

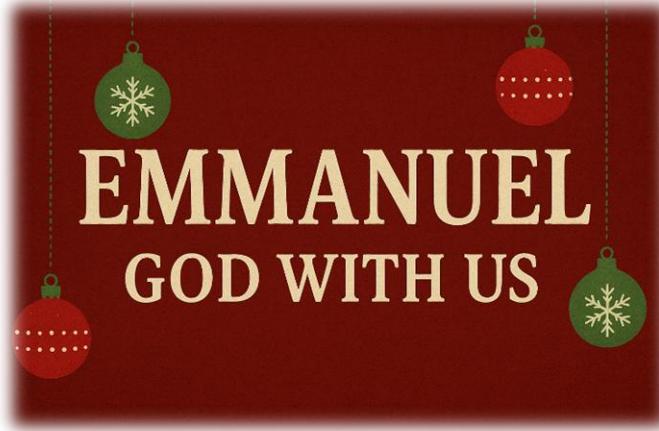


JANUARY NEWSLETTER 2026

NEW SCANDINAVIA LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

New Scandinavia Lutheran Church Council Minutes. There was no Council Meeting in December



CHILDREN'S CHAPEL NEWS:

Sunday School Class (Pre-K thru 12th Grade) 10:00 am – 10:55 am

We are using *Spark Lectionary Curriculum* for Fall semester, *Christmas Road Trip~ The Journey of a Lifetime* for our Advent Curriculum and then *Spark Lectionary Curriculum* for Spring semester.

Shelly Shipley: Pre-K thru Kindergarten

Kelly Martinson – First, Second and Third Grades

Michelle Klefstad – Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Grades

Kristal Gifford - 7th – 12th Grade – I will be here each Sunday to have a lesson for Middle School and High School Students as always 😊 It will be a laid back class with discussions about Faith, The Bible and whatever the students have questions about faith.

CONFIRMATION IS COMPLETED FOR 2025 2026 - We will be having an overnight lock-in sometime in the spring at Luther Park Bible Camp. We will have more information for you as it is scheduled.

Augsburg's *Re:Form* will be the curriculum.

December 28- No Sunday School/Confirmation Class Christmas Vacation

January 4, 2026 – Sunday School resumes.

March 29, 2026 – Palm Sunday

April 5, 2026 – Easter Sunday – No Sunday School– Easter Break

May 3, 2026 - Last Day of Sunday School and High School Senior Recognition Sunday.

THIS IS OUR CORE CURRICULUM BEFORE AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM:

Pre K and K: 2 or 3 table prayers and or bedtime prayer, The Lord's Prayer and church manners.

1st and 2nd Grade: The Lord's Prayer, Apostle's Creed and the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd The Commandments.

3rd and 4th Grade: The Lord's Prayer, The Apostle's Creed, The Commandments 1-10, Bible usage (looking up verses).

5th and 6th Grade: The Lord's Prayer, The Apostle's Creed, The Commandments 1-10, Psalm 23, John 3:16, Matthew 22:37-39, John 14:6, Matthew 7:7, Matthew 7:12, The Beatitudes Matthew 5:3-12, Isaiah 40:3,5, Matthew 7:1-2, Matthew 5:43-44, 1 John 1:7, Matthew 28:19-20.

7th and 8th Grade: The Lord's Prayer, The Apostle's Creed, The Commandments 1-10, Psalm 23, The Beatitudes Matthew 5:3-12, Ephesians 2:8-9, Matthew 18:20, John 11:25-26, Matthew 25:40, Matthew 6:19-21, Mark 9:23b, Psalm 100, Roman 3:28, John 8:31b, 32, 1 Corinthians 10:13, John 20:23 and Matthew 18:18.

High School: Be a leader and good role model, open your Bible and devotion books 3-4 times a week or daily;), read any of the above Bible verses, The Lord's Prayer, The Apostle's Creed, The Commandments 1-10, Psalm 23.

Make homemade cards for our shut-in members. Smile often and sing –Hugs to you all!

Kristal Gifford -Sunday School Superintendent, Board of Education and Family Minstry- Michelle Klefstad , Kelly Martinson and Shelly Shipley

Be sure and notify the church office of your college students address so we can update our mailing list. If you do this, they will receive notes from our congregation once a month during the school year. Let's keep them connected with us. You can also call Louise at 715-764-2072..

Thanks

WELCA Report

New Scandinavia Lutheran Church Women met Tuesday, December 9, 2025 for their Christmas Luncheon.

We opened with devotions.

We had a skit and sang Christmas Carols.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer and sang the Table Prayer

We then then enjoyed a delicious luncheon and baked goods..

Secretary Chris Brotén



Visuth Sanmai	01/02	Emily Dau	01/17
Billie Jo Peterson	01/04	Judy Ebler	01/20
Bryan Hundley	01/11	Duane Olson	01/22
Dawn Bryngelson	01/12	Sage Ebler	01/25
Ricky Reichert	01/15		

GIVING MISSION CAMPAIGN
APPLICATIONS DUE JANUARY 31, 2026

When we received the money from the insurance company from the fire, there was lots of discussion as to how to spend it. When the building was rebuilt, we had \$250,000 left. Dave Driver took the responsibility to invest the money wisely. It was put in the Mission Investment fund at the ELCA which was paying the most interest. The CD's, which were 6 years, are now coming due. The interest on these CD's is about \$56,000.

At the time of the building much discussion centered around giving some of the money to the Glory of God. It was decided at that time that we would use the interest for that work. This is money we did not plan for, nor did we earn it. It was a gift.

The council voted to give ½ away in this program and the next half will be invested and given away in 3 years. The second 3 years have now passed, we have extra money for missions without touching the principle. The council has taken into consideration that a furnace could break etc. but they feel that \$250,000 would cover any such need.

We would like to have people pick up the application at the back of the church or the one in the newsletter and apply for grants for their missions. We would like to give priority to missions that people give to or work with within the church. You would be allowed to apply for more than one. Ex: quilting \$500... and maybe school kits \$ 500.00. Apply for what you need, and we will adjust the amount given as to how many requests come in.

A committee of 5 would then review all the requests and make the awards.

We would like to accept applications in December and January. With the cutoff date being January 31. The money would then be awarded in a special dinner with a representative from the organization receiving the money present to give a little overview as to how the money would be used. Some publicity will be done to promote the fact that our church is working for the Glory of God.

The awards and a celebratory meal will be held on February 15, 2026, after church.

Individuals that people have been working with are also included to receive the money should there be cancer etc. for need.

NAME OF CHARITY YOU WOULD LIKE THE GRANT FOR

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name of charity you would like the grant for: _____

Amount Requested _____

Detailed use of the grant for: _____

Do you financially support or work for this Organization: Y N

JANUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THUR.	FRI.	SAT.
				1	2	3
4 SS & Confirmation 10:10:55 Worship: 11:00	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 SS & Confirmation 10:10:55 Worship: 11:00	12	13 Quilting 9:00-12:00 WELCA meeting 1:30pm.	14	15	16	17
18 SS & Confirmation 10:10:55 Worship: 11:00 ANNUAL MEETING	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 SS & Confirmation 10:10:55 Worship: 11:00	26	27	28	29	30	31

**New Scandinavia Lutheran Church
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P.O. Box 128
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*Return Service Requested**

