



Salem Connection

March 2025

Salem Lutheran Church 21276 Archibald Road PO Box 100 Deerwood MN 56444
Phone: 218.534.3309 Email: office@salemdwd.org Website: www.salemdwd.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/salemlutheranchurchdeerwood



You heard me announce a few times recently that our Lutheran denomination was founded on asking questions. Luther's explanations about the 10 Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer all begin with "What does this mean?" What does it mean when we pray "give us this day our daily bread"? What does it mean when we say we believe in "the communion of saints"? What does it mean when the colors at the front of the church change? Asking these questions and digging into the answers is a key component of growing in our faith.

We ask all kinds of questions of God; make all kinds of requests in our prayers. We wonder why things are the way they are, we ask for healing and peace and comfort for others, we ask for guidance and help and transformation. Sometimes we ask for stuff, tangible signs of God's love.

Have you ever wondered what questions God might be asking of us? It's easy to forget that God is not only interested in our petitions but in a relationship that invites us to listen and respond.

We are about to start the church season called "Lent". Lent is nothing fancy, literally. It's 6 weeks dedicated to turning back to God. Put away the frills, the flowers, the celebration word "alleluia," and just listen. Listen to our own beating heart. Listen to what we're yearning for. Listen for God's voice.

Awhile back, I ran across a book, "Questions God Asks Us" by Trevor Hudson. It's a small, unassuming book, but offers a profound exploration into ten questions that God asks throughout Scripture.

On Wednesdays in Lent, we will explore seven of these questions, beginning with Ash Wednesday on March 5. Questions God asks, like "What are you doing here?" and "Where are you?" and "Who do you say that I am" have the potential to shape, challenge, and transform our lives. You'll be invited to reflect, to consider your perspective, and to offer God an honest answer.

That's what the church season of Lent is for. To take a look at your own heart and hear God ask, "What does this mean?" I do hope you'll join the conversation on Wednesday nights. We will use the worship service of Vespers for prayer and song and reflection at the end of the day. The schedule of those questions is on the next page.

May we all be encouraged to listen more deeply, respond more honestly, and walk more closely with the One who asks the questions that lead us into life.

In Christ's peace,
~Pastor Amanda



Lent 2025

Wednesdays in Lent

Join us Wednesdays at 5:15pm for a meal and 6:30pm for worship

If you would like to prepare a meal, bring bread or dessert for 30-40 people, please sign up on the kiosk in the entry.

“Questions God Asks Us”

based on a book by Trevor Hudson

March 5th - Ash Wednesday “What are You Doing Here?”

March 12th - “Where are You?”

March 19th - “What is Your Name?”

March 26th - “What is That In Your Hand?”

April 2nd - “What are You Looking For?”

April 9th - “Who Do You Say That I Am?”

April 17th - Maundy Thursday “Do You Understand What I Have Done for You?”

April 18th - Good Friday

Those Serving during Lenten Worship Services

<u>Scripture Readers</u>	<u>Ushers</u>
March 5th - Ash Wednesday: Jim Rude	March 5th: _____, _____
March 12th: Jack Voller	March 12th: _____, _____
March 19th: _____	March 19th: _____, _____
March 26th: _____	March 26th: _____, _____
April 2nd: _____	April 2nd: _____, _____
April 17th: _____	April 17th: _____, _____
April 18th: _____	April 18th: _____, _____

Sign-Up on the Kiosk if you are interested in serving on Wednesday Evenings!

Crosby/Deerwood Churches offer Wednesday Midday Worship

In the 6 weeks of Lent, you are invited to join with community members to reflect on the Parables of Jesus.

12:00p.m. Worship, 12:30p.m. Meal

March 12th at Lifespring

March 19th at Emmanuel

March 26th at Cascade

April 2nd at Salem

April 9th at Cuyuna Lakes Community

Worship Notes at Salem

Thank you to those serving in March:

READERS

- 2** Ken Stebbins
9 _____
16 Jim Rude
23 Ken Stebbins
30 _____

USHERS

- 2** Mark & Cindy Larson, Curt & Sylvia Hoge, Axel Novak
9 Randy Holmwig, Herb and Barb Schoon, Mark Boike
16 Roger and Marlene Prill, Clark and Joyce Marshall
23 Nory and Peggy Hunze, Chuck Lubowitz and Karla Peterson
30 John & Raye Cragun, Becki Zender, Rod Ogard

COMMUNION SERVERS

- 2** Ed & Sherri Godfrey, Becki Zender
9 Andrea Anderson, Shelly Skeim, Jon Kempthorne
16 _____, _____, _____
23 _____, _____, _____
30 _____, _____, _____

OFFERING COUNTERS

Lori Holmwig & Ann Zillmer

March Worship Schedule

- 2** 8:00a.m. Praise Team Practice
9:00a.m. Worship
Volunteer Choir
- 9** 8:00a.m. Praise Team Practice
9:00a.m. Worship
Choir
- 16** 8:00a.m. Praise Team Practice
9:00a.m. Worship
Bell Choir
- 23** 8:00a.m. Praise Team Practice
9:00a.m. Worship
Choir
- 30** 8:00a.m. Praise Team Practice
9:00a.m. Worship

Music Schedule:

Choir sings on the 2nd & 4th Sunday
practice Wednesdays at 6p.m.

Bells play on the 3rd Sunday
practice Wednesdays at 5p.m.

Hymn Sing before worship
2nd and 4th Sundays

Volunteer Choir
1st Sunday of each month

March 23rd is Camp Sunday!

Worship will include our children's stories from last year's camping experiences and guests from Voyageur's Lutheran Ministry as they share the impact of camping ministry. Reflect on the ways God has shaped your faith, and encourage our young people as they grow in faith while spending time in "God's Great Northwoods."



Heartwood Bible Study

The monthly Bible study at Heartwood will take place on March 10th at 1:00p.m.

A Message from the Library

There are books and DVD's for Lent and Easter on display in the Salem Library. Instead of giving up something for Lent, we encourage you to add a reading or prayer time as we contemplate Jesus' sacrifice for us.



Faith Formation!

Sunday School Schedule

Each Sunday at 9:50a.m.



Kids Club: March 19th 3:15-5:00p.m.

This month we will be focusing on building friendships while building birdhouses!

Those who are in grades 3-6 are welcome to join us on the third Wednesday of the month starting at 3:15p.m. as we celebrate how special friendship is!

Women's Bible Study, Wednesdays at 3:00p.m.

Men's Bible Study, Fridays at 8:00a.m.

Both of these are still taking place weekly! If you are looking to join a Bible Study, there is always room for one more at the table!

ATTENTION THRIVENT MEMBERS 2025

It's that time of year again. Your Thrivent Choice Dollars will become available to you February 1st. Thrivent will no longer notify you; you must contact them. It's a very easy procedure and costs you nothing. Just call Thrivent Financial 800-847-4836 say Choice Dollars or visit Thrivent.com. If you have funds available you can designate at that time. There is a time frame in which you must call or you could lose the availability of those funds. That deadline is March 31st. This is a great benefit for Salem. Some of the projects your Choice Dollars contributed to are, The Building Fund, Music Ministry, Memorial Garden, Barberry Coast Band Concert, New Speaker System for the organ, Electronic Sign, and purchased Christmas Trees to name a few. If you have questions, contact Lois Hicks @ 218-232-2628



First Communion Classes for All Curious Children!

Salem will be offering a Communion class after worship on Sundays, March 23 and 30 in preparation for First Communion in worship on Sunday, April 6. Please attend both of these classes, as they build on each other. Class will be from 10:20-11:15 and start in the large classroom with Pastor Amanda.

Parents are invited to bring any children, any age who are asking questions about Communion. Luther wrote in the Small Catechism, "a person is well prepared and worthy who believes these words, 'given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins'... the words 'for you' require simply a believing heart." A child who reaches out their hand knows this meal, and God's love, is for them. Much worse, the child that reaches out and doesn't receive bread and juice only knows they are missing out. Bring your young ones to God's Table, there's a place for them!



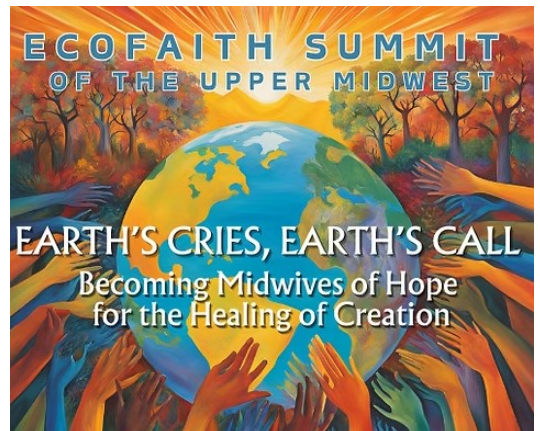
Mark Your Calendars!

2025 Women's Retreat October 3rd-5th! More Details to Come!

Mark Your Calendars! April 5th, 2025

EcoFaith Summit Course

Check Out More Information at www.ecofaithnetwork.org



Church Council News

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Thank you to all of you who supported the Valentine Dinner fundraiser for the building supplies for our Honduras Mission team. Your financial support, prayers, and encouragement make it possible for the team to carry out Salem's mission to Welcome people to Jesus Christ, Equip them with a faith that works in their lives, and Send them into the world on Jesus' name.

Though it is cold and wintery outside, plans are being made for Salem's participation in Deerwood Days - August 8 and 9, 2025. In addition to lefse and meatballs, the Council voted to have a Silent Auction this year. Donations from local businesses, from church members, from the public and possibly from Salem West will be collected. Begin thinking about things that you might be willing to donate. Baskets with different themes, sports equipment, lawn and garden items, quilts, crafts, furniture, etc. Don Hales and Mark Boike are co-chairs for the auction this year.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, March 5. Beginning March 12th and continuing to April 9th, there will be suppers before the Lenten worship service. Please sign up to serve at one of these suppers. It is a great way to connect with your church friends and invite neighbors to worship with you. This year our Lenten Offerings will go to Lutheran World Relief for those experiencing disasters. For those of you who like to plan ahead, Easter Sunday worship will be at 8 AM and 9:30 AM.

At our meeting on February 27, the Council will be deciding on the furnace repair quotes. If any of you are receiving tax refunds or you are in a position to make a contribution to this need, it would be appreciated. Having a warm building is one of the ways that we welcome people to worship.

As I mentioned last month, the Council is reading a chapter of Unlocking Your Church's Invite Culture each month. We challenge our members to look for ways to invite people to join us during this Lenten and Easter season.

Lynn Hansen

President of the Salem Lutheran Church Council

Financial Updates

Salem Lutheran Church Profit & Loss January 2025

	100 Church	150 Building	TOTAL
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
4000 · Offerings	26,650.22	0.00	26,650.22
4100 · Building Fund	0.00	7,605.06	7,605.06
4900 · Other Income	2,823.95	129.50	2,953.45
Total Income	29,474.17	7,734.56	37,208.73
Gross Profit	29,474.17	7,734.56	37,208.73
Expense	32,803.22	13,000.00	45,803.22
Net Ordinary Income	-3,329.05	-5,265.44	-8,594.49
Net Income	-3,329.05	-5,265.44	-8,594.49

**Information Provided by Aimee Watson,
Financial Manager at Salem Lutheran Church**

Thank you for the continuous generosity!

Special Celebrations in March



1	Alice Neibergs	16	Rod Ogard
2	Ethan Pearson		Al Schiffler
3	Craig Henningson	18	Natalie Gavin
4	Annette Olson		Marlene Prill
6	Les Chileen		LeRoy Ryan
	Sylvia Hoge	20	Cory Brix
7	Amanda Kempthorne	21	Erik Christenson
	Louie Smilich		Barbara Schiffler
10	Sue Stromberg	22	Emmet Deseth
12	Randy Holmwig	23	Parker Perpich
	Rad Royer	25	Abe Deseth
	Les Taylor		Sandra Tietz
14	Gay Calkins	30	Dick Hicks
15	Renee Gilmer		Marcia Tweed
	Ken Stebbins	31	Nancy Pelant



- 3 Wayne & Joyce Kohnen
- 12 Mike & Katie McCormick
- 20 Clark & Joyce Marshall
- 24 Chris & Jeri Kobberdahl

Dear Pastor Amanda,

We want to thank you and your whole church for the gracious welcoming our family received during such a difficult time. We know Elaine and Burt loved Salem and the Lord. We now understand their community much better and what a blessing that has been. The love from the church community was felt so much!

Much gratitude, Elaine Dahlquist Family

Honduras

Salem's presence in Honduras!

We are counting down days until a team of volunteers head to Honduras, April 2-12. 11 people will travel to build a few homes, help at the VBS camp, and feed hungry children. Your gifts at the pancake breakfast and tickets for the Valentine's Dinner and other donations have covered \$7,200 for 4 homes and \$5,000 for Kids Ark International camp and domestic violence ministry, and \$1,000 for food through House of Blessing. Thank you for supporting this mission trip!

Please keep Doug and Gay Calkins, Julie Fritz, Don and Debra Flam, Lynn Hansen, Cecil Schmidt, Marianne Reininger, Greg Meyer, Pete and Nora Ribbens (from Alaska) in your prayers as they make final preparations.

Join us in worship on March 30 as we bless the crew before they go!

Thank You for all those who joined us for our Valentine's Day Dinner Fundraiser!





SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH SILENT AUCTION SATURDAY AUGUST 9, 2025 DURING DEERWOOD DAYS

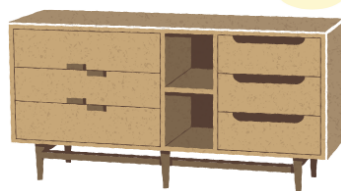
The Salem Lutheran Church Council has decided to have a silent auction fundraiser during Deerwood Days 2025.

- We are asking the church family and public to consider donating to this auction.
- We are accepting new or used items, large and small. When you are spring cleaning, consider donating that gently used item you no longer need.
- We are also accepting donations of gift cards and items for auction baskets.
- If you want to donate your own auction basket, that would be great! Be creative and make a themed basket such as Movie Night, Kids Games, Reading, Sewing, etc.
- Large items can be delivered to Salem West or make arrangements for pick up. Small items can be left at the church.

Please contact:

Don Hales by email at baylakepapa@gmail.com or phone at 320-267-7770 or

Mark Boike at mgboike59@gmail.com or by phone at 218-349-2234



Salem Lutheran Church Council

January 23, 2025

We exist with God's help, to provide Leadership for Salem Lutheran Church.

MSC=The motion was seconded and carried.

Call to Order

Members Present: Mark Boike, Lynn Hansen, Don Hales, Nate Van Risseghem, Sylvia Hoge, Julie Fritz,

Members Absent: Pastor Amanda Kempthorne, Sherri Godfrey, Jason Kempthorne, Alan Niemann, Tina Royer

Opening Prayer: Lynn Hansen provided the opening prayer

SOS announcement: None

Approval of the Agenda:

Motion to approve the agenda, MSC

Discussion questions for Chapter 1 of Unlocking Your Church's Invite Culture (not more than 15 minutes)-MOVED TO FEBRUARY- Books were distributed to members.

Approval of minutes:

Motion to approve November 26,2024 meeting minutes. MSC

Approval of Financials:

Mark Boike took the council through the end of year financials

- Envelop giving was under what was budgeted, Loose offerings received more than budgeted, restricted offering was under what was budgeted.
- Income for the building fund was over the annual budget.
- Overall, we had anticipated being \$54,000 over budget but came in at only \$30,000 over.

Motion to approve the December 2024 financial report. MSC

Pastor's Report –

- Working on End of Year giving letter and Pastor's annual report
- Lent worship planning:
 - Crosby Ministerial – Noon Lent Worship, Salem on April
 - Lent Rotation in evening – not enough pastors, exploring options
- Catching up on visits, creating a better schedule during the year
- Home Communion Visitors – final logistics for reporting
 - Training and Commissioning Home Communion Visitors
- Excellent conversations with confirmation students, engaged
- Exploring Worship opportunity: creating accessible worship for those with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD)

Continued on the next page.

- First Communion on Sunday, April 6 due to Maundy Thursday conflict.

Outreach Report – Mark

- \$200,000 or so in Deerwood Bank getting no interest. Moving \$100,000 to Brainerd Community Foundation to get more interest.
- Radio advertising stopped for now until closer to Spring and summer
- Facebook- always trying to increase views- Jake working on postings. Have increased to 38,000 views and an audience of 3000
- Jake is attending a series of management classes at CLC
- February round up going to Honduras trip

Committee Reports:

Capital Appeal -Sherri- \$390,000 goal. \$301,000 pledged 88 households- 40%. The second mailings went out last week. Waiting till February for the next meeting.

Columbarium – Don and Al- Annual meeting has not taken place yet

Facilities- Nate- Lights in Fellowship Hall done- 6 lights are a different kind of light and have not been changed and will not be unless people want them.

Faith Formation – Sylvia- Discussed Camp this summer. Before Covid we had day camp at our church. Camp staff are sent here, and we have kids come daily. Whitney is looking into the possibility of having the day camp this year. There was positive feedback on the Christmas program. The committee itself said they need to practice more next year.

Memorial – Don- Met January- Spent \$176 to cover the final money owed for the church directory. Working with council on scholarships for kids to attend camp. Working with school counselors for high school scholarships. They appointed new leaders in the group.

Stewardship – Lynn- nothing to report

Technology – Julie- Trying to get a meeting set

Welcome – Tina- no report

Worship and Music – Julie-New room microphone. Tina will be working on a new Easter alter décor. Ash Wednesday is March 5. Looking at Lent worship at 6:30pm. Unknown if we will rotate or have all at our church

Unfinished Business

* Ratify E-votes from 12/11 and 12/18/24

*1. Due to a recent memorial donation, Aimee investigated our Memorial Account #2530. Dating back to 2011, there are funds left over from specific purposes for maintenance and special projects (refrigerator, organ repair, Lunch Bunch, lilies, etc.). It also looks like a regular offering of \$5,000 to Salem's ministry was placed here in 2021. The total of these funds is \$6,167.33.

a. A motion was made that we transfer unused and unrestricted funds from account #2530 into the general account, leaving the \$300 that is reserved for 2 specific uses as noted in the account.

Continued on the next page.

b. MSC

*2. Memorial Account #2500 is the account heading and has \$30 outstanding from 2021 Easter lilies as well.

A motion was made that we transfer the \$30 from #2500 into the general account.
MSC

*3. A tax benefit to clergy is to designate a portion of my salary to housing expenses. It is recorded officially in church council minutes should I ever be audited, However, it does not need a vote. The following language will be added to the January meeting minutes:

a. As reported on December 11, 2024, Pastor Amanda Kempthorne designates \$45,000 of her income as a housing allowance. This designation shall apply to the calendar year 2025 and all future years unless otherwise provided.

4. Don presented the plan for Honduras and budget at the OGB meeting. From his calculations, there will be a \$5,500 need after income from designated funds and registration fees. The team is planning two fundraisers: a January pancake feed (possible date Jan 12) and February 14 Valentine's Dinner. Council needs to approve any fundraising apart from regular offerings and capital campaigns.

a. A motion was made to approve both fundraisers

b. MSC.

Old Business:

Parents Night Off- The Saturday event went well. We should continue- one per quarter. Perhaps March. Lynn and Julie are willing to do it on a weeknight. Will decide soon.

Annual reports from committees - deadline date January 26. Grace is asking committees.

Year-end donations report for the Connection: Mark will contact Amy to see if we can get something by February connection

New Business:

Furnace repair- We have one bid. We are waiting for the second bid. Wait to hear on second bid before deciding. Bids include the cost to repair and cost to replace.

Lenten offering designation- Our Thanksgiving offering was supposed to go to Lutheran World Relief. But since Thanksgiving was at Cascade, our offering went to Cascade, and they gave the offering to the Food Shelf

A motion was made that we give our Lenten offering to the Lutheran World Relief Organization for disasters

MSC

Continued on the next page.

Set Summer Worship Schedule

A motion was made for 9am for summer

MSC

Summerfest/Deerwood Days- We discussed several options at the retreat and tonight.

There was a motion to sell meatballs and leftse under our tents on Friday and Saturday in our parking lot (where Deerwood Bank Parks)

MSC

Mark and Don spoke to Sherri on the phone before the meeting since she was not going to be at this meeting (and she is the food person). Sherri said we should not have the pancake breakfast because the Legion has the same breakfast, and it is too difficult to have both pancakes and meatballs in the kitchen.

Members would like to discuss the pancake breakfast in more detail to see if we can still do it. There are other vendors that have the same items i.e. two hot dog vendors, two ice cream, etc. Mark will talk to the Legion/Terry Tischner to find out what the Legion serves for breakfast during Summerfest. Julie will talk to Sherri to see if there is some way to make both meatballs and pancakes since we do not have other items such as ice cream, hot dogs, etc.

We would do the silent auction if we can do the pancake breakfast/or something in the morning.

Announcements:

Executive Team Meeting: Tuesday February 18, 3:00pm

Next Council Meeting: Thursday February 27, 6:30pm

A motion was made to adjourn at pm 7:57 MSC

Closed in the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Fritz

Salem Outreach Governing Board – January 21, 2025

Present were: Pastor Amanda Kempthorne, Jason Kempthorne, Kay Bendorf, Nancy Tighe, Mark Boike and Linda Sudman. Guest: Julie Fritz and Jake Absent – Randy Sykes Skype – Cathy Aykens

MSC: Motion was made, seconded, motion carried to start meeting.

Opened with a prayer by Pastor Amanda

Secretary report was emailed to board members. Approval of minutes was made by Cathy Aykens and seconded by Linda Sudman.

Financial report was approved. MSC. Motion of approval was made by Linda Sudman and seconded by Mark Boike.

Mustard Seed: Mustard Seed Sales for December were \$26,511

Salem West Impact Report for the month of December, we had 39 referrals and completed 45 orders. A total of 116 individuals were helped. For the year 2024 we had 663 referrals and completed 574 orders. A total of 1,215 individuals were helped. Total volunteer time for the year 2024 was 18,131 hours.

There has been \$487,560 in goods delivered to the community for the year 2024.

The In Kind impact for 2024 was \$1,111,698.70.

New Business: Year End Financials: Surplus Investment: Deerwood Bank at ~1% interest vs BLCF (Brainerd Lakes Community Foundation) at 7.9% interest.

Cathy Aykens made a motion and Mark Boike seconded the motion to take \$100,000 out of the 2900 Reserve Account and place it in the BLCF – Community Giving Investment Pool returns. The \$100,000 will be placed in the Moderately Conservative Pool. We will reconvene in 6 months to check on the growth of the investment.

Teen Challenge Pancake Breakfast will be moved to May.

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner will be set for early May. Jason will reach out to Sherri Godfrey on a proposed date for May.

Discussion was made on the Free Food Pantry outside of the church being abused by a few locals. Been slowly placing food out in the pantry so many families can take advantage of it instead of the same family wiping the pantry clean every day it is filled.

Niswaw food packaging: Jason will look into getting a group of volunteers to package food in June.

Old Business:

Chocolate Extravaganza replacement for Honduras: Cathy Aykens made a motion for the Month of February that all money collected by customers rounding up at the cash register will go to the Honduras Mission trip. Jake and Jason will take care of making flyers to be placed at the registers. They will educate the cashiers on the Honduras Mission trip. All the money made in the month of February from the roundups will go to the Honduras mission trip.

The Mustard Seed has stopped all radio advertisement for now. Will start up again in June 2025.

Next OGB Meeting will be February 18, 2025

Closing Prayer by Pastor Amanda

Adjourn

March 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
23 8:00am Praise Singers Rehearsal 9:00am Worship 9:50am Sunday School	24 4:00pm Drum Group Practice	25 9:00am <u>Piecemakers</u>	26 3:00pm Women's Bible Study 5:00pm Bell Practice 5:30pm Choir Practice	27 6:30pm Council Meeting	28 8:00am Men's Bible Study	1
2 Transfiguration Sunday 8:00am Praise Singers Rehearsal 9:00am Worship 9:50am Sunday School 10:15am Facilities Meeting	3	4 9:00am <u>Piecemakers</u> 5:00pm Worship and Music Meeting 6:00pm Faith Formation	5 Ash Wednesday 3:00pm Women's Bible Study 5:00pm Bell Practice 5:30pm Choir Practice 6:30pm Ash Wednesday Worship	6 11:30am Catholic Charities Meal Distribution	7 World Day of Prayer 8:00am Men's Bible Study	8 9:00am Serpent Lake Association Meeting
9 8:00am Praise Singers Rehearsal 9:00am Worship 9:50am Sunday School	10 1:00pm Bible Study at Heartwood	11 9:00am <u>Piecemakers</u>	12 3:00pm Women's Bible Study 5:00pm Bell Practice 5:15pm Lent Evening Meal 5:30pm Choir Practice 6:30pm Lent Evening Worship	13	14 8:00am Men's Bible Study	15
16 8:00am Praise Singers Rehearsal 9:00am Worship 9:50am Sunday School	17	18 9:00am <u>Piecemakers</u> 1:00pm Outreach Governing Board Meeting 3:00pm Executive Team Meeting	19 3:00pm Women's Bible Study 3:15pm Kids Club 5:00pm Bell Practice 5:15pm Lent Evening Meal 5:30pm Choir Practice 6:30pm Lent Evening Worship	20 6:00pm Cuyuna Range Lions Meeting	21 8:00am Men's Bible Study	22
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