

CROSSROADS

Monthly Newsletter for:

CUSTER LUTHERAN FELLOWSHIP

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www.custerlutheran.com

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KEY UPDATE

Thank you all for your patience while we were getting our outside entrances rekeyed. For the safety of our building, the safety of the things in our building, the safety of the staff in our building and the safety of those groups that use our building, we have rekeyed all outside entrances. As we have transitioned to keyed entry, we identified individuals that would require a key on a pretty frequent basis. If you feel like we missed you, please reach out to the office and we can check a key out to you. We have set up a check out/check in procedure as was required by our insurance. Also, as you are coming to the church during office hours, we ask that you transition to using the office door for your point of entry so we are aware of who is in the church with us. We truly appreciate your understanding that we are trying to keep the church and those in the church safe.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Would you like to help with decorating the altar with poinsettias for the Christmas season? You may bring them by **Dec. 22nd** and place them in the Family Room off the Narthex. They will be placed in the Sanctuary for the Christmas Eve services.

Please let the office know if your plant is in memory or in honor of someone. You may take them home after the Christmas service. Thanks!



MID-WEEK ADVENT SERVICES

We will have Worship with Communion on Wednesday, December 3rd, and use the Holden Evening Prayer service on December 10th and 17th.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Join us for worship on Christmas Eve as we celebrate the birth of our Savior!

Christmas Eve: 4:00 PM Candlelight Service
7:00 PM Candlelight Service

Both evening services will have Holy Communion and Candle Lighting as we sing Silent Night, Holy Night.



**CHURCH E-MAIL ADDRESSES**

If you would to e-mail someone in the church office, our e-mail addresses are:

Main address— clf@gwtc.net

**OFFICE HOURS**

The church office is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday from 8:00-4:30 and 10:00-6:30 on Wednesdays.

CLF WEBSITE OFFERS ONLINE GIVING OPTIONS

On Custer Lutheran Fellowship's website, www.custerlutheran.com you will find the option to support Custer Lutheran Fellowship's mission and ministry through the "ONLINE GIVING" link. Whether you'd like to make a one-time donation or set-up regularly scheduled donations, you can do this easily through a secure server by following the instructions. At this time, CLF accepts bank account (ACH) transactions and debit and credit cards. You can set up your own login/password and make changes with your giving at any time.

**JANUARY NEWSLETTER
DEADLINE**

Please have articles for the January Newsletter to the office by **December 18th.** Thank you!

DO YOU HAVE ANY CHANGES?

Please let the church office know of any recent address changes, new email addresses or changes in your phone numbers whether home or cell phone. We are trying to keep our records up to date. Thank You for your assistance!

**ANNUAL MEETING DATE & ANNUAL REPORTS DUE DATE**

The Custer Lutheran Fellowship Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 25, 2026 at 10:30 am, with a Brunch Potluck. All Committee activity group, and Team leaders should submit their reports to the church office by January 8th. Remember to bring a dish for the potluck.

Join us for this important day in the life of our faith community.

**NEWSLETTER DELIVERY UPDATE: PICK UP AT CHURCH, RECEIVE VIA
EMAIL OR CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE**

Our church is making a change to how we distribute our monthly newsletter. Starting in January, we will no longer be mailing printed copies to our congregation members. This decision was made to help us save on mailing costs, and to embrace more sustainable practices within our congregation

You now have three convenient options for receiving your newsletter:

- **Pick up a printed copy at the church office.** Physical copies will be readily available for pickup in designated areas at the church throughout the month.
- **Receive a digital copy directly in your email inbox.** Subscribing to the email list ensures you get the newsletter as soon as it's published.
- **Find it on our Website.** Custerlutheran.com and choose the Newsletter tab on the top.

If there is a special circumstance where you would like to have it mailed, please let us know and we will happily mail one out on occasion.

How to sign up for email delivery:

If you are not already receiving the newsletter via email, contact the church office directly to let us know you would like it emailed. We want to ensure everyone stays informed about all the exciting things happening in our church community.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we implement this small change for a big impact!

Who wants to join me and several other leaders from our church in a fun way to prepare our hearts, minds, and bodies for Christmas?

Several council members and CLF staff will be joining this walking and scripture reading challenge beginning on Nov. 30, the first day of Advent. Our plan is to meet as often as possible to walk one mile, read a passage from the Bible, and take time journaling about our experience. You do not have to formally join the challenge, you can simply watch for times and dates and join us or you can make this a personal journey to walk and pray to prepare for Jesus' birth. The following is copied and pasted from the website where you can find the official challenge and sign up to get the fun "merch"!

If you want to register, make sure you click on this link or use your phone to sign up with the QR Code, but look at the top of the page for a code for a discount. Otherwise, reach out to me and I will help get you started!

Here's the site: <https://fortyfortychallenge.com/products/adventchallenge>

The Christmas Walk: A 25-Day Advent Challenge

Join us from December 1st through Christmas Day as we prepare our hearts, minds, and bodies for the arrival of Jesus. Each day includes:

- A short, powerful Scripture reading focused on the Christmas story and the life of Jesus
- A meaningful challenge to apply what you've read in your life
- One mile of walking to reflect and move with purpose

This limited-edition Advent Challenge kit includes:

- A custom **2025 Forty-Forty Advent Ornament**
- 25 tear-off sticky notes**, one for each day, with your daily Scripture, challenge, and mile tracker
- A cozy **Forty-Forty beanie** to wear on your walks
- A **bookmark** to keep you grounded in the journey
- A printable **journal** PDF for extra reflection

Whether you're walking through snow-covered streets or quiet hallways at home, this season invites you to slow down, reflect, and draw near to the One who came to be with us.

Your sister in Christ, Pastor Shannon



PLEASE NOTIFY THE CHURCH OFFICE WHEN:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| *There is a hospitalization in your family | *There is a death in your family |
| *You would like a pastoral visit | *There is a birth or adoption |
| *Someone becomes homebound | *Someone becomes unemployed |
| *There is a cause for sorrow or a cause for joy | |

Please contact Pastor Shannon Witt at 563-542-6080 or 605-673-4691 (church).



My Faith Story

By: Brooks Wheeler

I was baptized in April of 2011 and went to church off and on till about three years ago when I started confirmation. After that we started going every Wednesday and more often on Sundays. I have always gone with my mom or grandparents; sometimes in Platte, sometimes in Pringle, but mostly at CLF. I have had lots of good experiences with the church like Spark, VBS, and Confirmation. Some of the very important people in my faith journey are my mom who has always taken me to church and encouraged me to participate in church events, and my grandpa Rick who was my mentor for confirmation, Wendi who leads Spark, and my grandparents Jerry and Alison who are very involved in their church in Platte.

I am choosing to get confirmed because I feel that it is the next step in growing my relationship with God. It is a blessing to know that Jesus died for me and since I believe in him I will have the gift of eternal life. In my life Jesus is a role model of how to live and love others and a person to look up to on how to treat people. Jesus died for us and that means a lot to me because He died to save us from our sins and He gives us power and strength to live a Christian life. Being a Christian means being a follower of Christ and treating others how He tells us we should. Having Holy Communion as a Christian is very important to me, reminding me that Jesus shed His body and blood for us and it is good to remember He did that for us.

Prayer is important in my life but is a thing I struggle with. In church it is easy to pray when I am led to pray, but when I am not led to do so I struggle and that is something I want to work on. I see myself serving Christ in my life through treating others well and loving them along with praying and doing acts for Him such as helping with church services or helping people in need. I can do what He calls me to do and always be listening for that, I can also worship God regularly and think about what He has done for me.

The bible verse I picked is Joshua 1:9 which states "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go". This bible verse is important to me because it reminds us that God will be with us wherever we go and so we do not need to be afraid.

Faith Paper

My name is Jersey Barrick, and I've got no idea what I'm doing. I've been to three total churches in my journey so far, but here, the Custer Lutheran Fellowship, is where everything started to finally make sense. Starting at Sparks, like many people did, I was taught many things about the story of God, Jesus, and the many stories of the bible. I was told of the creation of the earth, the birth and death of Jesus, and of the many disciples and people who were impacted by Jesus's kindness and power. After joining confirmation, I began to dive deeper into the bible stories of Sparks and more that I haven't yet heard. However, even with all the information and words I have read, I still have my questions and moments where I truly don't understand what and why everything happens how it does. And I know that I will still have those questions in the future, but I also know I have an amazing Pastor and supportive community whom I can turn to when I need them. My relationship with God can be summarized in an On-again, off-again type of relationship. Sometimes I go weeks without thinking about what I'm doing with my life and just go with the flow. Other times, I feel overly guilty for the things and 'sins' I have committed, whether they be recent or a few years ago. Faith for me isn't defined by when and how much I think about God and my own actions, but how, as long as I believe and truly accept God as my Lord and Savior, he will forgive me, even if I can't forgive myself. I can see this in Jesus's death and resurrection. He was dead, which I interpret as the lowest possible place to be in life. Then he, against all odds, came back from the dead, proving that no matter how far down you fall, you still can climb back up, even if it seems hard. Now I don't mean to sound like one of those deep-diving theorists who think that every little thing has a bigger meaning to it, but I truly believe that Jesus's resurrection proved that everyone has a chance to redeem themselves; it's just whether or not you truly believe you can or want to. Once confirmed, I want to stay with the church I call my community. I want to become better at keeping myself from spiraling down into that deep hole of doubt and confusion. I plan to help out around the church as much as I can, and hopefully begin to attend regularly on Sundays, instead of only going during special occasions and when I'm forced to be here. I hope to actually finish the bible, not just start and then not pick it up again after a few years. I could not have joined a better, more comfortable church than the one I'm standing in, and I thank you all for being there through mine and everyone else's journey with God. I thank my family for pushing me to attend church and originally introducing me to the lord. I thank Pastor Shannon for always being there and so understanding with me and my constant, wacky questions I've asked. And I thank the community, who I can always count on to support me in my continuous journey in my faith. My bible verse is "Deuteronomy 31:6 ~ Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave or forsake you."

Faith Statement

Melody Bolen

"Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray to God these girls and boys to keep. Keep them safe all through the night, wake them with the morning light. Amen. Thank you for this beautiful day. For the chance to work and play. Please be with our family all night long, help us learn to do what's right, not what's wrong. Amen." This is the prayer that has been said to me since day one of my life. My grandma made up parts of it and told it to my mom and my mom taught it to me and my brother. I think it is a major foundation of my faith and also outlines how I want to live each day.

Through these words, I was introduced to the importance of prayer and faith in my life.

As a child, I grew up with Christianity as my faith. From preschool to 3rd grade I went to Sioux Falls Lutheran School in Sioux Falls. I would like to believe that if my parents had never enrolled me there, I wouldn't be where I am today, both in my faith and personality wise. I learned how to be kind, creative, and to have a good attitude. Sioux Falls Lutheran was the foundation for my faith, along with my family, and friends.

My family's faith started long before I was born. My great great grandpa on my moms side built First Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls and he was the first pastor there. I can remember going there as a kid and thinking about how beautiful it is. I still go there now with my family for Easter and Christmas services and for the Norwegian Bazaar. One of my favorite church experiences is in Sioux Falls on Christmas Eve at the candlelight service. I get to spend time with my family and experience a special service as a faith tradition.

Outlaw Ranch is another big step in my faith journey. On my dad's side, my family donated the land that Outlaw Ranch is on today. I didn't know that until the first time I went there, but now it makes me feel even more connected to the area and to my faith when I go to camp. When I first came to Custer, I was struggling with moving and worried about finding friends. That is, until I went to Outlaw and was greeted by a loving community, not just from Custer but from all over, not unlike when I came to Confirmation Class for the first time.

Being in this caring community at Custer Lutheran Fellowship has made me realize just how many people here would stand up for me, or who would always be there to lend a helping hand. I have had so many great experiences in Confirmation Class. A big part of growing as a person from when I moved here to now is this church and all the people within it. I also have been exposed through Confirmation to mission trips, like Church on the Street that have allowed me to share my faith with others.

The Bible verse that I choose to represent my faith is Psalm 46:5, "God is within her, she will not fail." I know that this means that God is with me and that I can count on my faith when I go through hardships in life. I can also pass my faith on to my kids, family, and community in the future because God lives within me.

In summary, my faith has been shaped by traditions, like the prayer that I say with my mom and brother at night, and with my history going to a Christian school before moving to Custer. My faith has continued to grow through experiences I have had in Custer at camp, with my family, and with friends and mentors through the Confirmation Class at Custer Lutheran Fellowship. I know that I want to continue with my faith journey as an adult and that with God, I can not fail.

Sam Shepard Faith Story

My name is Sam Shepard and this is what I learned in Confirmation. That Jesus is the light and he died on the cross for us. Also, what Confirmation did for me is it helped me to believe in Jesus and not to listen to the devil. Also, I learned not to sin, but to be a believer. Thank you.

Faith
over
Fear

Faith
over
Fear

RAP

We love to see all 9th-12th graders join us for Youth Group! Everyone is Welcome! We meet every week on Wednesday at 6:30 PM. We have 12-14 kids each week! Here are some of the fun activities on the calendar for this month! Contact Wendi Rusch for ways to get involved! #509-494-3236

Dec 3rd- Christmas caroling to deliver singing telegrams

Dec 7th- Hayride in the Custer Christmas parade

Dec 10th- White elephant gift exchange and Christmas party

Dec 17th- Christmas baking

Dec 24th & 31st Christmas Break

A big THANK YOU to the High School Youth Group families who helped with a stop for our Progressive Dinner! The Wheelers had awesome apps with a fun game, the Bolens had two soups and salad in a cup (because Jesus fills our cup), Matt had tasty marinated chicken and mashed potatoes with homemade biscuits, and the Barricks served delicious brownie sundaes! The kids had fun at each place and especially the last one when they played sardines at the church. Great memories!



The High School Youth will be offering Christmas-grams once again! We will travel to sing a few Christmas carols during Youth group on Wednesday, December 3rd @ 6:30 PM. For a donation, the first five who sign-up can request the youth come to your house or order a Christmas singing telegram for someone else! Help us share the joy of the season and contact Wendi #509-494-3236 to get on the list!



ALL Middle School and High School Youth are invited! Sat, December 6th for the Custer Christmas Parade @ 5:30 PM! We will go on the Outlaw hayride and pass out candy. Hope to see you there! For more info contact Wendi #509-494-3236



The week before Thanksgiving we had our annual Scavenger Hunt to collect non-perishable food times for the Storehouse and Christmas baskets! We split into two HS teams and one MS team to collect items for 45 min and meet back at the church to see who could gather the most! This year we had two categories for winners: 1) Most "hunted" items and 2) Most "shared" items we brought! The 20 youth were able to collect 522lbs of food (up from last year at 392lbs)! We are so proud of this tradition to serve our community! For more info contact Wendi Rusch #509-494-3236



SPARK KIDS

Join us for SPARK Kids! During the school year on Wednesdays, children from Kindergarten through Grade 5 are picked up at the Elementary building after school is dismissed and brought to the church. We sing songs, have a snack, and do a game or craft that connects to the Bible story. It is always a fun time of learning and laughing, with also some great questions and deep thinking! Pickup is 5:00-5:15 pm. There is NO cost for this program! Children need to be registered by their parents/guardians in order to participate. We have 20 kids signed up! All are welcome! Here we are in the lion's den while talking about Daniel!



Children's Christmas Program on December 7th during the 9:30 AM Worship Service! The Spark Kids will perform "On The Red Carpet". Younger siblings or any other children that would like to participate can join too! We have been working to put together a performance of carols and costumes that you don't want to miss! Special THANKS to Linda Fennell for coordinating the costumes and script and to the other Spark Asst teachers for guiding the kids along. Invite your friends and family to remember the reason for the season! Contact Wendi Rusch for more details! #509-494-3236

Merry Christmas



THANK YOU

Thank you to all who have been helping with the WNL meal! We are so appreciative for those who have volunteered to help prepare, serve and clean up the meal. We couldn't do it without you! If you are interested in helping out, you can either let Jean in the office know or simply sign up on the sign up sheet at the Welcome Center in the Narthex. We have been joyfully serving 45 to 50 and up to 75 individuals every Wednesday evening!

CONFIRMATION

Wednesday, Dec. 3 we will have our regular Middle School class, which will include practicing for worship on Dec. 7th. As you know, we are designating the first Sunday of every month as youth Sunday, and this will be the day the Spark Kids do their Christmas program as part of the service, but I would also like our Middle School kids to have some special parts in the service, so we will talk about those on the Wednesday before.

Wednesday, Dec. 10 we will be making some Christmas decorations together and discussing Christmas traditions in the church.

Wednesday, Dec. 17th will be our Christmas party, and this is also Mentor Night. There will be a gift exchange of any small gift, with a \$10 limit per person. The gift needs to be appropriate for a boy or girl. Mentors if you are willing, you are invited to be a part of the exchange. The exchange will be a fun game!

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

ISAIAH 9:6

Merry CHRISTMAS



JOIN A DISCIPLESHIP TEAM!

What is a discipleship team you ask? It is a group of 12 people who have a similar calling to share their time and talent with Custer Lutheran Fellowship.

Beginning in January of 2026, we'd like to try something new in terms of having volunteers assist with worship. Every Sunday we have a sign up sheet out and encourage you to sign up to help with these areas on Sundays: Reading, Ushering/Greeting, Communion Assisting, Videoing, Running the PowerPoint, and hosting Fellowship. Most weeks we end up having to make several calls to recruit volunteers. Our assumption is that many of you are willing to help, but either it's too crowded around the Welcome Center to sign up, or you don't know your schedule, or you don't know where the Welcome Center is! If we could get teams of 12 to rotate through the year, it would mean you would only need to help once every three months. Be watching the Narthex for the white board to be out and prayerfully consider which team you would like to be on for 2026!

GIVING BACK TO OUR HOSTS: GROWING ROOTS' "SPRINKLES FOR SPRINKLERS" FUNDRAISER!

The Growing Roots program is hosting a special fundraiser to support CLF! While we were not asked to contribute to the upgrades, we want to show our deep gratitude to the church for being such an incredible and generous host to our program families. We are raising money for the replacement of the essential sprinkler system through our "Sprinkles for Sprinklers" event on the Day of Giving on December 2nd, 2025. If you'd like, you can participate in four ways: sponsor a sprinkler head, pre-order cookies to take home, join the fun at the cookie decorating party, or come share your voice during the caroling on December 2nd. Every contribution helps us support this vital community space! Learn more at GrowingRootsSD.com/Events.

Order or donate by using your phone's camera to take a picture of this QR code:



CHRISTMAS COOKIES & CAROLING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2ND
CUSTER LUTHERAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH
5:30 PM TO 8:00 PM

Cookie Decorating (5:30 PM - 6:45 PM)

\$15 ticket includes cookies, frosting, sprinkles & cocoa!
Please RSVP!

Christmas Caroling (Starts 6:45 PM)

Classic carols & holiday cheer! Free-will donation.
No RVSP needed.

Why it Matters: Help us fund a \$38,000 sprinkler replacement for CLF to keep Growing Roots Preschool licensed & safe!

W/ELCA HAPPENINGS!

Next meeting: Monday, January 19, 2026 at 11:30 in the Fireside Room.

Program: To be determined. Please check the January newsletter for details. Note that there will NOT be a W/ELCA meeting in December.

Judy Baldwin was our speaker at our November meeting. We had a grand time looking at and hearing about Judy's collection of The Night Before Christmas books. Judy has 50 unique books. The presentation brought back many memories of Christmas past. Thank you, Judy, for sharing your treasures!

Our officers for 2026 are as follows: President—Joan Ruen; Vice President—Arbutus Winter; Secretary—Bonnie Thompson; Treasurer—Barb Lewison; Community Action—Julie Taylor. A sincere thank you to these ladies for taking the responsibility of each of these offices. We look forward to a brilliant new year thanks to you!

We bought \$200 worth of socks and gloves to send to Pine Ridge on the weekend of the wood haul. Your financial support over the past year made it possible for us to do that. We also donated \$500 to the Custer YMCA for their scholarship drive. We appreciate each of you and your generosity! Thanks to your support it is our pleasure to help folks in the Custer community and beyond!!

There will be information concerning the results of the Craft and Goodie Sale that will be held on November 23rd in the December newsletter.

A Merry Christmas to each of you! Peace, love and joy be yours all through the new year!!



CLF QUILTERS

The quilters have had a busy year. To date we have made 41 lap quilts which we donate to Monument health, 47 pet shelter beds which go to Hot Springs and the Custer pet shelters, 143 quilts which are donated to VA HOSPICE in Hot Springs, Boys and Girls Home in Rapid City, WEAVE, Christmas for Kids auction at the VFW, CLF members who go to Care Centers, Lutheran World Relief, Red Shirt and Pine Ridge. We also have several tops made, ready to make into a quilt.

We appreciate the donations of cotton fabric and sheets, as with everything our costs of fabric and batting has gone up this past year.

We are taking a Holiday break and will be back quilting on January 6th.

Thanks to everyone who has supported our mission with your gifts of fabric, sheets, money, and Thrivent cards.

Have a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



OUR ANNUAL WOOD HAUL

On a blustery Saturday morning, November 8, sixteen CLF'ers gathered at the church to finish loading firewood onto 10 trucks/trailers for the journey to the Red Shirt community. Approximately 10 cords of firewood were delivered that will help warm the 12 - 15 homes this winter. In addition to the firewood, our quilters provided several quilts for the local residents and many, many articles of clothing were also donated. The Social Ministry Team would like to thank all who helped make this happen!



"GOOD GIFTS" SUMMARY

Your Social Ministry Team sponsored ELCA "Good Gifts" in early November. Farm animals, educational and development projects can make a world of difference for a family in need. Your gifts of Goats, Pigs, Chicks, School Supplies, Honey Bees and more will go a long way in helping families escape the cycle of hunger and poverty. A total of \$2,165.00 was raised from sales at church. We know that others at CLF support "Good Gifts" online so, there are many gifts beyond what are reflected here. Thank you for supporting this important mission.

"SHARING THE DREAM" SUMMARY

Sharing the Dream in Guatemala was a big success this year. We had beautiful artisan items to purchase and generated \$2,580. 100% of such proceeds are returned to the Guatemalan artists to help lift their families from poverty. In addition to purchasing gift items, this year's fundraiser provided the opportunity to donate funds to support the community in other ways as well. Offerings could also be directed towards meals for elders, transportation, school tuition and more. Thanks to everyone who made this possible!



CUSTER MEET & EAT

The Custer Community Church at 6th & Harney will be hosting the Community Christmas dinner on December 9th from 5pm to 7pm. Gather for a meal with friends and neighbors. There is no charge for the meal. Everyone is Welcome to attend



WNL POTPOURRI OF CLASSES

For the six weeks before Lent in January and February there will be no worship service on Wednesday night. Instead, we will have a potpourri of intergenerational and educational classes. We are tentatively planning to have 2-3 classes each week on a very wide-range of topics. Classes can include topics such as: flower arrangements, ASL, cake decorating, arts & crafts, bible study, board games, plants/birds of the Black Hills and many other topics! We are in need of people to volunteer to lead a class and also to attend since this is for everyone! Everyone is welcome!. If you are interested, please contact the church office.

W/ELCA CRAFT AND GOODIES SALE

The weekend of November 22nd and 23rd saw two special events at CLF. On the 22nd, the kitchen was bursting with happy folks making lefse and krumkake. This included men, women and children. Needless to say, there was lots of talk and laughter plus the making of the Norwegian holiday traditions.

Not sure how many packages of lefse and krumkake were made, but it was enough to fill the wants and needs of members of the CLF congregation who shopped at the Craft and Goodie sale on Sunday, the 23rd. Shoppers were treated to many other goodies including pies, a variety of holiday breads, cakes, cookies and other special treats. Of course, our crafters had been busy also. Dishcloths, microwave bowl holders, ceramic items, aprons, throws, wreathes, and tree toppers were among the many items from which to choose.

Thanks to everyone that shopped at the sale and to those who put time and talent into the items that were donated on that beautiful Sunday morning. It truly was a special weekend at CLF.



Greetings!

Our choir will meet on the following Wednesdays in December. Our time will change to 5:00 PM for the month so that the children can practice for their Christmas program in the sanctuary. We will be singing a piece to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ entitled *"Soon the Messiah Will Come."* We are excited to have Jaycie Pulscher join us with her flute for this piece. Feel free to join us.

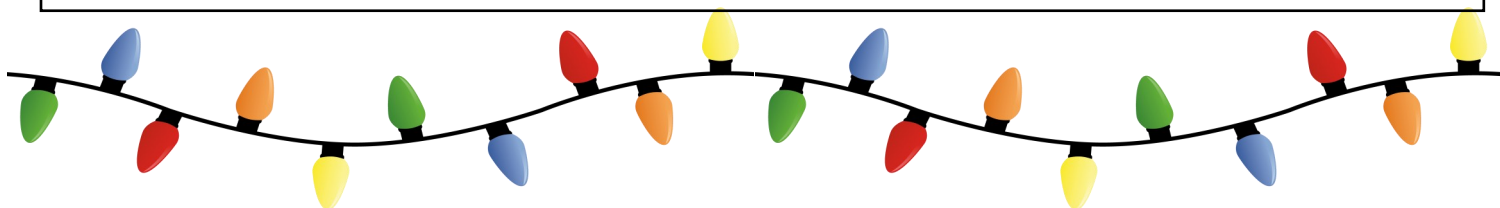
December Choir Schedule:

Rehearsal ~ Wednesday, December 3 @ 5:00 PM
 Rehearsal ~ Wednesday, December 10 @ 5:00 PM
 Special Music ~ Sunday, December 14

Righteous & ready for the season,

Jenn Doyle

jenniferkaydoyle@gmail.com or (605) 864-1322



Custer Lutheran Fellowship**General Fund Budget to Actual**

Account	 - - - - Year To Date (October FY 2025) - - - - 		
	Actual	Budget	Variance
Total Revenues	\$ 310,505.73	\$ 295,539.00	\$ 14,966.73
Expenditures			
Pastoral Leadership	67,863.85	75,092.00	-7,228.15
Worship	17,845.98	20,211.00	-2,365.02
Education	22,408.72	22,915.00	-506.28
Mission Support	29,138.76	31,170.00	-2,031.24
Support/Care	3,655.34	7,472.00	-3,816.66
Office Administration	47,136.07	47,141.00	-4.93
Office Operations	5,164.85	13,890.00	-8,725.15
Facilities Expenses	64,487.37	73,151.00	-8,663.63
Total Expenditures	257,700.94	291,042.00	-33,341.06
Total Other Revenues	1,686.43	0.00	1,686.43
Total Other Expenditures	1,306.25	0.00	1,306.25
2024 Net Transfers	-24,763.00	0.00	-24,763.00
Change in Net Assets	\$ 28,421.97	\$ 4,497.00	\$ 23,924.97

Our loan balance is now only approximatly \$30,000! We paid \$15,000 this past year!

Custer Lutheran Fellowship**Council Minutes — November 18, 2025**

Members Present: Karen Barness, Kathy Bradeen, Helena Buehler, Donna McConnell, Dave Mertz, Sara Mooney, Dave Ruen, Pastor Shannon Witt and Joy Smolnisky.

Not Present: Craig Black

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by President Helena Buehler.

Gathering of Personal Concerns and Joys

Members shared concerns and joys.

Reading of CLF Mission Statement and Council Covenant

Members read the mission statement and council covenant.

Devotions and Prayers

Kathy Bradeen led the devotion, and Pastor Shannon led the prayer.

Agenda Additions/Approval

There were 3 additions to the agenda. There was consensus and the agenda was approved as amended.

Secretary's Report: The correspondence was reviewed. Karen moved, Sara seconded and the minutes for the October meeting were approved. Worship attendance records were reviewed.

Treasurer's and Finance Committee's Report: The offerings thru October were 105% (\$14,966.73) of budget and expenses were 88.54% (-\$33,341.06) of budget.

In October, some expenses were moved to spend down restricted funds. Loan balance is \$30,045.13. Dave M moved, Dave R second to approve the Treasurer's report. Motion carried.

Finance Committee met and went over estimated expense for the remainder of the year. It is looking good at staying under budget due to using restricted funds before using general funds.

Special Agenda Items:

There were no special agenda items.

Unfinished Business:

Thrivent Choice – October \$ 64.00, YTD - \$1,442.00

Lynn's Dakotamart Receipts – October \$300.00, YTD - \$1,200.00

Policies & Procedures Update – Employee handbook coming along. Building Use policies handed out. Dave R moved, Kathy second to adjust the overnight use fees to \$100 from \$50, \$125 from \$75 and \$5 from \$1. Motion carried. All policies need to be distributed to council members so they can be voted on at the December meeting.

Growing Roots Fundraiser Update – Have raised \$1,000 so far that will go towards the \$3,000 matching grant. Sprinkles for Sprinklers event is December 2nd.

January/February WNL Update – Will have an article in December newsletter. Helena, Wendi and Donna will meet to finalize things.

New Business:

Membership changes – Loss: Claudia Dethlefs – transfer to Our Redeemer Lutheran, Custer SD

Nomination Committee – Craig Black, Helena Buehler and Dave Mertz's terms are up in January. They will work with Nomination Committee to fill the positions.

Forty-Forty – This group sponsors an event called the Christmas Walk is a commitment to read scripture and walk one mile a day during December.

Set Date for Annual Meeting – Annual Meeting is set for January 25th. Budget forum will be on Sunday, January 11th and Council Meeting on January 13th.

Other –

Fall Theological Conference – Will be hosted by CLF and Outlaw Ranch on September 13-15, 2026.

Leadership Book – Pastor Shannon recommended a book call "Dare to Lead". Will be ordering books for those interested.

Log Splitter – The small log splitter is old and getting beyond repairing. Suggestions were to see if anyone has one they are not using anymore and to get prices on purchasing a new one.

Pastor's Report:

Review Worship & Activities – had good time visiting family in Colorado and Iowa. Looking forward to hosting the Thanksgiving meal.

Committee & Ministry Team Reports:

Caring Hands, Helena Buehler – will meet on December 11th.

Christian Education, Kathy Bradeen – Nothing to report.

Endowment, Sara Mooney – Nothing to report.

Mutual Ministry, Dave Mertz – Nothing to report.

Property, Karen Barness – Border for playground mulch has been ordered.

Social Ministry, Craig Black – Reviewed committee activity. Dave M moved, Karen seconded to approve the Social Ministry recommendation for the wood sales money as follows: Pine Ridge - \$2,000, Delta Dental - \$1,000, Pastor Discretionary Fund - \$2,000, RAP Group for 2027 National Gathering - \$3,000 and to keep the mission tithe at 10%. Motion carried.

W/ELCA, Dave Ruen – The program at their November meeting was Judy Baldwin presenting her 'Twas the Night Before Christmas collection.

Worship & Music, Donna McConnell – Meeting held. Christmas Eve service times were set for 4 & 7 PM.

Next Meeting: December 16, 2025:

Treats – Karen Barness Devotions – Dave Ruen

December 2025 Care & Share Calling Coordinator – _____.

Closing Prayer, Lord's Prayer**Adjournment**

Donna McConnell, Council Secretary

Custer Lutheran Fellowship**Council Minutes — October 28, 2025**

Members Present: Karen Barness, Craig Black, Kathy Bradeen, Helena Buehler, Donna McConnell, Sara Mooney, Dave Ruen and Pastor Shannon Witt.

Not Present: Dave Mertz

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by President Helena Buehler.

Gathering of Personal Concerns and Joys

Members shared concerns and joys.

Reading of CLF Mission Statement and Council Covenant

Members read the mission statement and council covenant.

Devotions and Prayers

Karen Barness led the devotion and prayer.

Agenda Additions/Approval

There were no additions to the agenda. Dave R moved, Sara seconded and the agenda was approved.

Secretary's Report: The correspondence was reviewed. Craig moved, Dave R seconded and the minutes for the September meeting were approved. Worship attendance records were reviewed.

Treasurer's and Finance Committee's Report: The offerings thru September were 104.3% (\$11,489.96) of budget and expenses were 89.16% (-\$28,337.76) of budget.

Loan Balance is currently at \$30,817.08. Sara is working on a preliminary 2026 budget so needs each committee's input of their needs.

Craig moved, Kathy seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

Special Agenda Items:

There were no special agenda items.

Unfinished Business:

Thrivent Choice – September \$ 0.00, YTD - \$1,378.00

Lynn's Dakotamart Receipts – September \$ 0.00, YTD - \$ 900.00

Policy and Procedures update – Will plan on approving them at the January council meeting and then present them at the annual meeting.

Growing Roots update/Day of Giving – They are going to participate in the Day of Giving and use the proceeds to help pay for the sprinkler updates.

New Business:**Membership changes: Adds: (17)**

Lynn & Peggy Moller from Christ the King Lutheran Church – NALC, Newcastle, WY

Rodney & Marsha Schultz from St. John's Lutheran Church, Broomfield, CO

Jewell & Kenneth Reifenrath; Jewell from Morningside Lutheran Church – LCMC, Sioux City IA; Kenneth by Affirmation of Faith

Linda Nelson by Affirmation of Faith

Scott Luikart from Triumphant Love Lutheran Church – ELCA, Austin, TX

Bruce & Linda Holmes from Our Redeemer Lutheran – Missouri Synod, Custer, SD

Leon & Barb Melstad from St. John's Lutheran Church – ELCA, Hot Springs, SD

Michaela Doyle and Declan Doyle from Our Saviors Lutheran Church – ELCA, Flandreau, SD

Kirsten Ruen and Charles MacDonald – Kirsten from Bethlehem Lutheran Church – ELCA, Lanesboro, MN and Charles MacDonald by baptism

Shelly Anderson from Lutheran Memorial Church – ELCA, Pierre, SD

Welcome Rob Conn, Property Manager & a Thank You Celebration for Augie Heyne – Possibly hold the two together. Tentatively plan for November 16th.

January/February Wednesday Worship – Helena & Donna to work with Pastor Shannon to develop inter-generational events to do instead of worship until Lent.

Newsletter discussion – Instead of mailing the newsletter, it will be emailed to the majority of people with a limited number of copies available at church. Dave R moved, Craig seconded to start with the January newsletter with a notice in the December newsletter. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report:

Review Worship & Activities – Discussed what council wants to hear from her. Trip to Washington was wonderful.

Currently serving as President of the Custer Ministerial Alliance. Has concerns with the lack of participation by other churches.

Was also elected as President of the Bear Butte Conference.

Sunday, November 30, 2025, Daniel 3:1, 8-30**Daniel: The Fiery Furnace**

Monday, December 1, 2025, Daniel 2:24-49

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream Interpreted

Tuesday, December 2, 2025, Daniel 5:1-12

Belshazzar's Feast

Wednesday, December 3, 2025, Daniel 5:13-30

The Writing on the Wall

Thursday, December 4, 2025, Daniel 6:6-27

The Lions' Pit

Friday, December 5, 2025, Daniel 7:1-18

The Four Beasts

Saturday, December 6, 2025, Daniel 12:1-3; 5-13

*The End of Days***Sunday, December 7, 2025, Ezekiel 37:1-14****Ezekiel: Valley of Dry Bones**

Monday, December 8, 2025, Ezekiel 1:1-14

The Vision of the Chariot

Tuesday, December 9, 2025, Ezekiel 1:15-28

The Vision of the Chariot

Wednesday, December 10, 2025, Ezekiel 2:1-3:11

The Vision of the Scroll

Thursday, December 11, 2025, Ezekiel 40:1-19

The Vision of the New Temple

Friday, December 12, 2025, Ezekiel 40:20-37

The Vision of the New Temple

Saturday, December 13, 2025, Ezekiel 40:38-47

*The Vision of the New Temple***Sunday, December 14, 2025, Isaiah 55:1-11****Word Accomplishes God's Purpose**

Monday, December 15, 2025, Isaiah 40:1-11

God's People Are Comforted

Tuesday, December 16, 2025, Isaiah 53:2-12

The Suffering Servant

Wednesday, December 17, 2025, Isaiah 57:14-21

A Promise of Help and Healing

Thursday, December 18, 2025, Isaiah 59:1-8

Injustice and Oppression to Be Punished

Friday, December 19, 2025, Isaiah 61:1-13

The Good News of Deliverance

Saturday, December 20, 2025, Isaiah 65:17-25

*The Glorious New Creation***Sunday, December 21, 2025, John 1:1-18****Word Made Flesh**

Monday, December 22, 2025, Luke 1:26-38

Birth of Jesus Foretold

Tuesday, December 23, 2025, Luke 1:39-56

Mary Visits Elizabeth

Wednesday, December 24, 2025, Lk 2:1-14 [15-20]

Birth of Jesus

Thursday, December 25, 2025, Luke 2:8-20

Shepherds Visit

Friday, December 26, 2025, Matthew 2:1-12

Wise Men

Saturday, December 27, 2025, Luke 2:41-52

*The Boy Jesus in the Temple***Sunday, December 28, 2025, John 1:19-34****A Voice in the Wilderness**

Monday, December 29, 2025, Psalm 32:1-2

The Joy of Forgiveness I

Tuesday, December 30, 2025, Psalm 32:3-4

The Joy of Forgiveness II

Wednesday, December 31, 2025, Psalm 32:5

The Joy of Forgiveness III

Thursday, January 1, 2026, Psalm 32:6-7

The Joy of Forgiveness IV

Friday, January 2, 2026, Psalm 32:8-9

The Joy of Forgiveness V

Saturday, January 3, 2026, Psalm 32:10-11

*The Joy of Forgiveness VI***Committee & Ministry Team Reports:****Caring Hands**, Helena Buehler – Nothing to report. Due for a quarterly meeting in December.**Christian Education**, Kathy Bradeen – 20 kids now enrolled in SPARK Kids.**Endowment**, Sara Mooney – Did the fall distribution of funds – will do another one in the spring.**Mutual Ministry**, Dave Mertz – Nothing to report.**Property**, Karen Barness – Presented planned projects, costs and timeline.**Social Ministry**, Craig Black – Sharing the Dream amount was \$2,580. ELCA Good Gifts will be held the next 2 weeks. Annual wood haul to Red Shirt Table will be on November 8th. The noisy offering will be moved to the first Sunday of the month as that is when the youth help with worship.**W/ELCA**, Dave Ruen – They are collecting food items for the Storehouse in October and November.**Worship & Music**, Donna McConnell – Will be meeting soon. Children's Christmas Program is the first Sunday in December.**Next Meeting: November 18, 2025:**

Treats – Helena Buehler. Devotions – Kathy Bradeen.

November 2025 Care & Share Calling Coordinator – _____.

Closing Prayer, Lord's Prayer**Adjournment**

Donna McConnell, Council Secretary



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Custer Lutheran Fellowship

Our Mission ... is to plant the word of God, nurture growth in children and adults, and scatter the seeds of joy and faith in a diverse community.

We envision Custer Lutheran Fellowship to be like the Black Hills themselves, an inviting community in which God's Spirit blows through people – like wind through the pine – life that is forever new! God's spirit inspires us to be:

A **worshipping** community, hearing the life-giving Word of God receiving Christ's very presence in the Sacraments, and raising our voices in joyful songs of praise and prayer;

A **growing** community, with building and grounds spacious enough for all;

An **intergenerational** community, nurturing children and youth, young adults, people in mid-life, and older people as one family of God;

A **learning** community, in which people of all ages take advantage of multiple opportunities to deepen their understanding of the grace and justice of God;

A **giving** community, generously offering our time, talent and treasure to support each other and share in Christ's ministry;

A **serving** community, reaching beyond ourselves to stand with the poor, the sick, the hungry and the oppressed;

A **witnessing** community, eager to share with everyone the joy we have received from Christ.

***We believe in the Cross and
our risen Lord and
that through Christ
we have eternal life***

Our Bedrock Beliefs are...

We grow in faith through worship and sacraments

The Word of God is our hope, Support comes from within our family of believers who see and serve Jesus in others

Through prayer we evoke God's love and power as the Spirit intercedes for us "with sighs too deep for words to express"

In crisis God is our strength. He is all loving and accepting and He helps us through these times.

We have faith only through God's grace.

Our Core Values are:

*Faith, Family, Mission,
Service, Worship*



Ministering at Custer Lutheran Fellowship

Pastor: Shannon Witt

Office Manager: Jean Pulscher

Parish Nurse: Jean Witt

Custodian: Rob Conn

Worship & Music Director:

Jennifer Doyle

Financial Secretary:

Janice Albers &

Steve Baldwin

Treasurer: Joy Smolnisky

Youth Coordinator: Wendi Rusch

Ministers: All Members of CLF!