



West Denmark News

OCTOBER 2025



WHAT'S COMING UP AT WEST DENMARK?!

- October 5th** **Høstfest (HARVEST FEST!!!)** Come celebrate fall and all its abundance with the annual potluck and afternoon of games and fun!
- October 7th** **Monarca Rapid Response Training** 6:30-8 pm at the Parish Hall
- October 18th** **Hanneke Cassell Band** 7pm at the church.
- October 21-22** Nordic Church grant on site visit
- October 23** Polk Burnett Farmer's Union Annual Meeting at the Parish Hall 6-8
- October 25th** Community Pot luck, watch the bulletin for details
- October 26th** **PETER FLETCHER** Classical Guitarist sponsored by the Luck Library and hosted by the West Denmark Lutheran Church October 26th at 2pm
- November 15th** Local Singer Song Writer **Steven Hobert** 7pm

✧ Special Days ✧ in October

Birthdays

- 2 Tony Rolloff
- 5 Liz Dodge
- 6 Mary Jensen
- Ramona Tretsven
- 14 Sheri Hacker
- 16 Lucie Jenssen
- 24 Steven Jenssen
- 29 Connie Engblom
- 30 Lucie Tretsven

Anniversaries

- 2 Terra & Erica Lumley

DO YOU CONSIDER WEST DENMARK A "THIRD PLACE"?

You might or might not have heard the term "Third Places" but it feels like West Denmark, because of its welcoming and hospitable traditions, is just such a place. Many of the articles in this month's newsletter talk about the ways that West Denmark serves the purpose of creating, providing and sustaining a third place in our community.

Third Places are a sociological term used to describe environments and places outside of work and home where people gather to interact, relax, foster social connections and build and sustain community. Third places regularly host or are the site for voluntary, informal and happily anticipated gatherings beyond the usual realms of home and work....think Family Camp, Heritage Council concerts, Aebleskiver, Harvest Fest, Sunday meditation and worship services, just to list a few. Being in a "Third Place" is good for us because they can provide us with a sense of belonging that would be hard to find without them...we feel welcome in them, and we can meet our neighbors in new ways and around shared interests.

When you read this month's newsletter, think of all the ways West Denmark is helping to build community and sustain you!!

Our Sacred Thread

As we find ourselves navigating a time of transition here at West Denmark Lutheran Church, it becomes essential to pause and reflect on who we are and where we are being called. Our congregation is blessed to hold dearly to the thread of N.F.S. Grundtvig's theology and philosophy, which remind us of the sacred nature of creation, music, culture, and the lived faith that translates into loving action. This foundation is our thread, tethering us to our beliefs amidst divisive times.

My husband and I are in the midst of consolidating our living to our lake home in St. Croix Falls. There are days I can feel unmoored.

That is why I am led back to the writer, theologian, and educator Parker Palmer. He beautifully articulates this necessity for discernment in his reflections on the threads that weave through our lives. I find myself resonating deeply with his insights, especially as we grapple with the dynamic shifts in our world. He encourages us to recognize that while our environments change, there exists a thread that remains constant, guiding us through the maze of life's complexities. William Stafford's poem, "The Way It Is," speaks this truth gently but powerfully:

There's a thread you follow. It goes among
things that change. But it doesn't change.

As we consider our own institutional thread, it's a moment to grasp this symbolism fully. Yes, holding onto that thread may not promise an easier journey, but it will ensure that we do not lose ourselves in the shadows of uncertainty. Each of us knows what it is to wander through the dark woods of doubt and fear. Yet, with our thread firmly in hand, we can find our way back home and venture into those places that may challenge us. In moments of self-reflection, I often ponder the questions that Palmer suggests:

- What has given my life a sense of meaning and purpose?
- What darkness do I need to enter and explore?
- When do I typically lose my way, and how can I prepare myself to navigate these challenges?

These inquiries resonate deeply as we reflect collectively on our mission and identity as a congregation. It is a time that we can learn to lean on one another again as we embody our faith in connection.

I'm grateful for each of you during moments of feeling unmoored. Whether it be sharing reflective moments at the 8:30 meditation group, looking out over the congregation as I consecrate the bread and the wine, or share sacramental coffee after the service, I am reminded of my thread that weaves me into the web of connection.

Blessings,
Shawn Mai,
Interim Pastor, West Denmark Church

WEST DENMARK WORSHIP NOTES

SUNDAYS AT WEST DENMARK:

WORSHIP IN OCTOBER

- October 5:** Anne McKee, Preaching
West Denmark Chancel choir, singing
Harvest Fest!
- October 12:** Christy Wetzig, Preaching
- October 19:** Pam Hanson, Preaching
- October 26:** Christy Wetzig, Preaching

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!

CALLED TO SERVE?

A Request for Volunteers to Serve on the Pastoral Call Committee

Over the next few months, a selected group of volunteers from the West Denmark congregation will begin working with the Synod and the Church Council to screen and interview potential candidates to serve as a pastor for our church.

The Call and selection process will move ahead like this:

- ★ The Church Council calls for and appoints the members of the Call Committee.
- ★ The Synod will assist West Denmark in the process by advertising for and doing an initial screening of applicants.
- ★ The members of the Call Committee will review and interview potential candidates that have been provided by the Synod and make recommendations to the Church Council.
- ★ The Council will choose the applicant who appears to best meet the needs of our church and present the candidate and the recommendation to the voting members of the congregation.
- ★ If the congregation votes to agree with the Council and the Call Committee's recommendation, the Council will negotiate with the candidate and make a formal job offer.

The Council is seeking 5 to 7 persons to undertake this work. To date, there are two persons who have expressed an interest in participating.

If you are interested in or willing and able to serve on the Call Committee, please contact Terry Speiker. Terry can be reached at 925-681-9098 or brumfieldspeiker@gmail.com

Church Council Meeting Notes from September 23, 2025.

- Present: Terry, Mary, Liz, Jeff, Nancy, Barb, Laura, Shawn, Christy
 - Guests: Erika
- Erika: presented an opportunity for West Denmark to host a quilt workshop and/or exhibition for trans identifying people at the Hall. The date is still to be determined, but probably next February or March.
- Pastor's report from Shawn and Christy
 - Eight new members joined the church
 - Meditation group has had as many as 11 participants with an 8 as a regular attendance number.
 - Christy is looking into one year Seminary certificate programs at Luther and Wartburg.
- Finance Report: Liz
 - New copy machine is being leased for 5 years which includes toner and maintenance. The old copier was removed.
 - Our insurance was renewed for next year with a slight increase. We are still waiting to hear about insurance for the Woodland School
 - Discussed the parsonage and when it will be available to begin updating it.
 - Motion to waive the fee for the Hall rental by UNIDOS for an October event.
- "Next steps" in the call process were discussed. We will be looking for volunteers to serve on the Call Committee.
- Web site redesign: Shawn.
 - The goal is to have a functional and updated website by Advent, the staff will put this at the top of their agenda.
- Nordic Church Grant site visit: either October 20th or 21st.
- Woodland School report.
 - Program procedure manual has been created. Trails and nature playscape have been worked on, as well as interior spaces: art studio, kitchen, office.
 - Preparing for licensure visit and visits with prospective families.
 - Capital campaign is ongoing.
- Upcoming events
 - Harvest Festival on October 5th
 - Two upcoming concerts on October 18th and 26th.
- Next meeting is October 21st via Zoom.

FAMILY/YOUTH/KIDS' CORNER

Our Sunday School rally day got off to a great start. Our Sunday School teaching/helper staff were installed during the service. Mark Hulsether joined Jenni, Johanna, Lucy and Gussie Tretsven, Mercy Wetzig, and Greg Marsten as our Sunday School staff. Our Confirmation youth attended their first few sessions at Luck Lutheran and are looking forward to a trip into Minneapolis to visit Agate Housing Services and learning about housing insecurity in October. They will also be learning about acolyting, being communion helpers and taking offerings. We are excited to kick off another great year for our kids and families.



HARVEST FEST



It's time to begin thinking about our up-coming Harvest Festival (Høstfest) celebration on Sunday, October 5 following our morning church service. If you love good food, singing and, the opportunity to win "Fabulous Prizes" for your entries in the potluck competitions for salads, main dishes, and desserts (the required ingredient this year is nuts) and for games: horseshoes (come and give Mary and Norman some competition), home run derby, cribbage, and scrabble, [et.al.](#) and for the Most Impressive Vegetables. Please mark your calendar, and, if it doesn't rain, continue to water that giant pumpkin you have growing in your garden.

NORDIC CHURCHES GRANT

The Final Report and Visit to the Hall

On October 21st Emily Sadjek, representing the Nordic Churches Grant Project, will visit West Denmark's Hall. The purpose of her visit is to tour the completed renewal work at the Hall that we were able to undertake with the financial assistance from this grant. By raising \$15,000 we became eligible to apply for and did receive a one-to-one matching grant from the foundation to undertake several improvements at the Hall.

Improvements include new flooring in the lower-level dining area, a new metal fire escape and metal outdoor handrailing and deconstruction and removal of the old wooden fire escape, two new fire doors and installation of new lighted exit signs, new main level ceiling, stage and downstairs lighting, and new paint in the lower level.

Watch for more information about Emily's visit during announcement time at church or in the weekly church bulletin. Thanks for the many hours of talented volunteer labor who helped make this project possible and bring it to successful conclusion!!



BOOK DISCUSSION IS BACK



from Mark Hulsether

The WDLC book discussion group, which this year will meet via zoom at 11 AM on the third Wednesday of every other month, has chosen a book for our next meeting on October 15. This is Wendell Berry's classic statement, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*. In the on-deck circle for December 17 is Trevor Noah's memoir, *Born a Crime*. You may find used copies by searching bookfinder.com.

Our group practice is for everyone to access the books in whatever way that seems best to them. If you want on or off the group email list, which is where among other things the zoom link for the meeting is circulated, please let Mark Hulsether know at mhulseth@gmail.com.

PICTURE PAGE

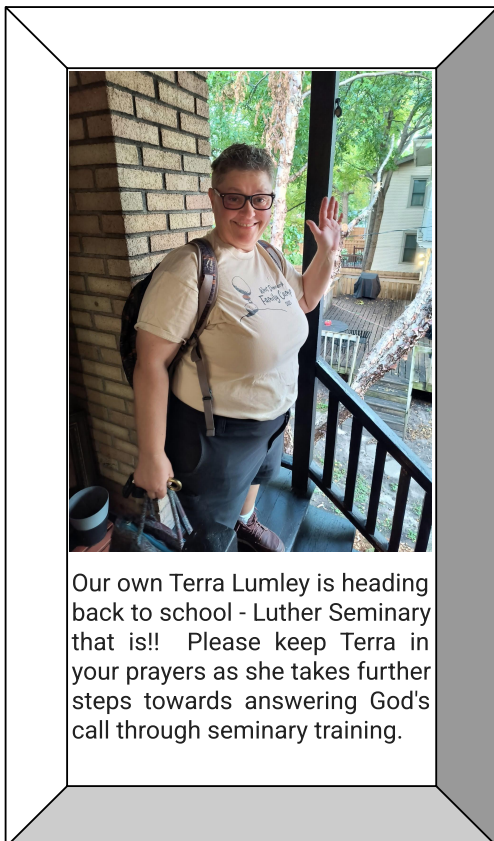
Picture submissions are always welcome! Whether sharing a personal triumph, local shenanigans, or WD Happenings, we want to see it! Pictures will be included in the newsletter whenever possible (as space and printing costs permit)



Bishop Halom joined the service on September 21st to officially install our Leadership Team.
From Left: Pastor Shawn Mai, Interim Pastor; Bishop Halom; Christy Wetzig, Interim Parish Associate; Liz Dodge, Church Administrator



Bishop Halom lent his joyful trumpet playing to the service!



Our own Terra Lumley is heading back to school - Luther Seminary that is!! Please keep Terra in your prayers as she takes further steps towards answering God's call through seminary training.



Build a Bigger Table!
On July 27th WD welcomed 6 new members:
Steve and Margaret Gehret;
Jon and Connie Wicklund; Lisa Simon;
Jen Williams; Chuck Parsons
Welcome All!

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR

The ELCA Wisconsin Bishops have been clear about their support of immigrant rights and encourage each of us to consider how best to be in solidarity with our neighbors. In the past few months, ICE has had a presence in rural Wisconsin. Our factories and businesses have migrant employees. There is a growing unease and fear of deportation.

UNIDOS MN offers education and training about ways to support immigrant communities and also offers resources to develop a rapid response plan to address ICE activity. West Denmark is hosting their MONARCA Upstander Training on October 7th at 6:30 at the Parish Hall. There is no charge for this training, but pre-registration is required. Please see the accompanying flyer and use the QR code to register.



The flyer has a light orange background with a faint city skyline at the bottom. At the top center is a logo of a monarch butterfly with its wings open, colored in orange and black. Below this, the word "MONARCA" is written in large, bold, black capital letters. Underneath "MONARCA" is the text "UPSTANDER TRAINING | LUCK, WI" in orange. Below that is "Tuesday, October 7, 2025 at 6:30 PM" in black. To the left of the center, there is a paragraph of text. To the right, there is a bulleted list. At the bottom left, there is a registration instruction. At the bottom right, there is a QR code and a URL. The UNIDOS MN logo is at the bottom left.

MONARCA
UPSTANDER TRAINING | LUCK, WI
Tuesday, October 7, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Months into the Trump administration, we are seeing a growing wave of executive orders and policies aimed at targeting and deporting millions, especially in states like ours. Agencies are showing up in neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools. We are coming together to build power, stand with our neighbors, and shine a light on these injustices.

- **Learn how to support immigrant communities**
- **Become part of Unidos' rapid response network.**
- **Ensure no one faces this threat alone.**

Register to attend our Luck, WI training—location details provided in registration.

UNIDOS MN
COMMUNITY • LEADERSHIP • POWER

REGISTER HERE



bit.ly/RRT_1007

PEANUT BUTTER PLEASE

from Barb Kass

School has started and we are collecting 18 oz jars of peanut butter again for the Backpack program at the Luck school. Please watch for sales and bring to church, or make a donation earmarked Backpack program so peanut butter can be purchased and dropped off at the school. Thank you!!!

LOAVES & FISHES MONTHLY REPORT AUGUST 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: 40
Luck 31; Unity 8
Adults: 65 Children: 18
Total people: 83
Donations: Money: \$100
(Below includes TEFAP, purchased, donated)
Weight of food coming in: #2237
Weight of food going out: #2007
Volunteer hours: 54

Needs for next month: cheese, eggs, spices,
sugar, pasta.

We can always use more volunteers!

Contact:
Pam Girtz:
320-232-7541 or girtzp@gmail.com.
Gena Bugno:
nobug115@yahoo.com

DONNA MORTENSEN 1935-2025

Donna (Casperson) Mortensen, a longtime member of West Denmark Church, died August 30, 2025. A memorial service was held at the United Pioneer Home, officiated by her grandnephew, Rev. Jason Clifton-Meller. She was the widow of Hartvig Mortensen, whom she married in 1957; he died in 2023. Donna and Hartvig are survived by their sons Allen and Duane and their families, as well as Diane Clifton and her family and other nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Our West Denmark Woodland School: Sturdy Roots, Mindful Growth

from Mary Jensen

At the West Denmark Woodland School, our mission is to develop young children's love of and comfort in nature (sturdy roots) and to support their mindful growth in woodland settings. Many of the outdoor projects we undertake and the way we set up our indoor environments reflect this mission. You are welcome to visit our outdoor and indoor settings, where you will see much progress as we get close to opening our program. Please feel free to ask us questions and share comments.

This week, Liz Dodge will be submitting our Program Handbooks and Procedures Manual for review. Once approved, we will get a date for our licensing visit. This past month, we have continued work on our Nature Playscape, Woodland Trails, and indoor spaces in order to prepare for this visit. For example, Ronnie Petersen, Jeff Wetzig, Carl Hansen, and Carrie Petersen have been working on installation of a hill slide in our Nature Playscape. Once we've added more dirt, we'll seed the hill, lay down some wood chips in the landing area, and install "tree cookie" steps.

A simple log platform is being built for the drums in the Music/Sound area. Nicole LaLond and Mary Jensen put together a small shelter for the Sand Pit. We're anticipating delivery soon of a Mud Kitchen structure in the Gardening corner and boards and branches for the Loose Parts Area. Nicole and Mary cleaned up the Woodland Trails and Exploration Areas, and Norm Hansen took down a dead tree near the trail. Indoors, Carrie has been setting up the Art Studio room. Beth Petersen added some artistic flourishes. Nicole and Mary have been setting up the Kitchen Area as well as the Meeting, Manipulatives, Book Browsing, Block, and Science/Storage Areas. Liz has been organizing the Office Area. There's lots to see. So, come visit us and see what we've done!



Using Large Muscles and Enjoying
Sensory Experiences on a Hill Slide

In addition to preparing for our licensing visit, we have been gathering information from a dozen or so interested families. We have plans for additional recruitment and family tours as soon as we establish a date for our licensing visit.

Our Capital Campaign continues with Al Zook's 90th Birthday 100-Mile Fundraising Walk. He has raised thus far almost \$2,500 to support his walk! We hope to expand soon the geographic reach of this appeal to the Twin Cities area. We also have applied a local grant to support planned Family Events for the upcoming year.



West Denmark Heritage Council

Presents:

Hanneke Cassel Band



Hanneke Cassel * Keith Murphy * Jenna Moynihan

West Denmark Lutheran Church

Saturday, October 18, 2025 @ 7:00pm

Tickets: Reserved \$25 Open Seat \$20

No fee for k-12 students with purchase of ticket by parent.

Artist Information:

www.hannekecassel.com

See web page: www.westdenmark.net
for information about purchasing tickets



West Denmark Lutheran Church
2478 170th Street Luck, WI 54853



Luck Lutheran Church

Harvest Dinner - Fall Fundraiser

Swedish Meatball Dinner

Saturday, November 1, 2025

Take-Out Only From: 4:00 until gone or 6:30 p.m.

(We will bring your meal to your car if you are unable to come into the church, just give us a HONK!!)

Dinner includes:

Homemade Swedish Meatballs,
Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Corn,
Squash, Rolls, Cookie or Bar!

Free Will Offering!

Take-Out Only: 4:00 until gone or 6:30 p.m.

Enjoy!



Small Theme Baskets - \$1.00 per entry
(located inside the church entrance)

Hope to see you there!!!

Proceeds will go towards mission projects!





West Denmark Lutheran Church

2478 170th Street
Luck, WI 54853

www.westdenmark.org

Return Service Requested

October 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

Confirmation, Luck Lutheran, 6pm
Choir Rehearsal 7pm

THURSDAY

Every Other week:

ENCORE 5:30pm

Upcoming Sessions: Oct.2nd, 16th & 30th

SATURDAYS

AA - 9-10:30 am

Mark Your Calendars! Upcoming Events

10/5	Harvest Fest!
10/7	MONARCA Training
10/18	Concert
10/21	Church Council

In This Issue

Pastor's Page	page 2
Worship Notes	page 3
Church Council	page 4
Picture Page!	page 6
Woodland School	page 9
Heritage Concert	page 10

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.