



Mission Statement

God calls us to Mission and Ministry in our rural community and to the world. Gathered in Faith and nurtured by Word and Sacraments, we commit ourselves to share a hope for the future, to use our resources and talents guided by the Holy Spirit, and to work together to expand our ministry to serve others in the name of Jesus Christ.

HOPE LUTHERAN & ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

January 2026

Sunday Worship:

Hope—9:00 AM
St. Paul's—10:30 AM
With Communion
on the first and third
Sundays

GLOW:

(Sept-April)

God's Love On
Wednesdays
5:30 PM Supper
6:00 PM GLOW
6:00 PM Ignite
(Confirmation)
Classes/Teen Power

Coffee & Fellowship:

Following Worship at
Hope

Inside this issue:

Bible Study's/Duties	2
Upcoming Dates/Notices	2
Council Minutes	3-5
Shoe Collection	5
Note from Jenn Warnock	6
Note from Amie Ascherman	7
January Work Group	8
January Calendar	9

Welcome

WORSHIP TIMES:

Hope Lutheran - 9:00 am Worship

(Communion 1st and 3rd Sundays)

St. Paul's Lutheran - 10:30 am Worship

(Communion 1st and 3rd Sundays)

Happy New Year!

**Scholarship Distribution
Sunday is January 4th!**

Annual Meeting

January 25th, following worship

Hope Lutheran Church

113 South Jefferson Street

PO Box 87

Minneota, MN 56264-0087

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

412 East Lyon Street

Minneota, MN 56264

Lay Minister Cell: 320-305-4955

Office/Kitchen: 507-872-6446

Parish Secretary: Chris Pesch

Secretary's Cell: 507-530-5666

Lay Minister: Jenn Warnock

Email: Jennifermcwarnock@gmail.com

Missionary: Dr. Elisabeth Johnson

Missionary Email: elisajo@msn.com

GLOW Directors: Erin Roberts

Custodians: Jason & Jen Johnson & Family

Organists: Valerie Buysse, Wendy Sarazyn

Jubilation: Kasey Denney & Nona Gottskalkson

Church Email:

hopelutheran87@gmail.com

Church Website:

www.hopeminneota.org

Bible Studies for Men and Women

Gather Magazine Bible Study January 5, 6:30 pm
 Women of the Bible Study January 14, 10:00 am
 Men's Bible Study January 2, 8:00 am

At Church
 At Karen Golden's Home
 At Porter Cafe

**2025 Church Attendance**

December 7 87
 December 14 77
 December 21 222
 December 24 187
 December 28 N/A Weather Cancelled
 Total: 573
 Average: 143

**Workgroup Chairpersons**

Scott & Barb Knutson
 507-828-9111 or 507-828-9117

Altar Guild (January 1-31)

Marlys Skaar 872-6600

**Date Sound Operators**

January 4 Scott Josephson
 January 11 ?
 January 18 Todd Sonnenburg
 January 25 Cole Myhre

Date Acolytes

January 4
 January 11
 January 18
 January 25



Money Counters: January—Deb Belae & ??

Upcoming Dates:

***January 4, 2026**—Scholarship Distribution Sunday, Communion

***January 15, 2026**—Annual Reports Due to Church Secretary

***January 18, 2026**—Communion, Temple Talk-Lutheran World Relief, Sandy Josephson; Proposed Budget Review Meeting - an informal meeting regarding Hope Lutheran's proposed 2026 to answer any inquiries or concerns prior to the annual meeting.

***January 25, 2026**—Walk Around Offering: Lutheran World Relief

***January 25, 2026**—Annual Meeting following worship

(February 14—24, church secretary gone)

***April 12, 2026**—First Communion Sunday

***May 10, 2026**—Baccalaureate Sunday

Church Council Notes – December 3, 2025

Fund Balances:	General Fund:	\$ 39,031.57	Cornerstone Fund:	\$ 71,587.82
	Building Fund:	\$ 5,823.15	Petty Cash Fund:	\$ 784.10
	GLOW:	\$ 9,198.56		

Attendance:**Attending in Person:**

Emily Hennen, Jen Anderson, Deb Belaen, Amie Ascherman, Sandy Josephson, Angie DeVos, Jasmine DeSmet, Barb Knutson, Jeff Van Keulen, Terri Myhre, Cory Myhre, Jason Johnson

Attending via Phone: Chris Pesch – Church Secretary

Absent: Rose Van Uden

President's Report

- No separate President's Report this month. There will be a letter in the newsletter, and the newsletter will be going out on Friday.

Secretary's Report – Motion made to approve secretary's report by Terri Myhre. Angie DeVos seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

- Bills: Bills for the month of December were sent out prior to the meeting for review. Total General Fund bills are estimated at \$8,441.78 with two additional bills for the building fund.
- **Motion made by Terri Myhire to approve the Treasurer's Report. Deb Belaen seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

Board of Trustees Report

- Bills: Total General Fund bills are estimated at \$8,441.78 with two additional bills for the building fund: garage door parts from Minneota Building Materials and rental of lift for trimming trees from Kesteloot's. Total building fund bills are \$546.85.
- Date for year-end cutoff: The cutoff date for donations will be December 29th; this will allow for online donations to get into the account prior to the end of the year.
- MN ESST and Paid Leave:
 - MN Earned, Sick, Saved Time - Minnesota law requires employers to provide earned sick and safe time (ESST), a type of paid leave, to workers in the state. An employee earns one hour of sick and safe time for every 30 hours worked and can earn a maximum of 48 hours each year. It allows for accrual and use of paid time off and provides job protections for employees who are unable to work due to a qualifying reason. At the end of the accrual year, your employees carry over or are paid out unused ESST hours, depending on how you have chosen to provide ESST hours. Chris is eligible for this, while Jason is considered a contractor. There are 3 different ways to manage this, and the options are below:
 - Option 1 – Employee receives at least 80 hours a year, and if it is not used, it can be carried over to the next year.
 - Option 2 – Employee receives 48 hours a year, and if it is not used, it is paid out at the regular hourly rate.
 - Option 3 - Employee receives at least 80 hours, and if it is not used, you will lose it.
 - It was recommended that we go with option 2, and we include the 48 hours as a separate budgetary line item. This eliminates the need for tracking hours carried over year to year.
 - Paid Leave – Beginning January 1, 2026, MN employers need to provide job protections and partial wage replacement for individuals unable to work due to a qualifying condition lasting at least seven days. It is funded through employer and employee premiums starting in 2026. We need to set up an online account, and Amie is still working to get us registered.
 - Amie has drafted a policy and sent it to the council.
 - We have to provide notice of the policy to any new employee; Chris was notified prior to the December 1, 2025 deadline.
 - The council president and council secretary need to be notified if an employee is planning to take paid leave.
 - Planning to use one workday as the minimum paid leave increment for this policy.
 - It was recommended that we don't do more than the minimum requirements.
 - These need to be approved by January 1st. Amie will be sending out an e-mail with the revised policy, and will need a motion to approve, a second, and everyone will need to vote. Please reply all when responding to make sure everyone is on the whole chain.
- Budget Planning: The trustees have a budget planning meeting scheduled for December 22nd. If there is anything specific that you want to be considered, please let us know prior to that meeting.
- Ordination Process Application: Jenn has requested \$500 for the ordination process application. **Motion made by Barb Knutson to pay \$500 from the undesignated memorial fund for the ordination application. Angie DeVos seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

(continued on page 4)

Church Council Notes (continued)

- **Motion made by Cory Myhre to approve the Board of Trustees' report. Jason Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

Board of Deacons Report

- Walk Around Offerings: 4th Sunday of the month - Endowment matches walk around offerings 2:1 up to \$500.
 - November – The walk around offering for November totaled \$1532 - \$532 donated plus \$1000 from the endowment fund. Thank you!
 - December – There will be a Christmas tree in the narthex for new and gently used hats, mittens, and boots. These will go to the Minneota Public School. Sandy also has Thrivent Action dollars that she will also donate for this.
 - December 21st – Christmas program - GLOW offering & regular offering.
 - January – Lutheran World Relief
 - January 18 – Sandy will do a temple talk on that day, and there will also be an insert in the bulletin that day.
 - January 25 – Date for walk around offering.
- Communion Dates:
 - December communion dates – December 7 and 24.
 - December 21st – GLOW Christmas program.
 - January communion dates – January 4 and 18
- Christmas Services:
 - Christmas Eve – 4 pm at St. Paul's; 5:30 pm at Hope
 - Christmas Day – No Services
- Work Groups: The deacons are continuing to get work group chairpersons for 2026.
- **Motion made by Cory Myhre to approve the Board of Deacons report. Deb Belaen seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

Board of Education Report

- GLOW: Christmas program practice is underway with the Christmas program on December 21st at 9:00 am.
- Confirmation / Youth of Hope:
 - Shopping this Sunday, December 7th for foster families. We purchased hats from the Mission Trip fundraiser, and we will shop for mittens on Sunday.
 - Christmas Angel Program
 - The Minneota Public School program had great support.
 - We will be purchasing a game and hygiene bundle for 16 families on Sunday, December 7th.
 - We will be wrapping games and assembling hygiene bundles (deodorant, shampoo, toothpaste, etc.) on Wednesday, December 10th.
- Teen Power: They are starting their annual Teen Power Shoe Collection. Please drop off any worn out shoes, boots, tennis shoes, slippers and sandals at church. The goal is to donate more than 700 pairs of shoes that were donated last year.
- Mission Trip:
 - Continuing to fundraise for the 2027 mission trip.
 - All students in grades 8 – 12 this fall at Minneota Public School are welcome to attend the next trip.
 - Fundraisers - **Christmas Baking Orders**
 - Baking will take place at Hope Lutheran Church at 10:30 am on December 7, 2025.
 - Pick-up and delivery in Minneota after baking is one on Sunday.
 - Contact Emily Hennen at emhaugland@hotmail.com or 507-828-6797 if interested in going on the 2027 mission trip.
- Upcoming Dates:
 - Christmas Program – December 21, 2025, at 9:00 am.
 - Scholarship Sunday – January 4, 2026
 - First Communion – April 12, 2026
 - Baccalaureate – May 10, 2026
- **Motion made by Jasmine DeSmet to approve the Board of Education report. Deb Belaen seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

(continued on page 5)

Church Council Notes (continued)

Other Business

- Peter Soli Meeting: The meeting is scheduled for Sunday, December 14th after worship. Muffins and fruit will be available during the meeting. On Wednesday, December 17th at 7:30 pm there will be a Zoom meeting as a follow-up to Sunday's meeting for those who can't attend on Sunday or if there are additional questions.
- Monthly Items: A google document has been created for the monthly "to do" items of the church. Please make additions and edits as needed.
- Nominating Committee: Rose, Barb, Emily, and Terri have completed their 2nd 3-year terms on council. Thank you very much for your service! Angie is completing her first 3-year term. Jeff's term will also be completed, and since he was completing a term for someone else, he is eligible to be nominated for a full term. The Nominating Committee is Roberta Josephson, Kevin Larson, and Moriah Reiss. Lori Dyce is also willing to serve on the council, so her name can be added to the ballot.
- Call Committee Update: Jeff provided an update from Dawn about a potential pastor that had approached us through our Linked In post. The response time from the synod was slow, and there was concern from the call committee about the response from the synod with this individual's years of experience.
- Updating locks: Southwest Glass can't do an automatic lock. We do need to get everything re-keyed. Jeff suggested using Yale Locks as you can assign key codes to different people; the cost is approximately \$150 per door. We will continue to research who could install this type of lock.
- Communication system: Amie would like to get a system in place that we can use for weather, announcements, etc. The recommendation from Amie is to use Text in Church, which is what she and Chris had tested. This program allows people to sign up themselves. Amie would like to have a decision made by the next meeting.
- **Motion made by Deb Belaen to adjourn. Jen Anderson seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

Next Executive Discussion on Agenda: Week of January 5th via e-mail.

Next Council Meeting - Wednesday, January 7, 2025, with committees at 7:00 pm; full council at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Deb Belaen

Hope Lutheran Teen Power's Annual Shoe Collection

Clean out your closets and bring your shoes, boots, sandals, and other footwear to Hope Lutheran Church! Give away your gently worn shoes to help to provide shoes that aren't worn or an old pair that may end up in a landfill. We will gather footwear and deliver our donations to one of the drop-off points, Schuler Shoes in St. Cloud, MN. They shared with us that after the footwear is donated, the shoes are paired and sorted, and the footwear goes to four different places. The newer ones may be donated to the shelter food shelf and then sold at shelters for \$5.00/pair. The money is then donated to the shelter's food shelf. Some of the shoes stay in Minnesota with a program called "Shoe Away Hunger", and some go to other countries where they are needed for people without shoes. The rest, if pretty worn out, or are singles, are shredded and used for playground surfacing of rubber mulch. **Please clean out your closets and bring your bags and boxes of your household's gently worn footwear to Hope Lutheran Church.**

Help us to promote "Shoe Away Hunger".

**GOAL IS TO GET
MORE THAN 700 SHOES**



From Jenn Warnock, Lay Minister

"Where there is no vision, the people perish" Proverbs 29:18

Happy New Year beloved people of God!

As we greet the New Year, we often look forward with resolution(s), with vision. We renew commitments and we make goals and we envision successes. As Christians, and as Church, what is our vision for 2026 and beyond? Jesus tells his disciples in Matthew 6:21, "where your treasure is, your heart will be also". Is Jesus our treasure? And, do we have a commitment to serving and following God? Do we follow our hearts to worship and to prayer and to community?

Now, everyone in Southwest Minnesota knows that the Minneota Vikings are an amazing and successful high school sports program across all teams! But, would the Minneota Vikings be as exceptional and successful as they are without **vision**, and without **commitment**? Imagine, if you will, that the athletes of Minneota only showed up for practice when they felt like it, or when there was nothing else to do? What if the parents never brought the athletes to practice or attended any of their games? Suppose the coaches would rather read the sports page or play games on their phones than care and coach? What if there was not adequate or consistent funding sources to support the program? I think there would be a very different Minneota athletic world.

Where is our treasure, our hearts, our priorities as church? A church who values **God over All** will prioritize God's will and His way, His people and His house, His gospel and His mission over everything. In the manner that we support our sports, this includes consistent church attendance, consistent monetary support, and consistent community building within and without the church family. All my life, both as a pastor's daughter and pastor's wife, I have heard people make this statement: *"our church needs to grow, how do we make our church grow"*. Just like anything else, a garden, a family, a sports team, we nurture **what is important to us!** So many times, those same churches asking those questions are looking for something or someone to come in from outside and magically make everything the way that they want it. (Usually financially) Basically, if everyone is following the vision, and is committed, the church will be and will remain healthy. If we only attend worship when we feel like it, what if eventually nobody feels like it? Are we waiting for everyone else to contribute financially? Do we want the church to be there for our families for baptisms and confirmations and weddings, but we make no commitment to the church and are surprised when we show up one day and the church is no longer there? I live in a former church building and am reminded of this often. We drive by former church buildings that now function as community centers or daycare centers.

The church is more than our buildings, however, as beautiful as they are. The church is the body of believers, the Family of God. It is a spiritual bond. As we nurture our biological families, so should we care for and nurture our church family. It is important, it is worth commitment, it is worth following and sustaining the vision. We know God's plan for us as outlined by the prophet Jeremiah: "plans to prosper you, and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." What are our plans? What is our vision for 2026 (and beyond)?

May God bless us everyone, and lead us in His way in this New Year!

In Christ Alone,

Jenn

Council President's Report

December is a busy month, and this was certainly true at Hope Lutheran. The month was filled with many events and activities, supported by a great deal of behind-the-scenes work that made it all possible.

I am deeply thankful for all who put in extra time and effort preparing the church for the holidays; planning and providing music throughout the month; preparing for, participating in, and supporting the Minneota Mission Trip baking day; and planning, preparing, and supporting the Hope Lutheran Youth Ministries Christmas Program, among many other contributions. I am also grateful for your continued support of and presence at Hope Lutheran. Our members support in and for Hope Lutheran does not go unnoticed.

I would also like to express my appreciation to all who, despite many commitments at church and at home, participated in the initial meetings with Reverend Peter Soli. That being said, I understand - it was an absolutely busy time to be starting the process - so, do not be discouraged if time did not work for you to attend, you can pick right up by reviewing the letter that was sent out. Feel free to reach out with questions, concerns, or comments - and certainly we will take prayers as we start the work. Reflecting my interactions with Reverend Soli—both prior to and during December—I am encouraged by the breadth of experience he brings from his years serving congregations. He understands the day-to-day life and work of the church, having spent his vocation immersed in its ministry. This background and knowledge are new for Hope Lutheran, and it is clear that he is thoughtfully focused on our congregation and our future.

During one of our meetings, Peter invited everyone to share how they were doing. With my work life especially busy this December and being a mom of four teens/tweens—“providing the Christmas magic”—the season felt overwhelming. Another member shared that we had entered the season of Advent and that, for her, it was a time to slow down and reflect. Advent is meant to be a time to slow our pace and focus on the meaning of Christ's coming and reign—a season of hope, peace, and watchfulness. Her reflection gave me pause as December and Advent have not felt this way for me in recent years or if I were to be honest with myself, perhaps this season has never felt this way to me. As I sat down to write this newsletter, this became an “aha” moment for me: a reminder of how much we need meaningful interactions across a broad cross-section of our congregation, where insight, perspective, and community can be shared.

Many members and groups met throughout December to prepare for the end-of-year. One of those groups was the Trustees, who met prior to Christmas to review the proposed 2026 budget for Hope Lutheran. This budget will be reviewed at the January meeting, after which the Council will finalize and vote on it. A bit different from previous years, there will also be an informal meeting and discussion regarding the proposed budget for those who are interested on the Sunday prior to the Annual Meeting. This approach was recommended as a best practice, and I look forward to the questions and dialogue that can take place ahead of the Annual Meeting so members feel informed and engaged.

You may recall that I previously shared that another congregational survey would be sent out before the Annual Meeting. I had not forgotten about this; rather, during planning conversations with Reverend Soli, he shared that he may recommend conducting a survey as part of his work with the congregation. In light of that, I felt it would be best to focus on Reverend Soli's survey when the time comes. In the meantime, if you would like to share what you believe is going well, what could be improved, or any suggestions you may have, please feel free to reach out to me by phone or email.

This past year—and the holiday season—has been a difficult time for many. As we move into the new year, I want to continue to pray for understanding, patience, and empathy of others. We never truly know what is happening in another's life or home, and if nothing else, we can always choose kindness.

As we begin the new year, I wish each of you peace, hope, and God's blessings in the months ahead.

Amie Ascheman
Hope Lutheran Council President

2025 WORK GROUP 1**Updated 12-2025****FUNERALS ARE SERVED ON A ROTATING BASIS*****Sunday Duties are: Ushering***

January:	Scott & Barb Knutson	507-828-9111	507-828-9117
April:			
July:			
October:			

	#1		#2	Home #	#1 Cell	#2 Cell
Anderson	Josh	&	Bri		320-226-3745	507-828-8113
Anderson			Jennifer			507-828-2326
Anderson	Keith			507-872-6290		
Anderson	Scott				507-828-1971	
Bordewyk			Trish		507-829-1883	507-829-2194
Breyfogle	Nicholas	&	Allison		763-234-5767	507-828-2787
Dalager	Charles	&	Linda	507-872-6062		
Davis			Bobbi Jo			507-829-4552
DeSmet	Richard	&	Jasmine		605-881-4887	605-881-4138
Dovre	Allan	&	Rita	507-872-6059	507-828-7682	507-828-1415
Drown	Joe	&	Judy			507-828-4468
Fadness	Jon	&	Lisa			507-829-7487
Fier			Fran	507-872-6795		507-828-1423
Gilgert	Ronald			507-872-6743		
Hennen			Jen		507-829-4547	507-828-8394
Hettling	Royal			507-872-6326		
Horner	JJ	&	Jessica		507-828-7497	507-829-2799
Johnson	Ben	&	Becca		507-828-9079	763-843-0865
Josephson	Scott	&	Roberta		507-530-6091	507-530-6095
Knutson	Scott	&	Barbara		507-828-9111	507-828-9117
Kompelien			Courtney			507-829-4783
Larson	Danny	&	Tracy	507-872-6068	507-828-6080	507-828-0389
Miller	Stan	&	Loralee	507-872-6526		
Muhl	Austin	&	Whitney			507-829-0455
Myhre	Cory	&	Leah		507-706-0006	507-401-7983
Myhre	Kurt	&	Kim	507-872-5481	507-829-2902	507-828-8008
Myhre	Nels	&	Pat		507-872-6787	
Nuytten	Richard (Fig)	&	Linda		507-828-7789	507-829-9379
Opdahl	Anthony	&	Kathy		507-828-6987	605-999-1557
Pesch	Henry	&	Taylor Burley		507-828-2459	218-330-3097
Petersen	Patrick				507-401-7922	
Pohlen	Alex	&	Jenny		507-829-2693	507-330-4628
Prellwitz			Brenda	507-872-6996	507-530-3878	
Rassier			Susan			507-828-2509
Reiss	Chad	&	Moriah		507-828-2999	507-828-2627
Roberts	Jerren	&	Erin		605-370-1679	507-530-4333
Rokeh	James	&	Helen	507-872-6847		
Sonnenburg	Tavin	&	Caitlyn		507-530-6055	507-829-2549
Stiensen	Doug	&	Katie Blegen			507-828-3635
Thompson			Sandy	507-872-6212		
Tolk			Sandy	507-872-6730	507-530-1849	
Van Keulen	Jeff	&	Dawn		507-829-8398	507-829-8399
VanDePutte			Lois	507-872-6422	507-530-9385	
Wambeke			Judy	507-872-6069		763-843-9703
Wiese			Nancy			507-530-5502
Yeo	Jeff					