



# Salem Connection

## July 2025

Salem Lutheran Church 21276 Archibald Road PO Box 100 Deerwood MN 56444  
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In the early days of Christianity, long before there were church buildings or formal structures, believers gathered in homes, courtyards, by waters, and quiet spaces. They came together not out of obligation, but out of love for Christ and for one another. People heard the news that their sins were forgiven and their souls secure, and it changed the way they operated in the world. Acts 2:44-47 paints a beautiful picture:

"All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by

day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."

These were not just religious meetings with specific songs and prayers, they were vibrant communities where people knew each other, shared life together, and cared deeply for those around them. The early church wasn't just a place to worship; it was a way of living.

Our culture would not support this type of community – it's sad, but true. The places where people do live like this are ripe for abuse of power and quickly turn into cults where one's individuality is absorbed along with their assets.

Yet, that same spirit of compassion and community is what we are still called to embody today. In a world filled with loneliness, hardship, and division, the Church is needed more than ever, not just as a building, but as a people who live out the love of Christ. When we listen to one another, provide a meal for someone going through a tough time, or simply show up with a kind word, we are being the Church. When we create spaces where everyone feels safe, seen, and supported, we are echoing the heart of those first gatherings.

Don't be fooled though, that life does cost us something. It means we set aside the focus on our own needs in favor of serving the people around us... (and it's harder to do that than to sell your possessions and donate the money!) But we do this out of love for Christ and for one another.

The Spirit is always working to make us into a church that isn't defined by walls or programs or style of worship, but by the generous, intentional, and unconditional way we love. Let's be the Church not only for the ones who come on Sunday morning, but for everyone – the hurting, the hopeful, the curious, the weary, and the seeking. As we do so, the Lord will add to our number day by day.

(This month's newsletter is full of ways you can love one another: birthdays, guiding children, celebrating the community, and visiting homebound members. Join the care!)

Peace,  
~Pastor Amanda



# Worship Notes at Salem

## Thank you to those serving in July:

### READERS

- 6** \_\_\_\_\_  
**13** \_\_\_\_\_  
**20** \_\_\_\_\_  
**27** \_\_\_\_\_

### USHERS

- 6** Mark & Cindy Larson, Curt & Sylvia Hoge  
**13** Randy Holmwig, Herb & Barb Schoon, Mark Boike  
**20** Clark & Joyce Marshall, Roger & Marlene Prill  
**27** Nory and Peggy Hunze, Chuck Lubowitz and Karla Peterson

### COMMUNION SERVERS

- 6** Andrea Anderson, Glenn Suess, Raye Cragun  
**13** Herb & Barb Schoon, Shelly Skeim  
**20** Marlys Orr, Nancy Johnson, Shelly Skeim  
**27** Kathy Dauer, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

### OFFERING COUNTERS

Shirley Huxford & Myron Midthun

## July Worship Schedule

- 6** 9:00a.m. Praise Worship  
**13** 9:00a.m. Traditional Worship  
**20** 9:00a.m. Praise Worship  
**27** 9:00a.m. Traditional Worship

### Summer Music Schedule:

Check out the Kiosk for more information about Music at Salem in the Summer!

\*We are looking for new voices and instruments to join the Praise Team! If you are interested in joining or just want to test it out, all are welcome to join Praise Choir practices, held at 5:30p.m. on Wednesdays!\*

## Heartwood Bible Study

The monthly Bible study at Heartwood will take place on July 14th at 1:00p.m.

## You Are Invited to Bring Christ to Others

Have you ever wanted to share Christ's presence in a personal and meaningful way? We are inviting compassionate and caring individuals to serve as Home Communion Visitors to our homebound members—those who, due to ability, illness, or other circumstances, are unable to attend Salem in person.

Pastor Amanda will hold a two-part training for these visits on Wednesday, July 23 and 30 from 6:00 to 7:00pm. The training covers logistics of the ministry and personal preparation for listening and caring for our homebound members.

Please let Pastor Amanda know if you are going to miss one of the dates.



## Faith and Coffee?

Sunday morning fellowship is a perfect time to talk through what God brought to your attention in worship. Grab a cup, a treat, and finish this sentence,

"Today I noticed..."



**Remember the Salem Summer Worship Experiment? Check out page 7 to find out how you can participate in giving feedback to how you are liking worship this summer at Salem!**

# A New Name for a Unified Mission

## Embracing Our Growth

Dear Church Family,

First and foremost, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude to each of you for embarking on this incredible mission to help our neighbors in need. Your vision for the future has been a guiding light, transforming our humble beginnings in the church basement into the thriving community service we now see in the Mustard Seed and Salem West.

This growth has been nothing short of amazing. However, as we have consolidated our efforts into one location and expanded the groups we serve, we've encountered some confusion about our identity. To some, Salem West is merely a drop-off point for donations. To others, it serves as a vital resource for social workers or a hub for businesses and volunteer groups seeking to assist our community. And then there's the Mustard Seed, which sells goods to generate funds for our mission.

When people arrive at our building, the multiple signs, busy parking lots, and various entrances can be overwhelming. The same confusion arises when someone calls. Should we answer as Salem West for donations, the Mustard Seed, or for social worker inquiries? This lack of clarity can hinder our ability to communicate effectively with those we aim to serve.

To address these challenges, we propose updating and restoring our exterior signage, clearly identifying our two box trucks, and creating a unified message for our Facebook and radio advertising. We need one name that encapsulates our mission and resonates with all our clients and customers.

Just as a mustard seed grows into a magnificent tree, our organization has evolved. Just as young Ricky has grown into adult Richard, we remain the same at our core, even as we adopt a new identity.

Transitioning to a single name will take time and effort, but we believe this change will allow us to streamline our focus on our true mission: helping our neighbors in need. Together, let's embrace this opportunity for clarity and unity as we continue to make a positive impact in our community.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication.

In service and love,

Randy Sykes  
OGB president

## Lunch Bunch 2025

Nourishing Our Community: The Summer Lunch Bunch Feeding Program

The Summer Lunch Bunch Program is back this year, working to ensure that no child in our community goes hungry during the school break. Designed to fill the gap left by school meal programs, this initiative provides free, nutritious meals to children and teens under 18. Meal sites in Crosby, Ironton, and Deerwood are easily accessible, offering not just food, but also connection and hope to families in need.

This summer we are meeting on Friday mornings at 9:00a.m. in the Fellowship Hall/Kitchen to pack lunches each week! The first day is Friday, June 6th! We look forward to seeing new faces and some familiar ones too! Invite a friend and help make a difference in your community one packed lunch at a time!



# Faith Formation!

**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!

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## Vacation Bible School 2025 - True North: Trusting Jesus in a Wild World!

Save the date for Vacation Bible School 2025!! Join us for True North: Trusting Jesus in a Wild World  
our own Alaskan adventure here at Salem, July 14-17th!

### Registration is OPEN ONLINE! Sign-Up Today!

Go to [www.salemdwd.org](http://www.salemdwd.org) and find the registration buttons on the homepage or click on the link below!

#### Online VBS Children's Registration:

<https://forms.ministryforms.net/viewForm.aspx?formId=88192f70-0748-4a74-b919-d961cc8883d1>

#### Online VBS Volunteer Sign-Up:

<https://forms.ministryforms.net/viewForm.aspx?formId=c1a118f9-a608-42ab-957b-1701c3164746>

The **VBS TEAM DIRECTORS** have been getting ready and already have **STATION LEADERS** who have received their materials and are starting to create exciting ways of learning about Jesus for the kiddos. NOW, we need about 14 adult or teenage volunteers to join in the fun of being **CREW LEADERS**. **CREW LEADERS** guide their group of 5 or 6 kids from station to station and enjoy the lessons that are presented and have lots of fun with their crew.



## Women's Retreat 2025

Join us for a weekend of fun and getting to know other women in our congregation and some women from First Lutheran in St. Paul! We will be retreating to the beautiful Bay Lake Retreat Center again this year. The dates will be **October 3 – 5**, Friday through Sunday. We are trying something new this year, as several people couldn't make it for the entire time last year. If you can only make it one night, or even just for the day on Saturday, please let us know and we will try to accommodate you! The cost should be about the same as last year, and will be provided soon! If you think the cost will create a hardship for you, scholarships are available! Mark your calendars and watch for more information to come!  
For more information, contact Jena Reed: (218) 670-0499 or [jenar64@hotmail.com](mailto:jenar64@hotmail.com)

From the Pastor: Our learning and conversation sessions will focus on forgiveness. Throughout the weekend, we will explore Scripture for examples of forgiveness while we learn ways to seek forgiveness when we've done wrong and grant forgiveness when others wrong us. We will also spend a portion of time working through barriers to forgiveness and how we forgive ourselves.

# Church Council News

Dear Salem Family,

Thank you to all who regularly support Salem's mission and ministries financially and with your time. We also want to thank the community for the generous donations to Salem West and the Mustard Seed and the shoppers who support our Outreach Ministry. Volunteers are essential to these endeavors.

Currently our income from offerings and pledges is not enough to cover our church operating expenses. We have had to use our reserves to cover some of the costs of our staff, utilities, benevolences, and programming. A Congregational Meeting is planned for July 27th to address the budget shortfall and to hear your ideas for options. Our giving patterns are down, and our staff has been very frugal with their spending. It is also time for us to plan the 2026 budget, and we are interested in knowing your priorities.

The Council has a goal of Improving Communication. We have used articles in the Connection, Congregational updates, and the Suggestion, Observations, and Solutions box. We are interested in your feedback and ways that you would like to communicate with the Council. Changes have been made because of a survey of the congregation that was done in the Fall of 2023. We want to know what you think.

There are opportunities to participate with VBS, Deerwood Days, Lunch Bunch, Food Distribution, Home Communion Visitors, Men's and Women's Retreats and more. Please consider volunteering and/or sharing in these fellowship events.

Our Kitchen Coordinators, Kathi Sharp and Sherri Godfrey, are resigning effective December 31, 2025. We are looking for a Kitchen Coordinator or a Kitchen Team to train with them to be ready for next year. We want to thank them for the wonderful job that they have done over the last eight years.

Lynn Hansen

*Salem Lutheran Church Council President*

## Deerwood Days - August 8th & 9th

Deerwood Days (formerly Summer Fest) has always been a team effort. To those who have been involved in the past we agree it is a wonderful time of fellowship. It's so special to see the Church come together for this most important fundraiser. This year especially with our financial situation as it is, we need a strong event.

So we are asking for everyone to step up and volunteer however you able.

How can you help:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| - Donate something for the Auction                | - Help make gift baskets!                                  |
| - Ask neighbors or friends if they have donations | - Buy 12 packs of soda                                     |
| - Make brownies for the ice cream sundaes         | - Sign-Up to make meatballs & lefsa                        |
| - Make cookies                                    | <b>Sign-Ups will be available July 9th in the Narthex!</b> |

*We look forward to seeing the great Salem team come together to make this year's event a grand success!*

*For information on absolutely anything, please reach out to our leadership team.*

Mark Boike (218) 349-2234

Paul Tesdahl (218) 851-6646

Julie Fritz (507) 254-8296

Don Hales (320) 267-7770



# Special Celebrations in July



## BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

1 Andrea Anderson  
2 Ruth Helgesen  
5 Lori Holmvig  
6 Brian Sudman  
7 Mary Erickson  
Joyce Kohnen  
8 Julie Fritz

10 Gloria Johnson  
13 Maridee Smilich  
14 Ahreanna Chandler  
18 Kim Coughlin  
24 Gwendolyn Voller  
26 Renee Voller  
27 Taylor Bordwell  
29 Sherri Godfrey  
Kari Henningson

1 Al & Barbara Schiffler  
10 Randy & Cindy Sykes  
23 Greg & Kathy Meyer  
27 Tom & Nancy Reek  
28 Ernie & Mary Erickson



## Financial Updates

### Salem Lutheran Church

#### Profit & Loss

May 2025

	100 Church	150 Building	TOTAL
<b>Income</b>			
4000 · Offerings	23,452.24	0.00	23,452.24
4100 · Building Fund	0.00	5,380.41	5,380.41
4900 · Other Income	1,136.15	121.05	1,257.20
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>24,588.39</b>	<b>5,501.46</b>	<b>30,089.85</b>
<b>Expense</b>	<b>33,066.58</b>	<b>9,000.00</b>	<b>42,066.58</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>(8,478.19)</b>	<b>(3,498.54)</b>	<b>(11,976.73)</b>

### May Benevolence

Synod ELCA \$1,387.45  
YAGM Support \$125.30  
VLM Support \$125.30

\$1638.05 Total

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

Thank you for the continuous generosity!

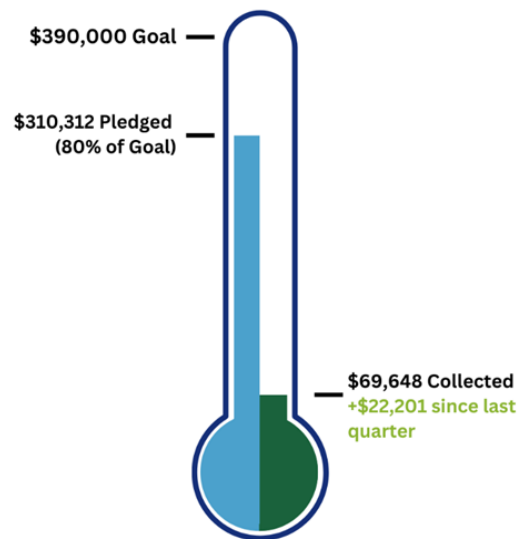
## Capital Appeal 2024-2027 Update



The 2024-2027 Stepping Forward in Faith Capital Appeal for reducing Salem's mortgage is underway. Thank you to those who pledged and/or gave! Your financial commitments will make a major impact in eliminating our debt and stepping forward towards the next chapter in Salem's future.

Each quarter, we will be providing a newsletter update on the capital appeal's financial numbers to share our progress on total raised in pledges and how much has been collected.

We are still working to reach our goal of \$390,000 over the next three years. If you have not made a commitment and/or gift, please do so. Gifts of all sizes are appreciated!



# Summer Worship Experiment

Thank you for experimenting in worship! Salem has been alternating between praise music and traditional hymns through June, July and August. Near the end of this month, we want your feedback! We'd like to invite you into a thoughtful and open two-way conversation on this worship experiment. (No surveys, no votes - just sharing together!)

These conversations are not just about music styles - they are about how we experience worship, connect with God, and grow together as a community. Whether your heart resonates more with the timeless words of hymns or the energy of praise songs (or somewhere in between), **your voice matters**. Your feedback, reflections, and spiritual insight will help us shape a meaningful path forward as a community!

For those who wish to meet online, join the Zoom meeting on Tuesday, July 22 at 3:00p.m.

Using the link or following information:

<https://luthersem.zoom.us/j/94368494227pwd=8fYa2wAPalzmC15mSDqfuA00oiobd9.1>

Meeting ID: 943 6849 4227 Passcode: 152080

For those in person, we will gather around treats and tables in the Fellowship Hall on Tuesday, July 22 at 6:00p.m.

Let the office know if you can't make this date, we will happily add another day the following week!

## Feeding Our Community

A group of volunteers went to The Outreach Program of Brainerd Lakes in Nisswa, MN on May 14th! Many of our confirmation students and their mentors attended along with a handful of other congregation members and friends to help package ready-to-cook meals for those hungry in our community. Our Lil' Free Pantry is small in size but massive with the impact it holds on our area! The pantry is located by the education wing, to the left of the front doors! This pantry is always open and available to those who need items to fill their own pantry. The group in early May packed over 1,200 packages of food, which can serve over 7,000 people! Our church got to take home 16 boxes filled with these meals, allowing for our pantry to stay nicely stocked for many weeks to come! If you know someone or you yourself are in need of a meal or two, we encourage you to take what you need and leave what you can at the Lil' Free Pantry!

Some available options include:

- Apple Cinnamon Oatmeal
- Rice & Beans
- Mac N' Cheese

*& many more!*



## Men's Retreat 2025

Prayers to the men who are headed up north July 7th-11th on the annual Salem Men's Retreat! They will be spending time participating in bible studies, fishing and lots of outdoor fellowship time, enjoying one another's company and the beautiful surroundings! We hope you have another fantastic year at Lake Kabetogema and can't wait to hear all the stories when you return!



## **Salem Outreach Governing Board – May 20th, 2025**

Present were: Pastor Amanda Kempthorne, Jason Kempthorne, Nancy Tighe, Cathy Aykens, Linda Sudman, Kay Bendorf

Guest: Julie Fritz, Jake Walker

Absent – Randy Sykes, and Mark Boike

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 Kay Bendorf.

Mustard Seed: Mustard Seed Sales for April 2025 were \$45,463.00

Salem West Impact Report for the month of April: 43 referrals and 39 completed orders. A total of 85 individuals were helped. Total volunteer hours for April were 1248.

There has been \$138,180 in goods delivered to the community YTD.

The In Kind impact is \$294,295.54 YTD.

New Business:

Honduras Final Report was given and all final numbers are in and paid for.

A financial question was brought up for attention on why liabilities are added into the total net asset on the Salem Outreach & Mustard Seed Dedicated balance sheet of 4/30/2025. Jason was going to check with Amy on this.

The Mustard Seed ad will be back on the radio starting in June. The audience on Facebook and Instagram continues to grow.

A Salem Outreach Survey was sent to all volunteers and paid staff employees at the Mustard Seed/ Salem West. Jason and Jake highly encouraged everyone to fill out this survey. Great way to get feedback on how the Mustard Seed/ Salem West is doing.

Fall service project –Nationwide ELCA Service day is September 7th. GWOH –Gods Work Our Hands. We discussed what we might want to do as a group on this day. Some ideas were:

- Food packaging here at Salem Church
- Fall clean up at a few people's houses.
- Bring more ideas to the next meeting.

Mission Trip 2026 was discussed. Do we go back to Honduras or do we look for something new in the US? We will discuss more ideas at the June meeting.

Quilters would like \$75.00 to get a quilt quilted. They will be donating this quilt for Deerwood Days. This will be brought to the council for request.

Continued on the next page.



## Old Business

One Name – Randy Sykes will be putting something in the Salem News Letter this month about the Mustard Seed and Salem West needing to be combined into one name.

Food packing went really well on May 14. There were 28 volunteers and packaged 7,776 Meals.

The cost was \$2,000. Salem brought back 3,240 meals for the little free pantry at the church.

Repair & Maintenance issue at the Mustard Seed – Painting in one of the pole barn buildings. One proposal was received but waiting on a few more before hiring someone to mud and paint the walls.

Next OGB Meeting will be June 24th, 2025

Closing Prayer by Pastor Amanda

Adjourn

# **Salem Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes**

May 22, 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: Pastor Amanda Kempthorne, Mark Boike, Lynn Hansen, Sherri Godfrey, Don Hales, Sylvia Hoge,

Julie Fritz

Members Absent: Alan Niemann, Nate Van Risseghem, Tina Royer

Opening Prayer: Pastor Amanda

SOS announcement: 1 SOS was addressed. At 6:35pm the group went into the Executive Session. MSC. At 7:19 MSC to come out of Executive Session.

Discussion Questions for Chapter 4 of Unlocking Your Church's Invite Culture were deferred until the June meeting

## Approval of the Agenda:

Addition to the agenda. Request from quilters, Listening Session of May 18

Motion to approve the amended May 22 agenda, MSC

## Approval of minutes:

Motion to approve the April 24, 2025 meeting minutes with one small change. MSC

## Approval of Financials:

Motion to approve the April 2025 financial report. MSC

## Pastor's Report – Pastor Amanda:

Wrapping up end of year programs

Summer Worship Planning – Praise Team new on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays.

Home Communion Visitors, calling visitors and recipients, will meet and match

Vacation June 5–8, working on guest preacher (have asked 5 so far)

Outdoor worship at Serpent Park, June 29

Outreach Report – Julie. Shelves and racks from JoAnn's were purchased and have been used in the store to better organize the products. The group is looking for a fall service project for GWOH (God's work. Our Hands) the first week in September.

## Committee Reports:

Capital Appeal – Sherri May 13 met. MSC to give ½ funds made from Deerwood Day to Capital Appeal and ½ to Church General Fund

Continued on the next page.

Columbarium – Alan, Don 2 meetings- planned planting and then planted. Also decorated the Cemetery. Wood was stained and all matches now.

Facilities- Nate- Meet on June 1

Faith Formation –Sylvia- May 18 Sunday school finished. VBS July 14-19. Kids club finished May 21. Looking at getting Plinko game with prizes and Face Painting during Deerwood Days

Memorial – Don. Approved camperships. June 8 is next meeting.

Spiritual Gifts – Alan- Looking for members

Technology – Julie-Some computers need Windows 11

Welcome – Tina no report

Worship and Music – Julie- The committee would like to buy some new music.

\*\*\*Motion to purchase music for up to \$250 from account 2410- MSC

#### Old Business:

- Home Communion- see pastor report
  - Thrivent Dollars- no need to address today
  - Parents Night Off- no report
  - Deerwood Days- Looking for donations. Have a donation of a car.
- \*\*\*There is a motion to support the Capital Appeal motion that ½ the church proceeds from the Deerwood Days silent auction be given to capital appeal, and ½ to general church fund. MSC.

#### New Business:

- 2026 Stewardship and Budgeting Process and Timeline: Council members were given a draft copy.
- Request from Quilters: The quilters will be donating a quilt to the Deerwood Days silent auction. They have the quilt ready for machine quilting which will cost some money. They are requesting \$75 from the Deerwood Days/Summerfest budget to get this done.  
\*\*\*\*Motion to use up to \$75 from Summerfest/Deerwood Days Account 2370 to finish the quilt the quilters are making for the silent auction. MSC.
- Listening Session – Requests from the session: Is there a way to turn off speaker before church so Facebook doesn't hear? Yes. Is there a way to have the bells ring at 9am not 8:55am so the prelude is not interrupted? Items will be taken to Worship and Music.

#### Announcements:

Executive Team Meeting: June 19, 2025, Next Council Meeting: June 26, 2025

A motion was made to adjourn at 8:10pm

Closed in Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Fritz



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>29</b> 9:00am Outdoor Worship at Serpent Lake Park	<b>30</b>	<b>1</b> 9:00am Piecemakers 5:00pm Worship and Music Meeting	<b>2</b> 3:00pm Women's Bible Study 5:30pm Praise Team Practice	<b>3</b> 11:30am Catholic Charities Meal Distribution	<b>4</b> <b>Independence Day</b> Office Closed!	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b> 9:00am Praise Worship	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 9:00am Piecemakers 6:00pm VBS Leaders Meeting	<b>9</b> 3:00pm Women's Bible Study 5:30pm Praise Team Practice	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Lunch Bunch	<b>12</b> 9:00am Serpent Lake Association Meeting
<b>13</b> 9:00am Traditional Worship	<b>14</b> 9:00am Vacation Bible School 1:00pm Bible Study at Heartwood	<b>15</b> 9:00am Vacation Bible School 1:00pm Outreach Governing Board Meeting 3:00pm Executive Team Meeting	<b>16</b> 9:00am Vacation Bible School 3:00pm Women's Bible Study 5:30pm Praise Team Practice	<b>17</b> 9:00am Vacation Bible School 6:00pm Cuyuna Range Lions Meeting	<b>18</b> 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Lunch Bunch	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b> 9:00am Praise Worship	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 9:00am Piecemakers 6:00pm Worship Experiment Conversation	<b>23</b> 3:00pm Women's Bible Study 5:30pm Praise Team Practice 6:00-7:00pm Home Communion Class	<b>24</b> 6:30pm Council Meeting	<b>25</b> 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Lunch Bunch	<b>26</b> 1:00pm Drum Group Practice
<b>27</b> 9:00am Traditional Worship	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 9:00am Piecemakers	<b>30</b> 3:00pm Women's Bible Study 5:30pm Praise Team Practice 6:00-7:00pm Home Communion Class	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b> 8:00am Men's Bible Study 9:00am Lunch Bunch	<b>2</b>