

# West Denmark News

## SEPTEMBER 2025

### A GLIMPSE OF DATES TO COME:

- September 13: Ravenholt reunion at the Parish Hall  
September 26: Community supper (see page 5)  
October 5: Harvest Fest  
**October 18;** **7pm** West Denmark Heritage Council Concert Hanneke Cassell Band featuring Hanneke Cassell ,Jenna Moynihan and Keith Murphy (Do not miss this!!! Hanneke and Jenna are instructors for the West Denmark Fiddle school and will have you toe tapping, then dancing and no doubt, the bells will ring!)
- October 26th:** **2pm** Peter Fletcher Classical guitar concert, Sponsored by the Luck Library  
Check out Peter's extensive and impressive website <https://peterfletcher.com/> and plan to attend this amazing free event!
- October 24th: Community supper(s)  
**November 15th:** Local musical artist Steven Hobart in concert. Details to follow!

### ◇ Special Days in September ◇

#### Birthdays

- 10 Marlis Petersen**  
**11 Brian Hacker**  
**Mark Johnson**
- 15 Donna Pedersen**  
**22 Maggie Petersen**  
**26 Todd Johnson**  
**27 Joyce Kessler**  
**28 Britta Petersen**  
**30 Thomas Kessler**

#### Anniversaries

- 1 Shawn Mai & Chuck Parsons**  
**6 Karn & Hans Hanson**  
**21 Jenni & Ty Tretsven**  
**29 Pam & Roger Petersen**



### JOIN THE CHOIR IN SONG!



The WD Choir will begin regular Wednesday evening rehearsals, **7:00-8:15, on September 24th**. We will be preparing for our traditional first-time-singing for the service on Harvest Fest Sunday, October 5th. If you would like to be a part of the group, and I hope all who read this will consider it, please come to the first rehearsal. If you have a question, call 715-419-3303.

## WEST DENMARK SEPTEMBER PASTOR'S COLUMN

As summer's warmth yields to the crispness of fall, we stand at a point of transition. The change from summer vacation to the start of a new school year stirs nostalgia in me, even years after leaving school. This time of year brings a mix of anticipation and reflection. Each summer offers promises of adventure, yet I often find myself lamenting the experiences that slipped away. Parker Palmer beautifully states, "There is as much guidance in what does not and cannot happen in my life as there is in what can and does – maybe more."; His words encourage us to rethink our views on disappointments during this season of change.

Let's recognize that closed doors bring invaluable wisdom. Instead of seeing these moments as failures, we should embrace them as lessons that illuminate the paths not meant for us, helping us discern our journeys.

There is a vibrant new group that has started at West Denmark. The group is called Encore. The purpose of the group is to provide safe and courageous space to reflect on the experience of aging. The questions that seem to arise are ones that Parker Palmer invites us to reflect on...What did you hope for this summer? What doors have seemed to close in life? Within our lament may lie new directions waiting to emerge. Life is rich with learning, even in sadness lies growth. Having spaces to reflect on these human realities can be the doorway into new perspectives.

As we welcome this new season, let us honor the changes around and within us, celebrating the guidance we gain from both our choices and the paths we forgo.

Warm wishes for a season of reflection and discovery,

Shawn Mai  
Interim Pastor, West Denmark

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## TAKE AWAYS FROM THE SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

*from Terry Spreiker*

On August 10th, members, friends and supporters of West Denmark Lutheran Church filled the fellowship area of our church to overflowing. We came together to participate in the Church's Semi-Annual meeting, and it was an energetic group gathering.

The meeting's agenda was to get a report from the church's Transition Team, (Nikki Strandskov, Connie Engblom, Paul Petersen and Barb Kass, representative on the Team from the Church Council), on the results of the survey about calling a new Pastor. In addition to hearing about the survey results, the Transition Team and Church Council members gathered further input from persons in attendance.

Collecting your comments, ideas and suggestions has been the first step in working with the Synod to place a call for applicants to serve as a replacement for Pastor Linda. The next step in the Call process is for the Church Council, assisted by the Transition Team, to draft a site profile that describes the church community at West Denmark, and the qualities and characteristics we are seeking in a new pastor. Drafting of West Denmark's site profile is currently being prepared for submission to the Synod. There will be updates to this work in both the church bulletin and the newsletter, so watch these publications for regular information.

For anyone who couldn't attend the meeting and would like to see the survey results or to add your personal comments to the information we are gathering, please get in touch with Terry Speiker (cell# 925-681-9098). She will add your thoughts and comments to the results and can answer your questions on the call process.

Thank you for your participation and involvement in this adventure.....it's an exciting time to help craft the future of West Denmark Church!!

## CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING NOTES FROM AUGUST 14, 2025.

Present: Terry, Mary, Liz, Jeff, Nancy, Barb

Finance Report: Liz

- o Upcoming meeting with our insurance rep. to discuss the needs of the Woodland School.
- o Liz will be putting together quarterly snapshots of our financial picture for the newsletter.
- o The Finance committee is putting together a five-year review of our expenses and revenue and a five-year projection.

Discussion of the survey results and the semi-annual meeting

- o The Call committee still needs to be chosen.
- o Terry is writing the church profile for the synod.

Motion to extend the council positions of Terry and Jeff for one year to keep continuity during our pastoral search. M,S,A

Woodland School report.

- o Anticipate licensure in September and opening in late September.
- o Fridge, stove, and food prep area has been installed in the church basement.

Discussed Dane School rental request

Other items discussed: reinstituting Friday Potluck, Ravenholt reunion, pizza oven building, labyrinth, winter concert and creating a protocol for concerts that the church puts on, plowing and weed whipping.

**Next meeting: September 23rd.**

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### Finance report: YTD

Category	Total for January – August 20, 2026	% of Annual Budget
<b>Income:</b>		
Gifts and Support	\$64,526	117.32%
Other revenue	\$38,429	274.30%
<b>Total income:</b>	<b>\$102,955</b>	<b>149.19%</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>		
Personnel	\$21,686	36.67%
Ministry Support	\$6,385	172.32%
Utilities	\$12,941	136.62%
Property	\$12,051	249.47%
Fundraising	\$1,012	0%
Social Ministry	\$2,990	138.03%
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$82,431</b>	<b>103.94%</b>
<b>Net Expense (income – expense)</b>	<b>\$20,523</b>	

## **WEST DENMARK WORSHIP NOTES**

### **SUNDAYS AT WEST DENMARK:**

#### **8:30 MEDITATION GROUP**

You are invited to join our 8:30 Meditation Group, which meets in the balcony of the church. In a world that can often feel chaotic, this gathering has become a grounding and connected time for all participants. We start with a short reflective reading, follow it with 15 to 20 minutes of silence, and wrap up with a discussion about our experiences. It's a beautiful way to center ourselves and find peace together.

#### **10 AM WORSHIP**

Join us for our thriving 10 AM worship service, filled with inspiring music, engaging lay participation, and thoughtful reflections on lectionary texts. Invite neighbors who may be looking for community to experience our eagerness to welcome. Stay afterward for coffee, delicious treats, and meaningful conversations at 11 AM!

### **NEW INITIATIVES**

#### **Based on Feedback from the Transition Survey**

The Church Council met on Thursday, August 14 th and discussed and accepted the results of the survey prepared by the Transition Team. Thanks to all of you who answered the survey questionnaire....it has many great ideas in it to help shape West Denmark's future.

Based on your comments, the Church Council has decided to proceed with the following new activities, initiatives and programs at West Denmark:

- Designing and constructing an outdoor pizza oven to be used to host pizza nights, for both the West Denmark congregation and for the larger community. Jeff Wetzig has volunteered to organize a team of other volunteers to work with him on this project. He anticipates that construction work will begin in late Spring 2026. Please talk to Jeff if you have questions or if you would like to help build the oven.
- Acting as a host site for, and/or sponsoring or organizing and advertising a minimum of one concert per month at West Denmark. Concerts will be open to the public and we propose to collaborate with the Heritage Council in this undertaking. Please talk to any of the Council members if you have questions or ideas about monthly concerts.
- Beginning in late September, West Denmark will act as the site for monthly no- host potluck dinners for church members, friends and supporters. The dinners will be held at the Hall. Please check the Newsletter and the weekly church bulletin for information on these upcoming dinners.

In addition to these initiatives, the Council would like to restart or redesign the small group progressive dinners that occurred in the past amongst West Denmark members. If you are interested in participating in this project, please let one of the Council members know and we'll follow up with all who are interested.

We will report back to you in upcoming Newsletters as these initiatives, and others that you suggested, proceed.

## MONTHLY POTLUCK SUPPERS

*from Nancy Moe*

The results of the church survey showed interest in potluck suppers. I wasn't around when they took place many moons ago. I'm told the potluck took place in the Fellowship area and was well attended (until it wasn't). Perhaps the energy on Sunday mornings has gotten people thinking about connecting again through more food and laughter so there is some excitement about having a potluck again.

The Council consulted the current calendar and found a couple of dates that would work, Friday **September 26th** and Friday **October 24th**. For more space we will have the meal in the Gym-Parish Hall starting at 5:00pm, but come when you can. If you can bring part of a meal to share great, don't let the lack of a casserole prevent you from coming. As a matter of fact this is not restricted to WD congregants. If you know someone that would enjoy this kind of gathering with us, then invite them.

We'll see how these meals go and may plan more for 2026. If we plan once a month potlucks in the winter months would you attend? Easy to say "yes" when the roads aren't slippery and the sun is up until bed time. Maybe a potluck is just the thing we need when it's dark outside at dinner time, to add light to our lives. Let a council person know what you think.



## ENCORE GROUP DISCUSSION

Do you wonder what all the fuss is about the "second half of life", especially if you feel like you're well into (or beyond) the second half of your life? Do you remember what it felt like to talk with your friends about all the challenges, opportunities and learnings occurring in your young adult years?

Do you wish you had a place where you could talk about what this stage of adulthood means to you, what it feels like, what you think about it.....a place where you can learn from others what it means to them?

If this description sounds like you, maybe you would like to join others at West Denmark who are asking themselves some of these questions. The ENCORE group will meet next on Thursday, September 11th in the Fellowship area of the church. Meetings are held twice a month, from 5:30 pm -7:00 pm. Volunteers from the group act as the leader for the sessions and topics are chosen by attendees.

Everyone with an interest in the topic is welcome!!

## FAMILY/YOUTH/KIDS' CORNER

### Sunday School:

**Sunday School Rally Day is September 7th!** All children going into 4k through 6th grade are invited to join us for our Sunday School activities. Jenni Tretsvan is our Sunday School Coordinator again and she'll be welcoming our children to church starting at 9 a.m. on that morning. Children, grandchildren, friends – come one, come all!

### Our Faith Journey: Wednesday church time at Luck Lutheran:

4K-6th grade children are invited to join in the activities happening at Luck Lutheran. Children break into age groups and grow their faith through developmentally appropriate activities and bible lessons. A meal is served as well. We've had fun watching this on Wednesday nights as we joined Luck Lutheran for confirmation and encourage all ages to consider participating. Families are encouraged to join their children for the meal. **There will be an OFJ parent orientation/registration meeting on Wednesday, September 17th from 6:30-7:00 p.m.** Please come to register your child and find out what is happening this year. **OFJ Kick-Off will be on September 24th from 5:30-6:00** supper that will include hot dogs with s'mores over the campfire. From 6:00-7:00 Carissa from Luther Point will be here with games and songs. Please join us!

### Confirmation:

Our confirmation studies include youth 7th – 9th grade. Once again we'll be collaborating with area churches and working with Luck Lutheran on confirmation.

**Confirmation orientation will be on Wednesday evening, September 17th from 7:00 – 7:45PM in the Luck Lutheran church fellowship hall for first and second year students and parents.**

- You will meet our new Luther Seminary Intern, Dana Paulsen. She will be helping with Confirmation this year as she learns and explores the many areas of pastoral ministry. Welcome, Dana!
- We will be discussing Confirmation expectations for the year and going over the schedule.
- Class time will normally be on Wednesday evenings from 6:00 – 7:00PM.
- All families will be signing up to help with our Wednesday night OFJ suppers that begin at 5:30PM on Wednesday evenings.

If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Mary Ann Bowman at 715.554.0789 or [bowman.prma57@gmail.com](mailto:bowman.prma57@gmail.com)

### Youth :

Our youth met in August and decided on a location and time for their mission trip in 2026. Youth and their adult mentors will be going to Bayou La Batre, Alabama in July, 2026. We will be working with YouthWorks – a well known and respected youth mission organization. You'll be hearing a lot more about this trip as we head into the new year. Thank you all for all your support in helping us get to this point for our young people.

## B.U.D.D.I.E.S. FROM WEST DENMARK

*from Christy Wetzig*

This summer Mercy and Abel Wetzig participated in the **Building Up Dedicated Disciples Into Experienced Servants** (in short, Buddies) program at Luther Point Bible Camp. For two week sessions this summer, a cohort of about six 10-12th graders acted as counselors-in-training and camp workers, while also studying the Bible and worshipping together. One week of Abel's session included helping with the VBS program at Luck Lutheran, and one week of Mercy's session included Camp Breakaway, a camp for children with life-threatening illnesses. A highlight for both of them during their time at Luther Point was developing relationships and enjoying time with their fellow Buddies. Washing dishes, somehow, was not among their highlights. Assuming they forget their time in the dishroom, they both look forward to Buddies again next year.



### ROBERT W. BUNE 1930-2025

Robert W. Bune, widower of Gerda Ravnholt Bune, died January 26 in Washington State. His ashes will be interred at West Denmark Cemetery next to his wife's at the Ravenholt Family Reunion in mid-September. Bob and Gerda both had teaching careers, she in home economics and he in music; he was choir director and music teacher at Ballard High School for many years. Bob and Gerda were early Family Campers at West Denmark — in the days when KP meant washing dishes by hand, Bob was always a great volunteer. Bob and Gerda leave two sons, Kai and Svend. We extend our sympathies to them and the entire Ravenholt clan.

## **AN EXCERPT FROM PASTOR MARY ANN BOWMAN'S SERMON ON AUGUST 10, 2025**

Do you know about the Danish Christian martyr, Kaj Munk? A friend of mine just happened to post information about him a couple of days ago on Facebook. I followed her link and learned that Kaj Munk's story is powerful and resonates with the urgency of Jesus' message for us today. I give credit to Anna Madsen for much of my sermon from here on in. The quotes are from her blog post written on the OMG Center for Theological Conversations in February, 2019.

Anna writes this: "Kaj Munk was a Danish playwright, killed by the Gestapo in the dark of the night, and whom the Church commemorates as a Saint on January 5th. Munk might be best known as an author of several plays, but he also was a [Lutheran] pastor who served a small parish in Vedersø, until the night of January 4, 1944. That's when the Gestapo broke into the parsonage, dragged him away from his wife and children, shot him, then callously tossed his body in a nearby ditch. The body was found on January 5th. The Gestapo assassinated Pastor Munk because he had the audacity to write and preach against the danger, the lies, the intimidation, the cruelty, the threat of the German regime, and he had no time for the Danes who were complicit or remained silent.

Munk wrote the following words for a community newsletter not long before he was killed by the Gestapo on January 4, 1944:

"What is, therefore, our task today? Shall I answer: "Faith, hope, and love"? That sounds beautiful. But I would say—courage. No, even that is not challenging enough to be the whole truth.

Our task today is recklessness. For what we Christians lack is not psychology or literature...we lack a holy rage—the recklessness which comes from the knowledge of God and humanity.

- The ability to rage when justice lies prostrate on the streets, and across the face of the earth; a holy anger about the things that are wrong in the world.
- To rage against the ravaging of God's earth, and the destruction of God's world.
- To rage when little children must die of hunger, when the tables of the rich are sagging with food.
- To rage at the senseless killing of so many, and against the madness of militaries.
- To rage at the lie that calls the threat of death and the strategy of destruction peace.
- To rage against complacency.
- To restlessly seek that recklessness that will challenge and seek to change human history until it conforms to the norms of the kingdom of God." (End quote from Munk.)

Anna continues with these reflections on Munk's article:

"The recklessness of which Munk spoke is not recklessness that is self-serving, that is hateful or spiteful or violent or mean-spirited. It is recklessness that speaks the Word of God, hears the Word God, and then acts on the Word God, regardless of the cost. It is recklessness that refuses to be tamped down by fears, by avoidance of conflict, by ducking the facts of injustice and suffering, by questions about timing or process or appropriateness.

*continued on page 9...*



...continued from Pastor Bowman's Sermon, page 8

It is a holy rage, a righteously indignant fury that we would feel if our own children were starving, if our own children were floating the waters, if our own water were polluted, if our own children were shot for the color of their skin, if our own religious group were profiled, if our own parents were sleeping in boxes, if our own families were denied health insurance, if our own loved ones were rejected, scorned, maligned, threatened, killed.

The holy rage manifests itself in Word and Action that names wrongs, that speaks truth, that protests, that changes, that repudiates, that calls out injustice, that works to change oppressive systems, that stands up to manifest death and fear and embraces manifest life and hope.”(End quote from Anna.)



Kaj Munk, 1898-1944:  
Pastor, Playwright, Martyr

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## LEITOURGIA...

### What does this word mean and why is it important to us?

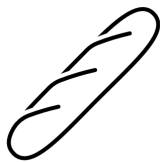
*from Terry Spreiker*

Thanks to Pastor MaryAnn Bowman for sharing the following information and pointing out the significance behind this Greek word.

Leitourgia means liturgy and is made up of a combination of two Greek words, “laos”, which translates as people, and “ergon”, which translates as work. Liturgy means “work of the people” and is used to describe a pattern of or for worship.

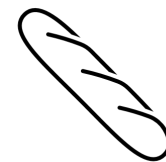
At West Denmark we have taken this word to heart in the way we worship and design our liturgical services.....we believe that our liturgy is truly the “work of the people” of our church.

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## LOAVES & FISHES MONTHLY REPORT

### July 2025



Open Tues. & Thurs. 11 – 1:00  
Lions Hall, 300 S. 1 st Street Luck, WI  
P.O. Box 554 Luck, WI 54853

# Households served: 52  
Luck 30 Unity 21  
Adults: 89 Children: 20  
Total people: 119  
Donations: Money: \$170  
(Below includes TEFAP, purchased, donated)  
Weight of food coming in: #2970  
Weight of food going out: #2754  
Volunteer hours: 74

Needs for next month: bread, eggs, pasta, sugar  
We can always use more volunteers. Contact  
Pam Girtz  
320-232-7541 or girtzp@gmail.com.  
Gena Bugno nobug115@yahoo.com



## **WOODLAND SCHOOL: Curious About What's Happening with the Woodland School?**

If you take a look out the east windows of the Church or walk around the back, you can track the headway made in a hill slide installation in our Nature Playscape. Can you picture young children's delight as they slide down the hill again and again? This has been one of the projects several volunteers (Ronnie, Jeff, Carl, and others) have been tackling this month. Thank you!



Other exciting coming attractions in our Nature Playscape are a Mud Kitchen (thanks John and Connie) and an amazing set of hand-crafted drums and xylophone for our Music/Sound Area (thanks Jonathan Wilson)!

The Woodland School Working Group (Carrie Petersen, Liz Dodge, community member Nicole LaLond, and Mary Jensen) and other volunteers participated in Work Days this past month to set up indoor classrooms including an eating area and office area as well as tidying up Trail areas and the Nature Playscape. Please let us know if you'd like a tour ([wdwoodlandschool@gmail.com](mailto:wdwoodlandschool@gmail.com)) or talk with Carrie, Mary, or Liz at Church.



In addition, Al Zook has started tallying the miles for his 90th birthday 100-mile walk to benefit children of the West Denmark Woodland School. If you might be interested in supporting Al and making a donation or pledge, please see the Donation/Pledge Form on the next page.

We are nearly ready to schedule a licensing visit. For this, all of our handbooks and procedure manuals must be submitted, learning areas set up, and insurance obtained. As you perhaps can guess, we have to meet many regulations, but we are confident that we can.

Interest In enrollment is growing well but we're looking for additional families who might be interested in enrolling their young child. If you can add a copy of our Enrollment Poster to your Facebook page, please let us know ([wdwoodlandschool@gmail.com](mailto:wdwoodlandschool@gmail.com)), and we'll electronically share a copy with you.

Finally, we'd greatly appreciate a volunteer or two who can spare some time during the Summer and Fall months to assist with trimming the edges of the play areas and inside the fence line of the Nature Playscape to help make it inviting. Trimming needs to be done about every three weeks. We have a battery-operated string trimmer that you could use. If you might be available and interested in helping out, please let us know at [wdwoodlandschool@gmail.com](mailto:wdwoodlandschool@gmail.com). Your support would be invaluable to ensuring the success of our program and the Nature Playscape.



# Celebrating Al Zook's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday 🎉 :

## A 100-Mile Walking Challenge for the WD Woodland School

Dear Potential Sponsor,

This Fall, Al Zook is walking 100 Miles this Fall to raise funds for the West Denmark Woodland School. This event will help to fund initial program operating costs as well as scholarships.

How You Can Sponsor:

Sponsors can pledge a specific amount per mile or a flat donation amount.

- Pledge per Mile: \$\_\_\_\_\_ per mile, with a maximum pledge of \$\_\_\_\_\_
- Flat Donation: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Donor Information:

- Donor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_
- Donation Amount: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Payment Information:

- Payment Method:
  - \_\_\_ Check (Make checks payable to West Denmark Woodland School with Al Zook Challenge in the Memo Line)
  - \_\_\_ Online Payment (Visit [WDwoodlandschool.org](http://WDwoodlandschool.org), click the donation tab, and use Zeffy)
  - \_\_\_ Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Thank You for Your Support!

Your contribution helps make a difference in supporting the Forest School education for young children in our surrounding communities. After the event, the Woodland School will follow up to confirm the final amount based on the miles completed (if pledging per mile) and collect the donation.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Important Notes:

- All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.
- If pledging per mile, the donor will be notified of the total miles walked after the event.
- For questions, please contact the West Denmark Woodland School ([wdwoodlandschool@gmail.com](mailto:wdwoodlandschool@gmail.com)) or Al Zook ([alzook@gmail.com](mailto:alzook@gmail.com))



## West Denmark Lutheran Church

2478 170th Street  
Luck, WI 54853

[www.westdenmark.org](http://www.westdenmark.org)

Return Service Requested

## September Weekly Calendar

### SUNDAYS

Contemplative Meditation	8:30am
Worship	10am
Fellowship time	11am

### MONDAYS

Men's Breakfast -	
Tin Shed, Frederic	7:30am
Women's Coffee	
Tin Shed, Frederic	10am
last week of month:	
TUESDAY 1:30pm, usually Cafe Wren	

### WEDNESDAY

Choir Rehearsal (begins 9/24)	7pm
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### THURSDAY

Every Other week:

ENCORE	5:30pm
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Upcoming Sessions: Aug. 28th & Sep. 11th

### SATURDAYS

AA -	9-10:30 am
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## Mark Your Calendars! Upcoming Events

9/7	Rally Sunday!
9/17	Confirmation Begins
10/5	Harvest Fest!

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West Denmark is a safe place  
to worship, study,  
and build relationships with God  
and others,  
regardless of race, creed, sexual  
orientation, gender identity, or cultural  
background.