

The Prairie Willow

A joint newsletter for Shepherd of the Hills and West Zion Lutheran Churches

SOTH July/August 2026

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West Zion Lutheran Church (WZ)

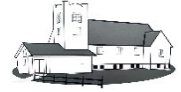
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West Zion Lutheran Church



Information & Contacts

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320-444-1113

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Custodians

Stephanie Smith – SOTH

320-766-3945

Gary & Connie Williams – WZ

320-843-4417

Pastor's Message



By Pastor Steve Carmany

"Celebrating, Grieving, Living!"

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ... Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." 1st Corinthians 12: 12 & 27

As I write this final Pastor's Greeting before my retirement, I am becoming more and more thankful for being a part of "the Body of Christ!" Aren't we blessed by a wonderful God who connects us with one another, here on earth and with all in heaven?! Through God:

*We make one another much more than any of us are just on our own!

*We help complete each other, and we complete Christ!
We are an Us!

Of course, with my retirement, will come a parting of our ways that we have gotten used to for the

Continued on next page...

Schedule Assignments

SOTH Computer Operators & Acolyte Schedule

	<u>Computer</u>	<u>Acolyte</u>
July 5	Adult (TBD)	
July 19	Logan Hight & Adult (TBD)	
August 2	Coy Kobbermann & Adult (TBD)	
August 16	Jacey Reich & Adult (TBD)	
August 30	Blake Larson & Adult (TBD)	
September 13	Aletta Larson & Lilly Wrobleski	Logan Hight

SOTH Fellowship Schedule

No fellowship during summer months.

SOTH Altar Guild

July	Linda Amlie/Jane Petrak
August	Tammy Thompson/Doreen Thompson
September	Sheri Fahl/Brenda Nelson
October	Janine Ellingson/Laura Ostlie
November	Joyce Lagred/Tammy Thompson
December	Dee Baird/WELCA Officers

**Please note,
if you are unable to
fulfill a scheduled
duty, please find
someone to take
your place!**

Retirement Potluck For Pastor Steve!

The congregations of SOTH and WZ are invited to be part of a potluck on July 19, 2026 to celebrate Pastor Steve's retirement and commemorate his tenure of ministry within our congregations. We want to express our heartfelt gratitude for the service he has provided and want to recognize his commitment to sharing God's word and most importantly becoming part of our family.

His passion for ministry, his compassion for all, his desire to make all feel included and his generous capacity to love is something to celebrate. We wish Pastor Steve and Leanne the best in retirement!



Prayer Requests



STEVE NELSON, MARGE ANDERSON, SARA & JON REICH, SUE CARSON & PHILIP SKARSTEN

Announcements

EAST ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH INFORMATION

28745 County Road 10

Starbuck, MN 56381

Phone: 320-239-4195

Email: office@eastzionlutheranchurch.org

Interim Administrative Assistant: Mary Jo Forbord

Custodian: Sandy Knutson, 320-843-4342

Website: eastzionlutheranchurch.org

Facebook: East Zion Lutheran Church

SOTH CHURCH RENTAL

Make sure to visit the website, speak with a church secretary or grab a facility use policy contract from the church office door to reserve the church, its tables and or chairs for your special events!

ON-LINE GIVING OPTIONS

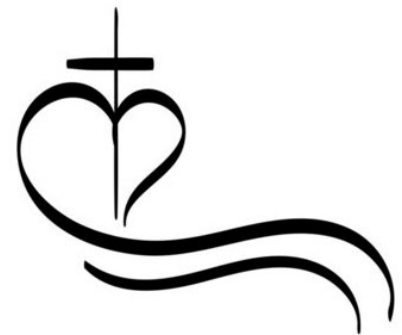
To make it easier to give, SOTH and West Zion have partnered with Tith.le. Tith.le offers automatic withdrawals from an account of your choice or from a credit card. Visit the Shepherd of the Hills website under giving or the West Zion website under give to learn more and sign up! Tith.le is recommended by the Southwest Synod of the ELCA and is notably safe!

BULLETIN DEADLINE

Announcements for bulletins must be emailed to soth2008@live.com or call/text 320-444-1113 by noon Tuesday prior to church service.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Material for newsletters must be emailed to soth2008@live.com or call/text 320-444-1113 by the 20th of each month.



JUNE 30th JOINT COUNCILS TO MEET WITH SYNOD MINISTER

On Tuesday evening, June 30th, 7pm, all church council members of our three congregations will meet together with Rev. Seyward Ask, a synod minister of SWMN Synod. At this meeting, the councils will begin planning the next steps for continuing the ministries and worship services and partnerships of our churches.

This will include an interim period in which preparations will be made, before a joint call committee can be formed and the call process begun.

Ongoing communication of how the worship services will be led, pastoral care covered and how the call process is proceeding, will be provided by the church councils through this monthly newsletter, and other means of communication.

Many thanks for all the prayers and cooperative effort from everyone during these upcoming months!

Announcements

WELCA SYNOD CONVENTION REPORT

The WELCA Synod Convention was held May 2, 2026 at Calvary Lutheran Church in Willmar, MN. 1,480 Lutheran World Relief (LWR) quilts, 939 school kits (32 from SOTH), 685 baby care kits, 26 fabric kits, 178 Global Health Ministry kits, and 1,048 quilts to others were collected that day. The 2027 LWR kit focus is school kits and Global Health Ministry focus will be newborn kits.

Officers were elected including Sharon Braaten as President for a two year term, Brenda Danielson as Vice President for a one year term, Karen Quistorff as Treasurer for a two year term, and two board members at large for a two year term: Kris Besel, Kendra Ohman and Ilene Penk.

The Triennial Convention is July 13-14, 2026 and the WELCA gathering is July 16-19, both in Des Moines, IA. More information can be found online at www.womenoftheelca.org.

Luther Crest Women's Week is June 21-26 or go for one day June 21, 22 or 23. Pre-registration is required.

Luther Crest Summer Fest and Auction is July 11, 2026 which includes a live auction, online auction, ziplining, arts and crafts, beach time and camp meal.

The Luther Crest Golf Scramble is Monday, August 3, 2026 at the Milona Golf Club.

October 10 is the Luther Crest Bible Camp annual meeting.

Green Lake Bible Camp which also includes St. Andrews Bible Camp and Camp House have a new company name called Waters Edge Ministries. They have several camp opportunities.

Church Council Reports

From the Treasurer...

Please see the last few pages of the newsletter for account balances.

Sincerely, Jim Ostlie, Treasurer

Church Council Reports

From the Secretary...

The June 10 meeting of the Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church Council was called to order by President Stephanie Smith at 7:05PM. A beautiful prayer was given by Pastor Steve.

Those in attendance: Stephanie Smith, Laura Ostlie, Laura Larson, Betsy Anderson, Brenda Nelson, Troy Nelson, Rick Davidson, Jim Ostlie and Pastor Steve Carmany.

The May council minutes were read and Betsy Anderson moved to approve the minutes as read with a second by Troy Nelson. Motion passed unanimously.

Jim Ostlie gave the Treasurers report. Currently we have \$4,305.58 in checking, \$2,604.25 in savings, \$25,030.60 in the Money Market Account, and \$88,153.96 in Mission Investment Funds. There are currently no outstanding bills. Motion by Laura Ostlie with a second by Betsy Anderson to approve the Treasurer's report with the motion passing unanimously.

In the Pastor's Report:

- Pastor Steve provided orders of service three ring binder for lay people during the interim when we will not have a pastor available or if an interim/traveling pastor wants us to create a service to use. He also shared the travel communion box with instructions that is used when giving communion to those that cannot physically make it to church. He encouraged lay people to provide this service to these members in the event an interim or traveling pastor cannot fulfill those duties. The wine and bread in the traveling communion box and any bread or wine needed for a full service can be blessed prior so communion can be offered without an official pastor present. Pastor Steve's last service with us is July 19.
- There is a youth weekend event to Sioux Falls planned for early July with three youth signed up to go and waiting on two families to reply. Depending on numbers it may or may not occur.

In the President's Report:

- Stephanie Smith reminded council of a joint council meeting taking place at 7PM on Tuesday, June 30 at East Zion to discuss next steps after Pastor Steve's official last day with us.

Deacon Report:

- None

Trustee Report:

- Chris Larson fixed the door knob on the back door of the church so it is now working properly.

Secretaries report continued on next page...

Secretaries report continued...

Board of Education Report:

- Laura Larson reported they had 14 children sign up for VBS that was held June 1-4 from 5-730PM at the church. The children presented a small program during worship on June 7.
- Council wants to give a huge shout out to Laura Larson, Erika Hughes, Ryan Davidson, Roxanne Nelson and the many others who collaborated and volunteered to make this event happen!

In Old Business

- Laura Larson presented the draft SOTH Emergency Response Plan which will be utilized in the event the church is used as shelter during an emergency situation. At an earlier meeting, County Line First Responders and council members listened to a presentation by Countryside Public Health asking if we would be interested in taking the role of administering assistance as a church in the case of an emergency. The plan provides local contact information and instruction in case of medical, fire, weather, active shooter or a missing child/vulnerable adult situation.

In New Business:

- Stephanie Smith asked for a mowing payment schedule to be placed in the Narthex. Mowing is \$55/time done by Lye Mowing.
- Jim Ostlie moved to purchase 8 battery operated smoke detectors and two battery operated carbon monoxide detectors for the church since there are none. A second was made by Troy Nelson and approved unanimously.
- Jim Ostlie moved to spend up to \$100 to purchase first aid kit that will be housed in the kitchen. A second was made by Betsy Anderson and approved unanimously.

In Announcements:

- A farewell potluck for Pastor Steve and Leanne will be held Sunday, July 19 following SOTH worship. West Zion will be invited.
- The next council meeting is Wednesday, July 8 at 7PM.

Motion made by Laura Ostlie to adjourn and a second made by Betsy Anderson. Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Ostlie

Baptism



Reagan Rae Reese will be baptized on July 5th, 2026 at West Zion. Parents are Dylan and Rebecah Bertalotto Reese. Godparents are Alison Buck, Connor Reese, Raymond Bertalotto and Jocelyn Filiyaro. There will be a lunch at the home of Randy & Lynn Reese to celebrate Reagan's baptism. All are welcome! Address is 25608 County Road 1, Hancock.

2026 Budget

				2026 Budget	Spent to date
1100 Missions/Donations/Memberships				\$910.00	\$0.00
1101	Benson Fire Department			\$50.00	\$0.00
1102	Glacial Ridge Conference			\$160.00	\$0.00
1103	Glenwood Retirement Village			\$200.00	\$0.00
1104	Luther Crest			\$100.00	\$0.00
1105	Lutheran Social Service			\$100.00	\$0.00
1106	Misc. Missions	Based on donations		\$0.00	\$0.00
1107	SW Minnesota Synod			\$300.00	\$0.00
1108	Love Fund	Based on donations		\$0.00	\$0.00
1109	Other			\$0.00	\$0.00

Note Love Fund budget is carryover from previous year plus any new money given in current year

1200 Staff and Ministry				\$66,377.50	\$27,599.31
1201	Church Custodial Salary			\$6,095.16	\$3,032.91
1202	Office Secretary Salary (incl. WZ portion)			\$9,142.68	\$4,551.38
1203	Organist Salary			\$1,700.00	\$960.97
1204	Pastoral Salary			\$44,511.46	\$17,414.85
1204.1	Pastoral Benefits			\$6,079.62	\$4,243.32
1204.2	Pastoral Mileage			\$1,800.00	\$0.00
1204.3	Pastoral Professional Development			\$525.00	\$66.50
1204.4	Pastoral Salary			\$36,106.84	\$13,105.03
1204.5	Other			\$0.00	\$0.00
1205	PowerPoint Creator Salary (incl. WZ portion)			\$1,108.20	\$552.78
1206	Pulpit Supply (sub Pastors)			\$300.00	\$175.00
1207	Employee Quarterly Taxes			\$3,200.00	\$786.42
1208	Sub organist fees			\$220.00	\$0.00
1209	Tax Prep			\$100.00	\$125.00
1210	MN Paid Leave			\$0.00	\$35.31

1300 Congregational Life				\$6,530.64	\$3,635.90
1301	Altar Supplies			\$500.00	\$262.20
1302	Church Worship Material			\$500.00	\$256.34
1303	Convention (Synod Assembly)			\$700.00	\$610.00
1304	Office Supplies/Rentals			\$3,930.64	\$1,951.41
1304.1	Copier Lease			\$2,805.64	\$1,306.95
1304.2	Copier staples/paper			\$400.00	\$58.19
1304.3	Other			\$250.00	\$586.27
1304.4	Postage			\$250.00	\$0.00
1304.5	Website Fee			\$225.00	\$0.00
1305	Other (Kitchen)			\$300.00	\$187.35
1306	Living Lutheran			\$0.00	\$0.00
1307	Transfer to Building Fund			\$0.00	\$0.00
1308	Transfer to Memorial Fund			\$0.00	\$0.00
1309	Youth Programs			\$600.00	\$368.60
1309.1	Sunday School			\$0.00	\$0.00

1309.2	Confirmation	\$0.00	\$85.10
1309.3	Graduation	\$0.00	\$0.00
1309.4	Other (VBS)	\$600.00	\$283.50
1309.5	Youth Mission Trip & Luther League expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00

1400 Church Building/Property **\$23,588.20** \$11,271.63

1401	Dept of Labor (Elevator Inspection)	\$100.00	\$145.00
1402	Insurance	\$5,500.00	\$2,794.24
1403	Mowing	\$700.00	\$220.00
1404	Repairs/Maintenance	\$1,500.00	\$628.36
1405	Supplies (custodial)*	\$500.00	\$187.20
1406	Utilities*	\$15,238.20	\$7,296.83
1407.1	Electricity	\$4,000.00	\$1,250.00
1407.2	Fuel	\$5,000.00	\$3,355.48
1407.3	Phone/Internet	\$1,150.00	\$521.78
1407.4	Propane	\$4,200.00	\$1,548.50
1407.5	Water	\$888.20	\$368.00
1407.6	Garbage Service	\$495.00	\$253.07
1408	Flowers	\$50.00	\$0.00

1500 Fundraiser Expenses **\$200.00** \$0.00

1501	Harvest Dinner	\$200.00	\$0.00
1502	Other	\$0.00	\$0.00

Proposed Operating Budget: **\$97,606.34** \$42,506.84

1600 Income **\$97,606.34** **\$36,562.12**

1601	Youth Programs (i.e. SS & VBS)	\$600.00	\$620.00
1602	Church Rentals	\$0.00	\$0.00
1603	Grants	\$0.00	\$0.00
1604	Interest	\$0.00	\$0.48
1605	Memorials	\$0.00	\$0.00
1605.1	Love Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00
1605.2	Other	\$0.00	\$0.00
1606	Missions	\$0.00	\$0.00
1607	Mowing	\$700.00	\$0.00
1608	Offering-Regular (includes loose offering & online)	\$85,286.34	\$32,117.66
1609	Offering-Lunch	\$500.00	\$328.00
1610	Other Income	\$3,000.00	\$222.98
1611	Harvest Lunch	\$1,300.00	\$0.00
1612	Thrivent Grant Funds	\$1,000.00	\$663.00
1613	Youth Mission Trip	\$0.00	\$0.00
1614	West Zion (shared costs)	\$5,220.00	\$2,610.00

June Financial Report

Checking Account

Line Item	Date	Check #	Description	Payment	Deposit	Balance
1304.1	5/26/2026	Auto	Great America Financial Services	\$211.89		\$2,054.58
1608	5/26/26	Auto	Tithely-offering-regular		\$274.84	\$2,329.42
1407.5	5/26/2026	Auto	Culligan	\$73.60		\$2,255.82
1301	5/29/2026	Debit	Amazon - Communion Cups	\$48.08		\$2,207.74
1610	6/1/2026		Agralite Capital Credit		\$197.98	\$2,405.72
1402	6/1/2026	14920	SFM Workers Comp Ins	\$526.00		\$1,879.72
1303	6/1/2026	14921	SW MN Synod Assembly Offering	\$150.00		\$1,729.72
1608	6/1/2026		Tithely-offering-regular		\$80.34	\$1,810.06
1402	6/3/2026	Auto	North Star Mutual Insurance	\$378.04		\$1,432.02
1407.3	6/5/2026		Federated Telephone	\$86.28		\$1,345.74
1403	6/5/2026	14922	Lye Mowing (3X)	\$165.00		\$1,180.74
	6/5/2026		From Savings		\$2,900.00	\$4,080.74
1608	6/8/2026		Tithely-offering-regular		\$224.84	\$4,305.58
1404	6/15/2026	Debit	Amazon (Smoke/CO2 Detectors/first aid kit)	\$358.11		\$3,947.47
1608	6/15/2026		Tithely-offering-regular	\$230.34		\$3,717.13
1612	6/15/2026		Thrivent Funds	\$199.00		\$3,518.13
1206	6/16/2026	14923	A Williams (Pulpit Supply 6/21/26)	\$175.00		\$3,343.13

Total Income to date 2026:

\$34,690.12

Total Income to date 2025:

\$33,717.38

June Financial Report

Savings Account

Line Item	Date	Description	Withdrawal	Deposit	Balance
1604	5/31/2026	Interest		\$0.01	\$2,984.25
	6/5/2026	To checking	\$2,900.00		\$84.25
1608	6/8/2026	Offering-Regular (5/24/26)		\$2,015.00	\$2,099.25
1608	6/8/2026	Offering-Loose (5/24/26)		\$70.00	\$2,169.25
1614	6/8/2026	Secretarial Reimbursement West Zion		\$435.00	\$2,604.25
1608	6/11/2026	Offering-Regular (6/7/26)		\$1,820.00	\$4,424.25
1608	6/11/2026	Offering-Loose (6/7/26)		\$52.00	\$4,476.25

Money Market Account

Budget	Date	Description	Withdrawal	Deposit	Balance
	5/29/2026	Interest		\$9.54	\$25,030.60

Mission Investment Funds

6 Year Term Building Fund	\$78,206.45
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Demand Checking Building Fund	\$9,819.29
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Demand Checking Memorial Fund	\$128.22
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