

THE CALLER

AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH CASTLEWOOD, SD

Volume 31, Issue 1, January 2026

P.T.'s Practical Theology:

*And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. **Matthew 2:9-11***

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. **Hebrews 12:1-2***

"Joy to the World, the Lord is Come! Let earth receive its King"

That beloved hymn that so powerfully marks the Christmas season may still be heard on the radio and still used in our worship of the King that came unto us in the form of a child. On Christmas Eve this year we heard the Gospel from Luke 2, but we also heard of the wise men from the East who had followed a star that led to the king of the Jews. *"They rejoiced exceedingly with great joy"* when their long journey had led them to their quest. And they met the child and his mother, and fell down to worship him!

Now, we might not think that our beloved Christmas hymn "Joy to the World" has wider use than December and January. But maybe, just maybe, it could also be a great Easter Hymn. After all, the child that the wise men came to worship was the one who would then sacrifice His life to become the Savior of many. The fact that Jesus had to die so that we could live may not ring "joyfully" in our ears, but as the writer of the book of Hebrews states, *"Jesus...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."* Jesus' joy came from the fact that he had accomplished for us what he had been born to do. Jesus' joy came not in that he had to die, but that through His death, he has brought us to salvation. His joy becomes our joy when we embrace what Jesus did to the power of sin, death and the devil. His joy becomes our joy when we celebrate in the fact that the child King of Christmas truly became the King of Kings! So, we sing: "Joy to the World"!

In His Service,

Pastor Tom



Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Sunday, January 25th at 10:15!

As part of this meeting, we will be asked to ratify Constitutional changes for the North American Church. As a member congregation, it is our privilege and responsibility to ratify or oppose changes that were approved at the last Convocation of the church. The three amendments that we are asked to ratify or oppose are as follows:

AMENDMENT ONE: CONSTITUTIONAL AND BYLAWS/SCRIVENER'S ERRORS

Moves some constitutional language into bylaws and corrects editorial/scrivener's errors

AMENDMENT TWO: ARTICLE ON THE NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN SEMINARY (NALS)

Establishes the NALS formally in the Constitution, outlines structure (Center, Network, President, and Board of Regents)

AMENDMENT THREE: ARTICLE 16 — LEGAL AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

Renames "Indemnification" to "Legal and Financial Matters," expands it with fiscal year, handling of funds, approval of contracts, and valid notice

Anyone interested in reading more is encouraged to see the Constitutional Ratifications tab on the front page of the NALC website (thenalc.org)

2025 Church Council Members

John Bucher, President

Lindsey Vetter, Vice President

Mark Larson, Sec.

Doug Strait, Treas.

Jesse Ruml

Dan Davis

Al Schochenmaier

Andy Smith

Amanda Pribbenow

- American Lutheran Church Council has two council member openings.
- Please consider volunteering to be on the church council or committee.
- Contact a church council member if interested.

ANNUAL MEETING

Nominating Committee Members

Phil Ruml (2026)

Dan Grupe (2027)

Rod Fischer (2027)

Auditing Committee

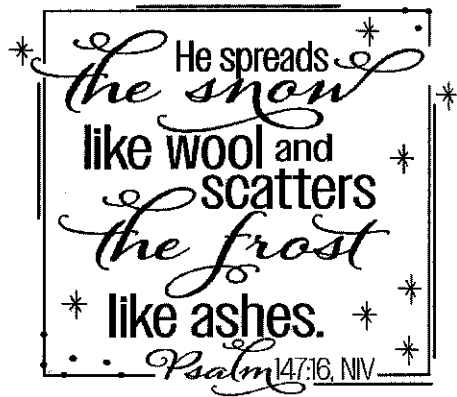
Landon Vetter (2026)

Rod Fischer (2027)

Lynn Borer (2028)

Annual Reports need to be printed and ready for distribution on the January 18th.

Please have annual reports to the office by Tuesday, January 13, 2026



January 2026

Sun	Mo	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

1st	<i>HAPPY NEW YEAR!</i>	
4th	8:30 a.m. Sr. High/Adult Choir Practice 9:00 a.m. Worship Service with Holy Communion 10:00 a.m. Fellowship 12:30—1:30p.m. Blessing Center Open	
7th	7:00 a.m. Wednesday in the Word Youth Breakfast 6:00 p.m. Confirmation	
11th	8:30 a.m. Sr. High/Adult Choir Practice 9:00 a.m. Worship Service 10:00 a.m. Fellowship 10:15 a.m. Sunday School 10:15 Church Council	
14th	6:00 p.m. Confirmation	
15th	<i>ESD Pastor Meeting in Lennox</i>	
18th	8:30 a.m. Sr. High/Adult Choir Practice 9:00 a.m. Worship Service with Holy Communion 10:00 a.m. Fellowship 10:15 a.m. Sunday School 12:30—1:30p.m. Blessing Center Open	
19th	Martin Luther King Jr. Day	
21st	6:00 p.m. Confirmation	
25th	9:00 a.m. Worship Service 10:00 a.m. Fellowship 10:15 a.m. Sunday School 10:15 a.m. Annual Meeting	
28th	6:00 p.m. Confirmation	



Remember the CALENDAR on our Website!

Go to: americanlutheranchurch.com and you can see the calendar of events for American Lutheran. If you have anything church related to add to the calendar, please contact Pastor Tom at pastortlc@gmail.com



Barrett Wittnebel	1-02
Gareth Hamen	1-04
Jodi Hanson	1-04
Collyns Ruml	1-10
Eric Aderhold	1-11
Lacey Severson	1-11
Sarah Christenson	1-12
Rodney Fischer	1-14
Asher Davis	1-16
Al Schochenmaier	1-22
Brody Bass	1-25
Alisha Nielsen	1-29
Dennis Strait	1-30

Baptism

Janet Christenson	1/01	Ernie Karst	1-12
Cameron Pewe	1-01	Haley Strait	1-12
Haley Pewe	1-01	Taylor Hanson	1-16
Myles Rawsthorne	1-01	Landon Vetter	1-20
Reese Rawsthorne	1-01	Noah Wiersma	1-21
Larry Dockter	1-02	Gail Nagelhout	1-23
Vale Smith	1-02	Logan Ronne	1-24
Nora Severson	1-05	Kendall Nielsen	1-27
Vavalia Smith	1-06	Kevin Pribbenow	1-27
Walker Borer	1-08	Carna Miller	1-29
		Madyson Ching	1-29
		Roxanne Bass	1-30
		Celia Kenyon	1-30



Larry & Pat Dockter
Jan. 24



*Let's stay
connected*

**Please notify the
church with
your...**



Sr. High/Adult Choir!

Practices on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Sundays of each month in the fellowship hall and will generally be prepared to provide the anthem on the 3rd Sunday in Worship.

New Years Eve Event – You are Invited!



Noah Wiersma and friends invite you to a "New Years Eve Fire Night" to be held on Wednesday, December 31st from 8:30- Midnight at Midwest Bible Camp in Watertown. Worship, Bonfire and Refreshments. (no alcohol provided or allowed). The sponsoring group will also be hosting a Tuesday night Bible Study at Midwest Bible Camp starting on January 6th.....more info can be obtained by emailing AWKNGWTN@gmail.com

If there is a need for
pastoral care please
contact ...

Pastor Tom
Christenson
605-956-0130



Church Council Meeting Minutes
American Lutheran Church
November 9th, 2025

Members Present: Danny Davis, Amanda Pribbenow, Doug Strait, Al Schochenmaier, Mark Larson, Lindsey Vetter and Pastor Tom.

Call to Order: Lindsey called the meeting to order declaring a quorum present.

Prayer: Led by Pastor Tom

Meeting Minutes: Review of September 21st, 2025, meeting minutes. Motion by Pastor Tom and a second by Al Schochenmaier, to approve. **MC**

Financial Report: Treasurer Strait presented the October 2025 financial report for review. Motion by Al, second by Mark to approve the report as presented. **MC**

Pastor's Report: Pastor Tom gave his report to include news on Wednesday in the Word with twenty-one kids and four adults being present. Thanksgiving Eve Service will be at ALC.

Old Business:

The trim for the basement is in and awaiting installation by Williams Carpeting.

The parsonage storage shed roof will be completed when Gerhold Brothers are available.

Communion Schedule for December 2025:

December 7th – Mark

December 21st – Al

December 24th – Lindsey

New Business:

Thanksgiving meal food has been ordered. A meeting is scheduled for the week of November 18th, 2025, to finalize things. Sign up sheets for help. Desserts and roasters are in the entry area of the Church.

A discussion was held concerning filling two council positions for Traci Bass and Danny Davis and that John will vacate the Presidents position but will remain on council. Danny Davis agreed to another term on the Council so that leaves one position to be filled. Pastor will reach out to the nominating committee to let them know to begin the process of finding a replacement council member.

A discussion was held concerning distribution of the funds raised from the Thanksgiving meal. No action was taken at this time, but council members all agreed the funds should stay local.

A motion was made by Mark with a second by Al to give \$500.00 to the mission district out of the mission fund. **MC**

A motion was made by Pastor Tom with a second by Mark to give \$2,000.00 to the NALC out of mission district. **MC**

A discussion was held concerning the current mission fund and how to proceed with giving. Pastor Tom encouraged council members to check the NALC Website for information regarding this as well as keeping in mind that the focus of our mission work is local, regional and global.

Next Council Meeting: The next council meeting was scheduled for December 21st, 2025, following worship.

Closing: With no further matters at hand a Motion by Mark to adjourn. Second by Al. **MC.**

Pastor led us in the Lord's Prayer, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Larson, Secretary

Church Council Sets End-of-Year Missions Giving:

At the November & December Church Council Meetings it was decided to give to the following missions:

Local Missions

Castlewood Kids Care Closet	\$500
"Family in Need"	\$500
Sleep in Heavenly Peace (Watertown)	\$1,000
Beacon Center (Watertown)	\$1,000

Domestic Missions

Eastern SD Mission District of the NALC	\$500
North American Lutheran Church	\$2,000

Global Missions

Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus	\$2,000
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Thank you for your ongoing financial support to the mission and ministries of American Lutheran Church.

**American Lutheran Church Financial Report
November 2025**

General Account

Balance on hand 11-1-2025		\$	33,742.64
Receipts			
Offerings	\$	8,378.80	
Thrivent	\$	42.00	\$ 8,420.80
Disbursements			
Thomas Christenson (Pastor Salary)	\$	4,905.50	
Thomas Christenson (Social Security)	\$	310.34	
Thomas Christenson (Housing Equity)	\$	200.00	
Thomas Christenson (Mileage - XXX Miles)	\$	203.70	
Retirement Contribution	\$	500.55	
EBSO (Health Insurance)	\$	2,450.00	
Tristar Management (Ancillary Benefits)	\$	572.11	
Janell Bemis (Secretary - 36 hrs)	\$	518.64	
Dawn Mickey (Custodian - 15 hrs)	\$	207.79	
Roxanne Bass (Organist - 3 Svcs)	\$	195.00	
Marsha Kurtenbach (Organist - 2 Svcs)	\$	130.00	
Karen Lund (Organist - 1 Svc)	\$	65.00	
City of Castlewood (Ch: \$65.00, Pars: \$98.64)	\$	163.64	
ITC (Phone & Internet)	\$	129.71	
NorthWestern Energy (Ch: \$20.18, Pars: \$15.09)	\$	35.27	
Otter Tail Power (Ch: \$133.88, Pars: \$104.78)	\$	238.66	
North Star Mutual Insurance Company	\$	483.58	
NALC (benevolence)	\$	50.00	
Thomas Christenson (worship supplies)	\$	116.79	
American Church (envelopes for 2026)	\$	383.28	
Upper Room Ministries (Jan & Feb devotional guides)	\$	55.33	\$ (11,914.89)
Balance on hand 11-30-2025		\$	30,248.55

*** Thrivent Choice Balance \$ 2,427.49

Building Account

Balance on hand 11-1-2025		\$	28,778.22
Receipts			
Offerings for Building Fund	\$	85.00	\$ 85.00
Disbursements			
Skyview CBS (parsonage window)	\$	490.32	
Williams Carpet One (install baseboards in basement)	\$	398.25	\$ (888.57)
Balance on hand 11-30-2025		\$	27,974.65

Mission Account

Balance on hand 11-1-2025		\$	10,262.53
Receipts			
Offerings for Mission Fund	\$	2,225.00	
Children's Offering	\$	51.00	
Offerings for Blessing Center	\$	95.00	\$ 2,371.00
Disbursements			
NALC	\$	2,000.00	
NALC - ESD Mission District	\$	500.00	
Castlewood Blessing Center (offerings for November)	\$	95.00	
KeVee (Thanksgiving)	\$	125.68	
Tables Steakhouse (Thanksgiving)	\$	1,336.73	\$ (4,057.41)
Balance on hand 11-30-2025		\$	8,576.12

Memorial Account

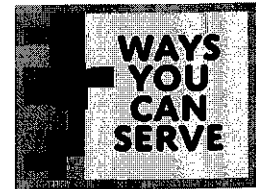
Balance on hand 11-1-2025		\$	4,369.36
Receipts	\$	-	\$ -
Disbursements	\$	-	\$ -
Balance on hand 11-30-2025		\$	4,369.36

Account Summary

	Current Balance	Change November 2025	Change Year to Date
General Account	\$ 30,248.55	\$ (3,494.09)	\$ (30,791.31)
Building Account	\$ 27,974.65	\$ (803.57)	\$ (14,936.73)
Mission Account	\$ 8,576.12	\$ (1,686.41)	\$ 4,710.54
Memorial Account	\$ 4,369.36	\$ -	\$ 11.05

*The Servants of our Lord*

	<i>Organists</i>	<i>Ushers</i>	<i>Audio-Visual Technician</i>
January 4	Roxanne Bass	Kevin & Amanda Pribbenow family	Chuck Juntti
January 11	Marsha Kurtenbach	John & Bonnie Bucher	
January 18	Roxanne Bass	Russell & Lorie Mack	Doug Strait
January 25	Marsha Kurtenbach	Andrew & Sarah Smith Family	Rod Fischer



**SIGN -UP SHEET
FOR**
**Lectors—(Scriptures
sheets available)**
&
**Fellowship
Servers
IN THE
NARTHEX**

ALTAR GUILD

January: Janet Christenson

February: Vicki Strait & Kristi Borer

Altar Guild takes care of the communion ware, change altar clothes, banners and fill oil candles when needed. Thank you for your service.

	General	Building	Mission	*Children	*Blessing Ctr
December 7	\$2,037.00	\$40.00	\$203.00	\$3.00	
December 14	\$2,747.00	\$505.00	\$125.00		
December 21	\$1,630.00	\$5.00	\$388.00	\$8.00	



*Childrens and Blessing Center amounts are included into the Mission account totals.

**ONLINE GIVING**

Our congregational website: americanlutheranchurch.com now has a link on the home page for online donations: **DONATE NOW.** From that link, you can set One-time, Weekly or Monthly Offerings.

If you point the camera on your cell phone at the QR code it will take you to the donation page.



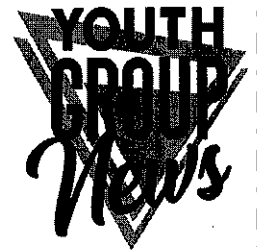
Attention American Lutheran Youth!

Wednesday in the Word!

On Wednesday, January 7th we encourage our youth in grades 7-12 to invite their friends to join us from 7:00-8:10 for a breakfast at American Lutheran.

There will be a full breakfast, a special Devotional presented by Rich Ohm of Fallout Shelter Ministries of Watertown, guided meditation and prayers.

Please bring a Bible and a friend! We will ensure that any Jr. High student who is dropped off to attend, will get a ride to the school!



Confirmation Ministry – Grades 7-9 (Wednesdays at 6:00)

Confirmation classes resume on January 7th and will run through February 4th.

Please help: if your son or daughter will not be in class for any reason, it is the parent's responsibility to contact Pastor Tom **in advance** to arrange for the make-up material.

Students: BRING YOUR OWN BIBLE & WRITING UTENSIL!

January Snack Families:

7th Ruml Family

14th Vetter Family

21nd Pribbenow Family

28th Craig Family



January Acolytes:

4th Reese Rawsthorne

11th Lincoln Pribbenow

18th Reese Rawsthorne

25th Liyah Vetter

Youth Group – 2026 Youth Gathering or Mission Trip

Pastor Tom and Brenda are looking for input from our youth and their parents as to what kind of Summer Faith Trip would be of interest. Our denomination will be holding the Continental Youth Gathering in Roanoke, VA July 7-10. Other possibilities could be week-long mission trips such as we have done to Cheyenne River or Colorado Springs. Or, if those trips are too long in length we can hatch another shorter-term mission trip as we did last year. Please let us know of your interest!!



The American Lutheran Caller

P.O. Box 132

Castlewood, SD 57223

Address Service Requested



WATCH US ON YOUTUBE & ITC!

*American Lutheran
Church's
Mission Statement*

The mission of American
Lutheran Church is to

**welcome,
worship,
teach and
serve**

In the name of Christ our Lord
and Savior!



americanlutheranchurch.com

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