

*West Denmark Lutheran Church Luck, Wisconsin*

## DECEMBER HAPPENINGS

### **December 6th Cookie Walk!!!**

#### **9-1 or until cookies are gone! Parish Hall**

A holiday tradition for West Denmark and for many wider community members who no longer bake, the WD Cookie walk showcases beautiful holiday cookies and ethnic delights for sale by the pound. Tell your friends!! And if you are able, bake up 3 dozen of 2 of your favorite kinds and drop at the hall Friday December 5th by noon.

### **December 8th Women's Holiday Tea 10 am**

In the fellowship area in the church. (This is instead of the Women's breakfast) Bring your favorite tea cup and saucer for a time of tea, treats and conversation. One might expect there would be coffee too... it is West Denmark!

### **December 7th Annual Meeting of the Congregation**

After the 10am service, the council will provide a light lunch, followed by the meeting. Agenda items include updates on the call process, financial report followed by discussion and approval of the 2026 budget, building and grounds committee, cemetery committee, Woodland School report, and volunteer appreciation all bundled into a time frame that will allow you to get to the Christmas Tea at the Pioneer Home!

This is an important meeting, please come—we welcome your voice—let it be heard!

### **December 21 Annual Christmas Program 6pm**

Festive program and traditional dancing around the Christmas tree!

### **December 24th Christmas Services 3:30pm with full choir, 10:30pm guitar and reflection**

### **December 28th Nativity Walk at Kristan and Art Martin Sunday 5:30 pm.**

A very special evening of hiking through the woods to find a hidden Nativity, singing Christmas Carols, followed by a delicious potluck. Dress accordingly to walk on groomed trails. To RSVP and get directions call Kristan at 715-371-0700.

### ❖ **Special Days** ❖ **In December**

#### **Birthdays**

- 1 Al Zook**
- 2 Mercy Wetzig**
- 4 Jeff Wetzig**
- 20 Ronnie Petersen**
- 25 Bill Brumfield**

#### **Anniversaries**

- 2 Lucie & Steven Jenssen**
- 5 Kristan & Art Martin**
- 21 Chris & Harry Johansen**

## The Both/And

As we step into December, a month rich with tradition, we find ourselves enveloped in the beauty and complexity that this season brings. December is not only marked by festive decorations and joyful celebrations (Juletre and Christmas program December 21!), but it also invites us to engage in deeper reflections about our lives, our faith, and our community (the contemplative Christmas Eve Service at 10:30, December 24).

The winter solstice, December 21, is the shortest day of the year, and symbolizes a turning point—an invitation to embrace introspection as we await the return of longer days and warmer times. On the heels of the winter solstice, Christmas Eve celebrates the arrival of light as we celebrate the birth of the Christ Child. The birth of Jesus is the embodiment of love and hope. It is a time of great joy, yet we must also acknowledge that for many, this season can feel overwhelming.

Andy Williams belted out in his Christmas hit, “It’s the most wonderful time of the year.” However, we also know that it’s not always easy. Many in our community might be navigating personal struggles, loss, or even the pressures of holiday expectations. I encourage each of you to take care of yourselves during this busy time. It’s important to step away when needed, to recharge, and to find quiet moments in the midst of celebration.

This December, we will embark on a year-long journey through the Gospel of Matthew, deepening our understanding of the significance of the Christ Child. Together, we’ll explore how this gift influences our lives and the world around us. It’s a beautiful reminder that all our experiences—joyful or challenging—fit into the larger narrative of God’s grace and love.

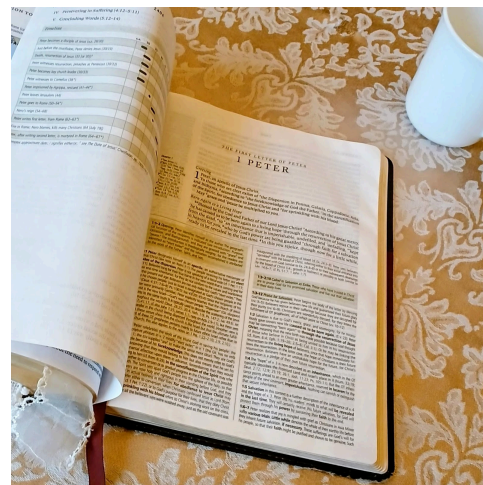
As we gather in fellowship, let’s be grateful for one another and the community that is West Denmark. May this season fill your hearts with peace, love, and the joy of connection.

Wishing you a blessed December,  
Shawn Mai,  
Interim Pastor, West Denmark Church

## BIBLE STUDY HAS BEGUN!

*from Christy Wetzig*

We’ve begun weekly meetings in the fellowship area of the church to look at the book of First Peter together. This is a pretty informal group modeled very loosely on the ancient monastic practice of *Lectio Divina*—we begin in silence with a short prayer, read a small passage together and discuss it, and we end in silence with a short prayer. We go very slowly through the verses—since there’s so much to taste in the words—so it may take us several years to get through that tiny book! Which means there’s plenty of time for you to come too!



## DECEMBER 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!

<b>November 30</b>	<i>Advent 1</i>		Christy Wetzig, preaching; Elinor Strandskov, soloist ( <i>Koppången</i> )
<b>December 7</b>	<i>Advent 2</i>		Cordelia Strandskov, preaching
<b>December 14</b>	<i>Advent 3</i>		Christy, preaching
<b>December 21</b>	<i>Advent 4</i>		Shawn, preaching
<b>December 24</b>	<i>Christmas Eve</i>	3:30:	Christy and Shawn, Worship Leaders; West Denmark Choir ( <i>A la Nanita Nana</i> )
		10:30:	Mike Miles and Barb Kass, Worship Leaders
<b>December 28</b>	<i>1st Sunday of Christmas</i>		Nikki Strandskov, preaching

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### ANNUAL MEETING DECEMBER 7

The Annual Meeting of West Denmark Lutheran Church will take place after worship on Sunday, December 7, 2025. The Council will provide a light lunch before the meeting. There is no election of new Council members (because we voted to keep the President and Secretary for one more year during this time of transition), but it will still be an important meeting with presentation of the budget for the coming year as well as an update on the search and call process. Please attend!

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### REGULAR MEETINGS

**West Denmark Bible Study** Wednesdays in December at 1pm (see page 2 for details)

**Encore: Conversations about aging** Thursdays December 4 and December 18 10:30- noon in the church. December 4th topic: Transitioning Traditions.

**WD Book Club Wednesday December 17** pg 11

**Men's Breakfast** Monday's 7:30 at the Tin Shed

**Women's Breakfast** Monday's 10 at the Tin Shed; last week of the month meet at Cafe Wren at 1:30pm.

## **Church Council Meeting Notes from November 17, 2025.**

- Present: Terry, Jeff, Nancy, Barb, Laura, Shawn, Christy
- Pastor's report from Shawn and Christy
  - o Discussed the challenges and advantages of being in the job for a year and coming to Advent season again (*Editor's Note: Turn to page 5 for Shawn's Report to the council!*).
  - o Bible study began
- Website update: Shawn
  - o Discussed the recommendations for changes to our website made by Joe and also council suggestions of additions.
  - o There will be a brief time, about a month, when the website is offline. There will be a website stand-in during that time and more Facebook postings.
- Finance Report: Liz was absent
  - o Doing well, there have been more in contributions this year but also lower expenses. Dane school siding was paid off without needing to dip into savings.
  - o Discussed many property related needs for the coming year for the church, hall, and parsonage.
- Call process information: Terry
  - o Approval of Call Committee members will be voted on at the congregational meeting. Pastor Randy will lead an orientation for the committee members.
  - o Paperwork for the synod will be shared with the congregation at the annual meeting.
- Annual Meeting plans were discussed.
- No Woodland School update this month.
- Upcoming events were discussed.
  - o Cookie Walk
  - o National Catholic Workers meeting
  - o Nonviolence training
  - o Quilting Project
  - o Garage Sale? Need to find out if there are enough volunteers.
  - o Fish Boil
  - o Christmas Program
  - o Christmas Tea: December 8th.
- Discussion about a Council retreat in January or February.
- Next Council meeting will be on December 7th after the Annual meeting.

# **Report to the West Denmark Church Council**

**November 2025**

## **Interim Pastor Report**

### **1. Apple River Conference:**

On November 5, I joined our confirmation group (Luck Lutheran, North Valley, and West Denmark) for an event with the Bishop, "Dish With the Bish". Among other things, the confirmation students joined the other conference youth in a food collection drive that was remarkably successful. The students spread-out all-over Amery, going door to door collecting food that was then distributed to Food Pantries. The evening ended with a Q and A with the bishop.

I attended the Apple River conference meeting at East Immanuel Lutheran Church in Amery this past week. During this meeting, we bid farewell to Pastor Laurie from Balsam Lake Lutheran Church, expressing our gratitude for her service. We also welcomed the new pastor of West Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Amery, Pastor Lucas Carlson, who is a recent graduate from Luther Seminary. He will be commuting from the cities to fulfill his new role.

### **2. Advent and Christmas Planning:**

Advent will begin on November 30. Christy and I are planning for our worship services for the new season of our Church year. We have written an opening liturgy for the Advent lighting, which will be led by our new member families in the congregation. For Christmas Eve, the choir will perform at the 3:30 service. Additionally, Chuck Parsons and Chris Johanssen are collaborating on piano-organ duets to accompany our hymns during the Christmas Eve service. This will enhance a festival service of lessons and carols. Mike Miles and Barb Kass will be leading a contemplative candle light service at 10:30 p.m.

### **3. Along with supporting our homebound members, the staff and I have begun identifying members that we think may need a visit. These are based on members who have become inactive, may have a particular event going on in their life, or an expressed need that has been passed along. If there are members with spiritual care needs, please let the church office know.**

### **4. I've continued to work with Joe Bjordahl, in Liz's absence, on Church communication. As I've checked out information on neighboring church websites and Facebook pages, the time and resource we put into our communication seems well spent.**

### **5. Congregational Profile:**

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Terry Speiker for completing our congregational profile for the call process. This document will play a key role in guiding us as we move forward, and I am grateful for Terry's hard work and dedication.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our church community. I look forward to our shared spiritual journey in Advent.

Blessings,

Shawn Mai, Interim Pastor

West Denmark Lutheran Church

## **NORTHWOODS HOMELESS SHELTERS OF POLK COUNTY SAY “THANK YOU!”**

Thank you to our Confirmation youth, their families, and their congregations for the collection of \$525.00 and many supplies for Northwoods Homeless Shelters of Polk County. When shelter director, Virginia Ormsby, was our guest speaker at Confirmation class on November 12, she had no idea she was going home with all these gifts. Surprise!



## **FOOD DRIVE!**

On November 5, our Confirmation youth joined forces with other church youth from our Apple River Conference. They went on a food drive throughout Amery collecting non-perishables for the Amery Area Food Bank.



**Well done, good and faithful servants!**

Our Confirmation youth represent the congregations of North Valley, Bone Lake, West Denmark, and Luck Lutheran.

**January 2026!!!!**

Back by popular demand

**GAWDY\* DESSERT THEATER!**

**January 2nd 7:30 pm and January 3rd 2pm**

Skits! Comedy! Delectable Desserts! Wine and Bubbly, Cocoa bar, and even coffee!

Freewill offering to support Youth mission trip to Alabama in July (Suggested donation \$20)

*\*Generous Antics of West Denmark Youth*

## BISHOP HALOM'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE: WHEN GOD SHOWS UP



As we approach the season of Christmas that so many of us adore, I'd like to address a few churchy words that theologians like to use and sound impressive when using them. The first word is incarnation and the second is Emmanuel.

If your church uses the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), you will again hear the passage from the first chapter of John on Christmas Day. The passage famously concludes in verse 14 with the words, "And the Word became flesh and lived among us..."

This verse speaks directly to the concept of incarnation. In other words, it speaks to a God who literally takes on human flesh and enters this world in the form of baby Jesus. It's in stark contrast to what some believe and experience - a God who exists far away, only to look down on us from God's heavenly throne. Instead, the incarnate God speaks to a God who is willing to take on the human experience with all the joys and sorrows that come with it. One can readily see that Jesus did indeed make his way through the human experience. He felt joy. He felt pain. His eyes teared up. And even if I can't recall a story when he laughed, I gotta believe that he really did!

Another passage found in the Christmas season comes from the gospel of Matthew, which references Isaiah 7:14: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, 'God is with us.'" One of the most important lessons I ever learned in seminary was in a pastoral care class. I had hoped to learn what to say, especially to someone hurting or grieving. What I learned was much more important. Instead of learning what to say, I was taught to show up - to be present. As time passes, few will remember what I say, but will remember that I was there. That's precisely why the name Emmanuel means so much to me. It's a constant reminder that God is always with us. Consider the final words in the gospel of Matthew: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20b) Presence matters because God embodies it and teaches it.

Christmas is known for its gift giving nature. We share gifts with one another to reveal our love for them. This year, I hope that regardless of the quantity or quality of the wrapped presents that lay under the tree, you will recognize the gift of presence. Not only the presence of your loved ones, but particularly the presence of God. So many of you will grieve as you experience the lack of presence from a loved one due to death or distance. My heart grieves with you. My hope lies in a God who provides and will gift you all with someone who will be present with you in some way at some time. If nothing else, remember God's presence as you receive the body and blood of Christ in the worship services that you attend, for that's yet another way in which God shows up.

Fellow disciples, Merry Christmas to you all and may the presence of God incarnate, Emmanuel, embrace you in such a way that brings warmth to your heart!

Bishop Martin

## PEANUT BUTTER PLEASE

*from Barb Kass*

The school year is underway and we continue to collect 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.

Thanks for the great response! I drop off jars every week!

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## LOAVES & FISHES MONTHLY REPORT OCTOBER 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 54  
Luck 39; Unity 13

Adults: 83 Children: 32

New families: 0

Total people: 115

Donations: Money: \$25.00

(Below includes TEFAP, purchased food,  
donations)

Weight of food coming in: # 2,174

Weight of food going out: # +2,808

Volunteer hours: 67 hours.

Needs for next month: Thanksgiving or  
Christmas food. Vegetables: canned tomatoes,  
tomato sauce, macaroni, peanut butter, pasta:  
rice, noodles, spaghetti. We can always use  
more volunteer workers.

If interested, please contact

Pam Girtz: 320-232-7541

email: [girtzp@gmail.com](mailto:girtzp@gmail.com);

Gena Bugno: [nobug115@yahoo.com](mailto:nobug115@yahoo.com)

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## QUILTERS!

We have finished and delivered the “nearly finished” quilt tops found in the church, and will be starting to piece quilts with the pieces already cut and accepting fabric for more. Call the church for meeting times. (We have often met on Mondays after the women’s breakfast.) All skill levels welcome!!!

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## THE OBITUARY PROJECT

*from Laura Jensen*

As an amateur historian and a volunteer genealogist, I have embarked on a journey to preserve the stories of those buried at the West Denmark Cemetery. My goal is to find an obituary and hopefully pictures for everyone buried there. Once gathered, the obituaries and pictures will be posted to FindaGrave.com. This is a free website which is often used by people researching their family trees. I need your help! Do you have scrapbooks full of obituaries you have collected over the years or pictures of family buried at West Denmark which you would be willing to share with me for this project? Please contact me via email at [laurajensen825@gmail.com](mailto:laurajensen825@gmail.com) or you can drop off or send items at the church. If the obituaries or pictures are original, I will take a picture and return them to you. Thank you so much!

## DECEMBER BOOK DISCUSSION

from Mark Hulsether

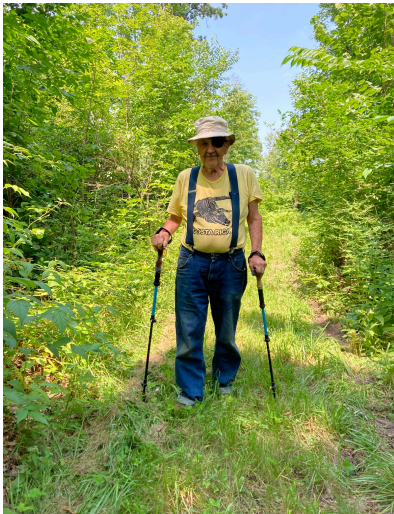
The WDLC book discussion group, which this year will meet via zoom at 11 AM on the third Wednesday of every other month, has chosen a book for our next meeting on December 17: Trevor Noah's well-received memoir, *Born a Crime*. You may find used copies by searching [bookfinder.com](https://bookfinder.com).

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](mailto:mhulseth@gmail.com).

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## 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)



Al Zook  
(pictured in summer) will complete  
his 100 mile walk on his 90th  
birthday, December 1st.  
His walk was completed as a  
fundraiser for Woodland School.  
Thank you, Al!!

In November, Steve Hobert  
performed in concert to  
raise \$500 in funds for West  
Denmark projects.  
Thank you, Steve!



## PASTORS NEW ADDRESS

Pastors Linda and Mike Rozumalski's new address: 31180 Nevers Road  
Washburn, WI 54891

# West Denmark Lutheran Church



2478 170th Street  
Luck, WI 54853  
[www.westdenmark.org](http://www.westdenmark.org)

Return Service Requested

## December 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 10:00am

### SATURDAYS

AA - 9-10:30 am

## Mark Your Calendars! Upcoming Events

12/6	Cookie Walk! (Hall)
12/7	Congregational Annual Meeting with Lunch
12/8	Women's Tea (Church)
12/21	Christmas Program (Hall)

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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.