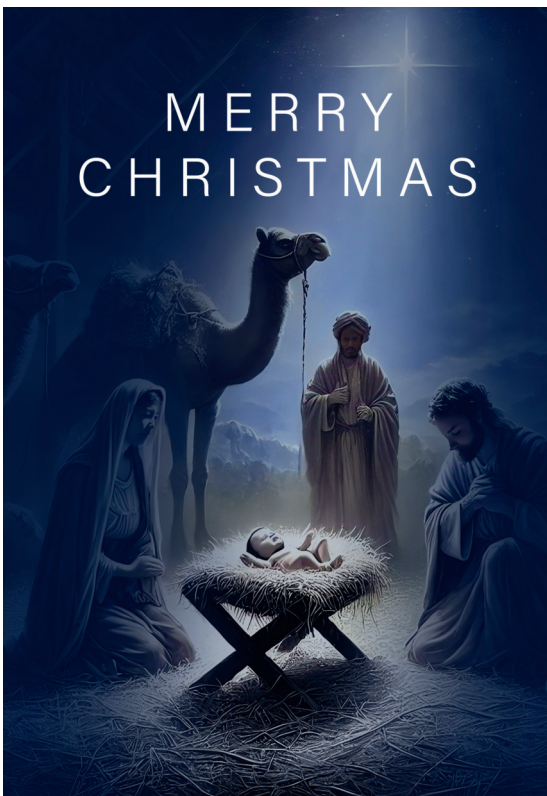


December 2025 Cross Beams



Construction: Nearing completion (we hope).
Next spring they plan to be working further
south on Piety.

*Happy Holiday Season
We wish you a joyous Christmas!
Celebrate the Reason for the Season!*



Gift Box Program

Great job to all involved
in making sure each person
has gifts this holiday season.



Our Thanksgiving Basket Initiative

There are many components to organizing
this!

The form, website, spreadsheets, requesting
food donations,
gathering food, putting together the boxes of
food, and the list goes on! Thanks to Chris
and Nancy who head up this initiative. You
are appreciated.



What's Inside:

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



Pastor Pete's Article

December 2025

We are still in the season of Advent

We are STILL in the season of Advent

WE are STILL in the season of ADVENT

WE ARE STILL IN THE SEASON OF ADVENT!!!

It is so hard when the rest of the world has been in the Christmas spirit since September or October at the very latest. That's when the stores put up their Christmas displays and we hadn't even gotten to Halloween. Thanksgiving is just the middle child of the holiday season because it's not even done yet and the rest of the world is full blown CHRISTMAS!!!

But I need to remind myself that we have only begun the season of Advent. The time of waiting, watching, preparing. We are pretty good at preparing, well preparing for all of our Christmas traditions: cookies, parties, and presents oh my! And I don't know about you, but I like to watch all of my favorite Christmas movies during the month of December. It's the waiting that I struggle with because I want the fun to begin now! I don't want to wait until Christmas Eve to sing all of my favorite Christmas Carols in church. Let's just skip over Advent and jump into Christmas. How does that sound?

And then that little voice in the back of my head whispers wait but I ignore it so then it screams at me WAIT!! Wait for what?! Do you remember the old Heinz ketchup ads? Good those come to those who... wait. And then it dawns on me. SLOW DOWN! WAIT!! Savor the moments. Live in the moments and take each day, one day at a time. It's like Ferris Bueller said, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it."

We are STILL in the season of Advent. And Advent is a time for us to savor. It is for us to take a break from the craziness of our lives and breathe. It is a chance to focus on the one who matters, the one who has come, the one who will come again, our savior, Jesus Christ. During this season of Advent, I invite you to take a break every once in a while. To sit and be still. If you need a place to do that, come to the church! You can sit in the sanctuary and simply be. Look at the stained glass windows, gaze at the Christmas decorations and listen to the traffic as it drives by on main street. Stop for a moment and take it in.

If you sitting in an empty church makes you nervous, join us on Wednesday nights at 6:30 PM for our Midweek Advent Services. We will use the Holden Evening Prayer Service as our guide and we will read from the first chapter of Luke's Gospel. We will read about the preparations that God made to prepare his people for Jesus. And we can then look to our hearts, to see how God is preparing us for Christ.

Advent is a time for us to prepare, to slow down, to savor the Christmas season. And just remember, Christmas does not end at 5:00 PM on December 25 th , that's just the start! My wish for you is that you find some peace during this hectic time of year. I'll be praying for you!

Amen.

Peace, Pastor Pete

CHURCH NEWS

random
Acts of kindness

Women's Brunch & Bible Study

We will meet on **Wednesday, December 10, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.** Pastor will prepare a brunch for us. Following that we will have an Advent Devotion from our Gather magazine. 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. We look forward to seeing you.

Questions: please contact Melba Smith at 641-740-7855.

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".



Relapse Prevention Group

A Recovery Meeting in the Ellsworth Area is held at English Lutheran on Thursday nights at 6:00 p.m.
Read and Discuss "Staying Sober".



Cantata Worship Service

Sunday, December 21st at the 9 a.m. service you will experience a special musical performance. Join us and invite others!

Advent Social

Tuesday, December 16th, 6:30 p.m. an Advent Social with Holiday Music and Refreshments.
English Lutheran Church. Please Join Us!



Candy Walk Fundraiser December 13 8 a.m. to Noon Our Savior's Lutheran Church

Our Savior's Candy Walk FUNDRAISER

ALL PROCEEDS WILL BENEFIT THE COLLEGE KITS AND OUTREACH MINISTRY.

**Saturday December 13th
8AM - 12PM**

LET US HELP YOU WITH YOUR HOLIDAY TREATS/GIFTS.

Homemade Candy will be sold at \$15 per pound
(less than 1/2 the price of candy stores!)

Our Savior's Lutheran Church
N6450 530th Street
Beldenville, WI 54003
1 mile east of Hwy 63 on Cty Rd N
Pierce County, WI



Sweet memories

CHURCH NEWS

Endowment News

The Endowment Committee met in November and was able to approve the following ministry funding requests!

\$500 for the Thanksgiving Baskets we provide to those in our community who have a need for assistance with food.

\$300 for the Kingdom Kids program that our church runs monthly for elementary aged students who are bussed to English Lutheran Church after school for a mini VBS day and a meal for the students and their families!! We have students from our church and many from our broader community joining us.

\$150 for our Confirmation and Sunday school programs to celebrate Christmas.

We are blessed to have the resources to provide funds to these amazing ministries! Thank you for submitting your requests and allowing us to be a small part of the ministry of our church family.

We will meet again in February. If your ministry has a funding need, please submit a request to the Endowment Committee. We meet quarterly to review these requests. Request forms can be found on the forms shelf outside of the office or on our website. Please contact the office if you need assistance in getting a form. Please contact a member of the Endowment Committee if you have any questions about our ministry or a fund request.

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



S.W.O.T. - Opportunities

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—simply scan the QR code (or click on the link below) to access the **S.W.O.T. Form-Opportunities**, or feel free to share your thoughts on Post-It Notes at the table in 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 English Lutheran Church, one that is beautifully shaped by your collective wisdom and insights! Thank you for being such an integral part of our church family!

Opportunities

<https://forms.gle/zcb2n4JdFtx97yzc9>



Continued: S.W.O.T. Analysis

OPPORTUNITIES Questions

Note: Opportunities are external factors. Opportunities are elements in the external environment that can be used to improve our church.

1. What new outreach programs could our church start?
2. What are other area churches not doing that our church could do?
3. What needs in the community could our church fill?
4. What can our church do to attract new members?
5. What growth opportunities exist? What would be the ideal opportunity for us?
6. What are some of the new trends in other churches?
7. Which of the trends from question 6 would affect our church in a positive manner if we were to adopt/embrace them?

ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

OCTOBER 21, 2025

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

1. President Mark called meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

- a. Mission statement was read by all.
- b. Pastor Pete gave devotions.
- c. Motion was made by Mike to approve tonight's agenda and the minutes from September. 2nd by Eric.

2. Reports

- a. Treasurers report given by Paul. The Sunday giving has gone up since this summer. He has started to get quotes for the Church's insurance needs for next year. We have not been sent the bill for the new compressor for the Fair stand but it should be less than initially quoted. Paul is having trouble with his vision and will not be able to continue as Treasurer for the new year. Motion made by Erik to approve the report and was 2nd by Danielle.
- b. Property report was given. 8 High School students came after school and helped oil the pews and wipe down the chairs. The storage room was organized during the Grubby Sunday.
- c. Worship committee had nothing new to report, they will meet again in January.
- d. Children, Youth and Family report. There are 12 kids enrolled in Confirmation. There will not be a Kingdom Kids night for the month of November.
- e. Pastor Reports, Pastor has been going out on visits. Trying to do a couple a week. He was able to visit Lila Larson before she passed away. Her funeral will be Friday at 11:00. His surgery is scheduled for November 4th; Melba will do the service for the 2 weeks he will be out.

3. Old Business

- a. Our Strategic plan is still in progress. Will be collecting the Strength and Weaknesses and sending out the Opportunities next.
- b. No new information on Kitchen renovation.
- c. So far no one has come forward to take the piano. May have to be carted away. Folding chairs are still available.

4. New Business

- a. The date for our Annual Meeting has been set for January 25, 2026. 3 Council members have their terms expiring at the end of the year. Names of possible replacements are encouraged.
- b. Health insurance as part of Pastors salary was discussed with a couple of options available. Salaries for Julie, Ava and Missy should be discussed by Finance Committee.
- c. Hot beef dinner for next spring was discussed. Possible date of February 22, 2026.
- d. The possibility of an Advent Social to be held the first part of December was discussed.

5. All joined in the Lord's Prayer.

6. Motion was made by Eric to adjourn the meeting and was 2nd by Cindy. Next meeting to be held on November 18th.

December 2025

Church Calendar							Dec 2025 (Central Time - Chicago)						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat							
30	1 1pm - Pool Players (Sr. Center)	2 9am - Foot Care (Sr. Ctr.) 1pm - Game Day (Sr. Ctr.)	3 3:30pm - Kingdom Kids 5pm - Family Supper 5:30pm - Choir Practice 6:30pm - Advent Services	4 8am - Men's Breakfast 6pm - Relapse Prevention Recover	5 1pm - Pool Players (Sr. Center)	6 9am - Private Baptism 10am - Decorate for the Advent 10am - Fellowship Hall Reserved							
7 9am - Advent Festival Worship 9:45am - Sunday School 10am - Fellowship Hour 10:15am - Choir Practice	8 1pm - Pool Players (Sr. Center)	9 11am - Discovering Tuesdays (Sr.) 6:30pm - Finance Meeting	10 9:30am - Women's Brunch & Bible 5:30pm - Choir Practice 6:30pm - Advent Services	11 8am - Men's Breakfast 1pm - Euchre (Preferred) 6pm - Relapse Prevention Recover	12 1pm - Pool Players (Sr. Center)	13							
14 9am - Worship 9:45am - Sunday School 10am - Fellowship Hour 10:15am - Choir Practice	15 1pm - Pool Players (Sr. Center)	16 9am - St. Croix Valley Pastors' 6:30pm - Advent Social	17 5:30pm - Choir Practice 6:30pm - Advent Services	18 8am - Men's Breakfast 10am - Senior Center Board 6pm - Relapse Prevention Recover 6:30pm - Church Council Meeting	19 <div>Deadline for Newsletter Articles</div> 1pm - Pool Players (Sr. Center)	20							
21 9am - Choir's Cantata Worship 10am - Christmas Brunch 6pm - Longest Night Worship Longest Night Worship is at Ezekiel in River Falls	22 1pm - Pool Players (Sr. Center)	23	24 2pm - Christmas Eve Family 4pm - Christmas Eve Candlelight	25 6pm - Relapse Prevention Recover	26 1pm - Pool Players (Sr. Center)	27							
28 9am - Worship 10am - Fellowship Hour 10:15am - Choir Practice	29 1pm - Pool Players (Sr. Center)	30 1:30pm - Celebrating Seniors (Sr.)	31	 	1 	2	3 						

BISHOP HALOM'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE: WHEN GOD SHOWS UP



As we approach the season of Christmas that so many of us adore, I'd like to address a few churchy words that theologians like to use and sound impressive when using them. The first word is *incarnation* and the second is *Emmanuel*.

If your church uses the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), you will again hear the passage from the first chapter of John on Christmas Day. The passage famously concludes in verse 14 with the words, "And the Word became flesh and lived among us..." This verse speaks directly to the concept of

incarnation. In other words, it speaks to a God who literally takes on human flesh and enters this world in the form of baby Jesus. It's in stark contrast to what some believe and experience - a God who exists far away, only to look down on us from God's heavenly throne. Instead, the incarnate God speaks to a God who is willing to take on the human experience with all the joys and sorrows that come with it. One can readily see that Jesus did indeed make his way through the human experience. He felt joy. He felt pain. His eyes teared up. And even if I can't recall a story when he laughed, I gotta believe that he really did!

Another passage found in the Christmas season comes from the gospel of Matthew, which references Isaiah 7:14: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, 'God is with us.'" One of the most important lessons I ever learned in seminary was in a pastoral care class. I had hoped to learn what to say, especially to someone hurting or grieving. What I learned was much more important. Instead of learning what to say, I was taught to show up - to be present. As time passes, few will remember what I say, but will remember that I was there. That's precisely why the name *Emmanuel* means so much to me. It's a constant reminder that God is always with us. Consider the final words in the gospel of Matthew: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20b) Presence matters because God embodies it and teaches it.

Christmas is known for its gift giving nature. We share gifts with one another to reveal our love for them. This year, I hope that regardless of the quantity or quality of the wrapped presents that lay under the tree, you will recognize the gift of presence. Not only the presence of your loved ones, but particularly the presence of God. So many of you will grieve as you experience the lack of presence from a loved one due to death or distance. My heart grieves with you. My hope lies in a God who provides and will gift you all with someone who will be present with you in some way at some time. If nothing else, remember God's presence as you receive the body and blood of Christ in the worship services that you attend, for that's yet another way in which God shows up.

Fellow disciples, Merry Christmas to you all and may the presence of God incarnate, Emmanuel, embrace you in such a way that brings warmth to your heart!

Bishop Martin



Prayer requests:

Janet Arndt
Max Beck
Vern Ellefson
Tomi Erlandson
Matt Feuerhelm
Julie Gore
Connie Gossett

Dean Mewes
Judy Morrow
Steve Pieczykolan
Darren Place
Melba Smith
Sophia Sokolik
Elaine Wegerer

Military service prayers:

Josh Bechel
Jonathan Bergman
Kohl Flock



Financial Update

October 31, 2025 Cash Balances

General Fund = \$105,422.21

Dedicated Fund = \$107,520.05

Total = \$212,942.26

Thrivent = \$117,272.41

October General Fund Balance

Income = \$20,277.07

Expenses = \$18,026.14

The next finance meeting:

December 9 at 6:30 p.m.

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 December is Melba Smith.



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

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pastorpete@englishlutheranchurch.org

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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: Malerie Mathis