Cross Beams
December 2026

english LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.englishlutheranchurch.org





All Saints Sunday November 1





Confirmation Donation Pick-Up November 18

Kingdom Kids November 4









Family Dinner after Kingdom Kids

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First Communion Service November 8

from the PASTOR

Pastor Pete's Article

December 2026

The Gift Given for Us

Dear friends in Christ,

December fills quickly with concerts, school programs, family gatherings, and the search for just the right present. Here in Ellsworth, snow settles over the fields and darkness comes early. We make lists of whom to buy for, what to bake, and where we need to be.

Gift-giving can be a joy, but it can also feel like a test: Did we spend enough? Will they like it? Did we forget someone? That is why the gift at the heart of Christmas is such good news. God's gift in Jesus is not something we earn, deserve, or repay. It is grace.

Centuries before Bethlehem, Isaiah announced, "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us" (Isaiah 9:6). Born for us. Given to us—not because we have everything in order, but just as we are.

And look at how this gift arrives: not in a palace, but in a stable; not among the powerful, but with a young couple far from home. Shepherds working the night shift are the first to hear the news. Martin Luther marveled that the Creator of heaven and earth would lie helpless in a feed trough, wrapped like any newborn.

This is how God loves: God comes low and close. The child is named Emmanuel, "God with us"—in the hospital waiting room, at the holiday table where a chair sits empty, and in the ordinary work and quiet worries of our days. No part of life is too ordinary or too broken for Christ to enter.

As Lutherans, we confess that even receiving this gift is itself a gift. We do not climb up to God; God comes down to us—in the manger, on the cross, and still today in baptism, Holy Communion, and the Word proclaimed. Christmas is not first about what we do, but what God has done and continues to do.

And this gift changes us. "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Knowing we have received what matters most frees us to give with gratitude, not guilt: perhaps by supporting the food shelf, visiting someone who is homebound, showing patience with a difficult relative, or inviting a neighbor to Christmas Eve worship.

So, during these Advent weeks, as we light the candles one by one, I invite you to slow down. Make room to wait, pray, and wonder. Then come to the manger, just as you are. Come and receive the gift given for you.

May the peace of the Christ child fill your hearts and homes this Christmas.

In Christ,
Pastor Pete



To the wonderfully gifted saints of the NWSWI,

How can it possibly be December already?! I guess that means we're having some fun!

Historically, December has offered me many great experiences and memories. Holiday school concerts filled with moving music that touch our heart strings. Contemplative midweek Advent services that filled the pews, mixing the Sunday and Wednesday worshiping communities together. Visiting nursing homes and senior independent living apartments while singing Christmas Carols with the confirmation class. And of course, capping it all off with a sanctuary filled with extended families holding candles while singing, "Silent Night". December just has a knack for offering so many stories that remind us of Immanuel, God with us.

Of course, this is all rooted in the story of Christ's birth, when God entered a messy world as a newborn child. It's a story with unconventional characters like Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, Zechariah, and a group of shepherds in the fields encountering the heavenly host. Think about that for a moment – God chose every day, unsuspecting characters to star in this story. Yet they all got to experience the sensations and feels of emotion when engaged with the divine.

What I love about the story of Christmas is that it is still alive well over 2,000 years later. It's alive because the Spirit continues to invite us to experience and share the story year after year. How will that play out for you and your church community next year? What stories will be added that feature characters like those above? What messages of hope can we offer to a world filled with doubt? The answers to these questions will not only add to God's story found in scripture but will also shape our collective impact on the world.

I pray that your likely busy Decembers are filled with life and joy. I hope that your Decembers gift you with stories where you encounter God and you manage to take notice. After all, God's presence in our world is not for God's benefit, it's for ours. And of all the gifts that may be exchanged this Christmas season, may the gifts of God's love, grace, and mercy be evident in your life!

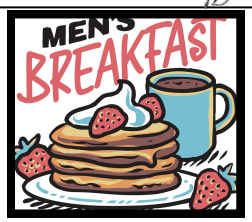
Bishop Martin Holom

CHURCH NEWS/EVENTS

Christmas Cantata

You are invited on Sunday, December 20 during the 9:00 service to enjoy a special performance from our ELC Choir as they preform their cantata, "Glory to the Newborn King!" They have been working hard since September to present this to you.Please come enjoy their time and talents!





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. Join them on **December 3, 10, and 17.**

Women's Brunch & Bible Study

Pastor Pete will prepare brunch for all women of the church on Wednesday, **December 9 at 9:30 A.M.** A donation of $5.00 is appreciated for the cost of food.We are looking forward to seeing you in the Fireside Room. The Advent Devotional will follow the brunch. It is "The Anchor I Choose: Hope." Turning toward the Light. Choosing hope and love over despair and indifference by Kristina Diaz. All are welcomed.



CHURCH NEWS/EVENTS

CONT.

Decorate the Church for Christmas
Please see the order forms at the back of the church. Cost is $12.00 per poinsettia. Please put the filled out form and money in the offering plate. Order deadline is December 20.



Pop-Up Pageant
Join us in service on Sunday December 13 as we celebrate with a pop-up pageant. All are invited to participate. No memorization needed! Costumes will be provided.



Decorate the Church with Flowers for Christmas

Members and friends of English Lutheran Church can help adorn the sanctuary for Christmas by ordering a red poinsettia. The cost is $12.00 **payable to English Lutheran**. Plants can be taken home after the worship service. **Please return order form by Sunday December 20.**

_____ Number of Poinsettias ordered

_____ Amount Total ($12.00 each)

Name: _____

Phone: _____

This poinsettia is given (please choose one):

In Memory of:
_____

In honor of:
_____

In Thanksgiving for:
_____

CHILDREN AND YOUTH NEWS



On November 6, Pastor Pete held a First Communion Class for 8 youth. 6 of them were honored on Sunday November 8 and the other two on November 15.



From Left to Right:
Marshall Goodier
Kaden Hager
Marcus Warren
Opie Chollett
Sophia Hodges
Clara Hanvelt



From Left to Right:
Drake Shilts
Dakotah Gardiner

Kingdom Kids
4k through 5th grade students can join us on the first Wednesday of the month after school from 3:30 to 5:00pm. We will have a bus bring the EES kids right after school. We will have a snack, sing songs, play games, and learn about God! Families are invited to join us for a meal at 5:00 p.m. Please join us on **December 2.**

Sunday School
Join us on Sundays during service for Sunday School. All children ages 4 to grade 5 are welcome. Children will leave after communion and be released at 10:15. There will be a Pop-Up Pageant on Sunday **December 13** during service. We invite everyone to wear a costume and participate. Also celebrate with us on **December 20** for our Sunday School Christmas Party!

Confirmation
6th -9th grade students are invited to join us for Confirmation Wednesday nights. Dinner will be served from 5:30-6:30 each night followed by class and activities from 6:30 to 7:30. We will have regular class on Wednesday December 2 and 9. **December 16** from 5:30 - 7:30 will be Dinner & CHRISTMAS PARTY - bring a $10 gift for the exchange game.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer opportunities available at English Lutheran Church include:
Worship Leaders: Volunteer to help with song leading or playing an instrument during Sunday morning worship
Worship Volunteers: Help with ushering duties, serving communion, or hosting fellowship
Kingdom Kids: The first Wednesday of the month, after school, 3:30–5:00 PM.
Confirmation: Be a guide for 6th–9th graders on Wednesday nights, 5:30–7:30 PM.
Please talk with Pastor or contact the office to get more information! We have lots of fun when we work together! You make a difference and are appreciated!



2026 Ellsworth Gift Box

Please return gifts, unwrapped, with the tag by December 6 so they can be turned in on time.
Thank you to everyone who bought gifts!

Sweet Treats for a Sweet Purpose

Piper will once again be hosting her annual bake sale with all proceeds going to KS95 for kids radiothon benefiting Gillet Children's Hospital and Masonic Children's Cancer Center.
She is looking for volunteers to help bake, donate supplies, donate baked goods, or even sponsor her event. Please reach out if you are interested in helping. Email her at nockerfamily4@gmail.com

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Sharing Shed

We have a new team that has volunteered to take care of the Sharing Shed! Thank you so much for stepping forward. Please remember the Sharing Shed for your extra or no longer needed clothing or small household items. Please put directly in the Sharing Shed outside the back door of the church.





A great big thank-you to EVERYONE who helped make our Thanksgiving Basket Blessings a Success! Because of everyone's generosity of money or food or time we were able to supply 52 families with full Thanksgiving dinners! This community truly is a blessing!

Basics for Local Kids (BLK)

What "Basics" are we actually talking about? Winter wear for children in need-winter jackets, snowpants, boots, warm hats, gloves/mittens, and new socks. Who are these "Local Kids?" Children in need from newborn through age 18 who reside in Pierce or St. Croix County in Western Wisconsin.

Something you may not know about the needs in our community- last year Basics for Local Kids (a local nonprofit) served over 1000 children in our area! Since 2010, BLK has quietly and efficiently outfitted appreciative families with what they need for our Wisconsin winter weather with absolutely no cost to the parent/caregiver. To find out more go to BasicsforLocalKids.org

Options are available to shop in person with an appointment, family pick up only after placing a specific request for a child, or case manager/school staff application and pick up. Look for all the details on the BLK webpage by scrolling down to 2026 Winter-Wear Sign Up and following the directions in both English and Spanish. Volunteers as well as donations are always needed and appreciated- see the site for this info also. Winter is coming! Thanks for your support!!

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.

COUNCIL MINTUES

English Lutheran Church Council Minutes
November 17th, 2026
Members Present: Pastor Pete, Danielle Chollett, Cindy Baird, Mike Harris, Mark Groen
Absent: Miranda Mewes, Eric Van Nocker
The meeting was called to order by Mark Groen at 6:36 PM.

1. The mission statement was read.
2. Pastor Pete read a devotion.
3. Tonight's meeting agenda was approved.
4. October 20th, 2026 council meeting minutes were approved previously via email correspondence.
5. REPORTS:
    a. Finance / Treasurer's Report - Eric and Pastor were not present at the most recent finance committee meeting. Pastor spoke to the Treasurer's Summary Report. Year to date is lower than budget but expenses have been managed accordingly. The finance report is approved.
    b. Property - Mark has been unable to help due to healing after surgery but Mark will supervise some projects including light replacements, door fixes. Steps on Main Street anticipated to be complete in spring 2027.
    c. Worship and Music - Last meeting was 9/9/2026. Next meeting date to be determined and as needed if any acute concerns develop.
    d. Children, Youth & Family - Sunday School Christmas program to be anticipated in December. Confirmation going smoothly combined with the other local churches. Interim pastors have been called to Svea/Eisvold and Our Saviors but joint confirmation to continue for the time being. Kingdom Kids continues.
    e. Endowment - 12 requests were made at the November endowment meeting for a total of $5500; all were approved. One opening on the endowment committee; nominating committee to assist.
    f. Pastor's Report - Both Our Saviors and Svea/Eisvold have interim pastors. Conference meeting; discussed several general church related issues including safety and emergency preparedness and pastoral/HR considerations. First communion class and service in early November completed. Confirmation service went well; 4 confirmands continue to return. No Wednesday night Advent services this year. Wedding in January 2027.
6. **OLD BUSINESS:**
    a. SWOT - We guided the confirmation group through SWOT. SWOT group needs to meet to go over this discussion and we would like to do an additional dedicated SWOT with the choir.
7. **NEW BUSINESS**:
    a. First Aid/Emergency Response - Discussed at Pastor Conference; will connect with local EMS about Basic CPR/AED/First aid certification/recertification to those interested.
    b. Visitation - More consistent visitation is requested and to be pursued on a regular schedule.
    c. Nominating committee - Endowment and Memorial and Gifts each need 1 new member also Synod Assembly member to elect. Mike and Danielle to continue on council if elected at the annual meeting to serve their second term if so. Cindy requests to go off of church council at the conclusion of her term, so council will be looking for 2-3 members to be elected. Council to have a minimum of 7 congregational members; more if possible.
8. **LORD'S PRAYER & ADJOURNMENT** – Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 PM. Next Scheduled Meeting, Tuesday, December 15th, 2026.

Church Calendar, Holidays in United States

December 2026 English Lutheran Church Calendar

Dec 2026 (Central Time - Chicago)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29 9am - Worship 10am - Fellowship Hour 10:15am - Choir Practice 2pm - Advent Social @ 6pm - Relapse Prevention	30 1pm - Pool Players (Sr.	1 9am - Footcare w/Katrina (Sr. 1pm - Game Day (Sr. Ctr.)	2 3:30pm - Kingdom Kids 5pm - Kingdom Kids Family & 6:30pm - Confirmation	3 8am - Men's Breakfast 6pm - Recovery Support	4 1pm - Pool Players (Sr. 7pm - Community Band	5
6 8:30am - Sweet Treats for 9am - Worship 10am - Fellowship Hour 10:15am - Choir Practice 6pm - Relapse Prevention	7 1pm - Pool Players (Sr.	8 11am - Discovering Tuesdays 11am - Warren Petryk - Sr. Ctr 6:30pm - Finance Meeting	9 9:30am - Women's Brunch & 5:30pm - Confirmation Supper 6:30pm - Confirmation	10 8am - Men's Breakfast 1pm - Euchre (Sr. Center) 6pm - Recovery Support	11 1pm - Pool Players (Sr.	12
13 9am - Worship/Pop-up 10am - Fellowship Hour 10:15am - Choir Practice 6pm - Relapse Prevention	14 1pm - Pool Players (Sr.	15 9am - St. Croix Valley Pastors' 6:30pm - Church Council	16 5:30pm - Confirmation Supper 6:30pm - Confirmation	17 8am - Men's Breakfast 9am - Bell Museum Tour (Sr. 6pm - Recovery Support	18 1pm - Pool Players (Sr.	19
20 9am - Worship/Cantata 10am - Fellowship Hour 10:15am - Choir Practice 6pm - Relapse Prevention	21 1pm - Pool Players (Sr.	22	23 Deadline for Newsletter	24 Christmas Eve Senior Center Closed 6pm - Recovery Support	25 Christmas Day Senior Center Closed 1pm - Pool Players (Sr.	26
27 9am - Worship 10am - Fellowship Hour 6pm - Relapse Prevention	28 1:30pm - New Years Event (Sr	29	30	31 New Year's Eve 6pm - Recovery Support	1 New Year's Day 1pm - Pool Players (Sr.	

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

PRAYER list

Military service prayers:
Josh Bechel
Jonathan Bergman
Kohl Flock
Ethan Ladwig



Prayer requests:
Janet Arndt
Max Beck
Diana Gilbertson
Julie Gore
Bob & Debbie Lundberg
Judy Morrow
Elaine Wegerer

Church COUNCIL

2026 Church Council Members

President: Mark Groen
Vice President: Mike Harris
Treasurer: Eric Van Nocker
Secretary: Danielle Chollett
Cindy Baird
Miranda Mewes

Financial Update

October 31, 2026 Cash Balances
General Fund = $100,451.27
Dedicated Fund = $101,254.01
Total = $201,705.28
Thrivent = $97,468.57

General Fund
Income = $12,011.54
Expenses = $21,216.94

The next finance meeting:
December 8 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
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Ellsworth, Wisconsin
Phone: 715-273-4617

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

Office Hours
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Staff

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Cell: 218-760-6974 Office: 715-273-4617

Communications Coordinator: Renee Van Nocker
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