 2:30pm Worship @ Care Facilities 6pm Confirmation	18 8am Men's Breakfast	19 Deadline for Newsletter Articles	20
21 9:00 am Worship 9:45 am Sunday School 10:00 am Fellowship	22	23	24	25 8am Men's Breakfast	26	27
28 9:00 am Worship 9:45 am Sunday School 10:00 am Fellowship w/ Cinnamon Rolls 10:00 am Annual Meeting	29	30	31 11:30 am Planning For Next Steps Luncheon			



English Lutheran Church
229 West Main Street
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Church website:
www.englishlutheranchurch.org

Find us on Facebook!
EnglishLutheranEllsworth

Staff

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Office: 715-273-4617

Julie Baggenstoss: Custodian

Music Director: Missy Kowalchyk

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Finance Administrator & Accompanist: Ava Maxwell

finance@englishlutheranchurch.org



Healing:

Liz Krohn
Mikey Krohn
Judi Nielsen
Tucker Thoen
Larry Larabee
Dean Mewes
Judy Nunn
Donna Tutor
Phyllis Kinneman
Elaine Hines

Military service:

Johnathan Bergman
Josh Bechel

Congregation Council

President: Eric Van Nocker
Vice President: Melba Smith
Treasurer: Gary Brown
Secretary: Greta Larson
Denise Hager
Jill Hague
Lynette Winger
Dennis Swanson

Office Hours

Our office hours are:

Tuesday-Thursday
9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Stop in, call, or email. Tammy will be working from home Monday's and in the office Tuesday-Thursday.



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 any prayers.

Deaconess for January~ Elaine Hines

Long-term:

Lila Larson
Sherry York
Judy Morrow
Deb Pierce, Trina Groen's Mom ~ Alzheimer's
Mackenzie Marks, Connie Gossett's Granddaughter
Tomi Erlandson ~ Seizures & Health
Marianne Melstrom
Mary Dee Prokop, Mother of Eileen Mewes
Wendy Wegerer
Janet Arndt
Rob Mathis
Jim Hines

