



# CURRENTS

DECEMBER 2016

## CHRISTMAS PROGRAM DEC. 11—10:30 A.M. ONE SERVICE AT PRAIRIE VIEW ELEMENTARY

We will be having **ONE** worship service on December 11, at 10:30 a.m. In order to accommodate the entire congregation & guests, the service will be held at Prairie View Elementary, 1201 Newport Ln, Holmen. **The Sunday School's Christmas Program will be the message for this worship service along with Holy Communion.** We hope you can join us. Please see page 5 of this newsletter for more information on rehearsals.

## CARING TREE PROGRAM

The Caring Tree is set up in the Narthex. Please record your phone number on the sheet on the clipboard by the tree when taking a tag. Each child receives two presents. One item is clothing and the other is a fun item. All gifts are **\$25 or less. If you would like to spend more than that, please take both tags for that child or select more tags.** We want to keep the amounts of gifts consistent for each child within a family. **Please return gifts (wrapped, with the tag attached) between December 3rd – 11th.** Last year we provided gifts for 268 children.

## QUIET CHRISTMAS SERVICE—DEC. 4

We will have a special service on December 4 at both the 8 & 10:30 a.m. worship called "Quiet Christmas". Please see p. 4 of this newsletter for more information.

## CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

Are you having company for Christmas? Be sure to bring them with you to worship. Three worship services are offered on Christmas Eve and we have one service on Christmas Day. See page 3 of this newsletter for more information

**Christmas Eve services 2:00 p.m. & 4:00 p.m.**—children's message, service of light, special music.

**Christmas Eve service 9:00 p.m.**— traditional carol service of light & special music

**Christmas Day service 9:00 a.m.**



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**HALFWAY CREEK LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
 W6016 County Road W  
 Holmen, WI 54636  
 Phone 608-526-3701  
 Pastor Janet Wollam  
 Worship at 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. on Sundays  
[www.halfwaycreek.org](http://www.halfwaycreek.org)

## Return Service Requested

### OFFICE HOURS

The office will be open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 pm. If you need to reach the office, you may leave a message on the answering machine or e-mail at [assistant@halfwaycreek.org](mailto:assistant@halfwaycreek.org).



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# PASTOR NOTES

When the turkey and pie is finally pushed away and the hunters straggle in, the pumpkins and gourds and the signs of fall harvest and our abundant life are left for the squirrels, our world takes on a different shape and feel. The cycle of our land is quieter, the shape more spare, bare, dead. Grays and muted golds outline the world, not yet white.

For some the darkness is a comfort and draws us smiling to the cozy fire, or to the magical corner behind the lighted Christmas tree. For others there is worry in the air; worry from the darkness itself or worry from the need to heat, and to feed in these times, for separation, for peace. For the young it is just too long to wait for goodness and gifts, as the bride waits for her groom. The night becomes long, the longest of the winter, before the season shifts, sleepless hours extend.

It is in the depth of darkness that true hope emerges, whether it is the darkness of despair or just the longing for the dawn. That deep longing for what we cherish most: renewing health, relief from trying to do deeply difficult tasks, the sight and smell of a loved one, peace of mind, bombs' ceasing.

Be alert, those of long ago suggest. Pay attention to this leafless and spare canvas God has painted. Look up from twisting hands and tasks and endless shopping aisles. Bring the bare branch into focus. With your fingers trace and feel the tips of the grey quiet branch.

Feel the tip of the sleek bud that caps the stem. In the deadness we perceive, in the smallness of the world's care is abundance waiting, well wrapped against the cold and night, waiting for us to reach and touch and see the life, and promise, even now, when half spent in winter's night.

God's hope and longing reaching, shaping: a Word of dawn, a light. Small bud of Jesse's stem, in unlikely cold and straw, clothed in parent's worry. No temples or crowns.

Memory and longing, for a future meet here, and now: a saving grace, when half spent is our night.

Hope and Peace, which passes all understanding, be yours, and the world's this season.

Pastor Janet



# NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.

## HOLMEN'S HOPE BACKPACK MEAL PROGRAM: DONATIONS NEEDED

Holmen's Hope is undertaking another task and hoping our congregation can help. As we know many children in our community are on free and reduced lunches in our local schools. We believe some of these children may go hungry on the weekends when meals are unavailable.

Holmen's Hope has started a Friday back pack program where they fill backpacks with non-perishable or microwaveable meals/snacks the children can take home. The children return the backpacks on Monday and Holmen's Hope refills them weekly.

The school principals and guidance counsellors have been the ones selecting the students/families they feel have the most need.

Here is the list of items Holmen's Hope is asking our congregation to donate for backpacks:

- FRUIT CUPS
- JUICE BOXES
- POP TARTS
- CRACKERS/PEANUT BUTTER
- MICROWAVABLE RAVIOLI
- MICROAVABLE SOUPS (NO CAN OPENER REQUIRED CANS PLEASE)
- INSTANT OATMEAL PACKETS
- MICROWAVE POPCORN
- APPLESAUCE CUPS
- GRANOLA BARS
- CRACKERS/CHEESE
- MICROWAVABLE MAC & CHEESE
- MICROWAVABLE BEEF STEW
- BREAKFAST BARS
- HOT COCOA PACKETS
- SMALL CANS OF VIENNA SAUSAGES



## WELCA CHRISTMAS BRUNCH

Mindoro Lutheran Church has invited our ladies to a Christmas Brunch on Saturday, December 3rd at 9:30 am. Please RSVP to Mona at 608-857-3474 by December 1st.

Year to date budget as of		numbers not available at the time of printing
General Fund Income:	\$	email Robert Bandoli with questions at
General Fund Expenses:	\$	treasurer@halfwaycreek.org
General Fund Net Loss:	- \$	

## NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT. STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

Our Consecration Sunday Stewardship campaign was very successful. As of November 27:

1. 54 giving units completed an estimate of giving card on Consecration Sunday plus 12 were received afterwards for a total of 66 giving units completing estimate of giving cards.
2. A total of 42 of these giving units increased their financial commitment above their last year's amount.
3. A total of 47 giving units filled out *estimate of giving* cards and committed a total of \$119,482.
4. Based on last's year's giving records, we can expect to receive \$38,060 during the coming year from people who have consistent giving patterns during the past 12 months but were not present on Consecration Sunday.
5. Based on the average total of loose offerings during the past three years, we can expect to receive \$4290 during the coming year from that source.
6. Church income from non-donor sources such as interest and fees is projected to be \$5125.
7. This gives us a grand total of \$166,958 anticipated income for the next twelve months.
8. The total income for our general operating budget during the last 12 months was \$126,550.
9. Next year, we can expect our operating budget income to increase by \$40,408. That is very good news as we continue to pay the mortgage on our addition.
10. This is a 32% increase in total giving above last year. WOW!!!
11. We served approximately 125 guests at our celebration meal. Thank you to L & M Catering of Melrose for their delicious meal.

We are still receiving estimate of giving cards in the office from members who were not able to attend Consecration Sunday. Final results will be included in the January annual report.

### **It's 2017 Budget Time!!**

Please direct questions and concerns to the FINANCE TEAM.

Robert Bandoli, Treasurer: [treasurer@halfwaycreek.org](mailto:treasurer@halfwaycreek.org)

Carolyn Bjerke, Rhonda Britton, & Joanne Nichols, Financial Secretary

## NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT. DECEMBER SERVICE SCHEDULE

### Sunday, December 4th—8 & 10:30 a.m.—Quiet Christmas Service

This Christmas service will include special prayers of healing for all who suffer from emotional, spiritual, or physical pain.

### Sunday, December 11th—10:30 a.m.—Sunday School Christmas Program

The Sunday School will present their Christmas program with Holy Communion at the 10:30 service AT PRAIRIE VIEW ELEMENTARY, 1201 Newport Lane. We will NOT HAVE AN 8:00 a.m. service that morning.

### Sunday, December 18th—8 & 10:30 a.m.—Music Ministry Sunday

The Halfway Choir and Chime Choir have prepared special anthems for this service. We will have a Cookie Walk in between services at 9:15 a.m.

### December 24th—2:00 p.m.—Christmas Eve Family Service

This family-friendly service features a children's message, special music, and candle lighting.

### December 24th—4:00 p.m.—Christmas Eve Family Service

This family-friendly service features a children's message, special music, and candle lighting.

### December 24th—9:00 p.m.—Christmas Eve Service of Light

This is a traditional Carol Service with special music and candle lighting.

### December 25th—Christmas Day Service—9:00 a.m., one service only

This is a traditional Christmas Day Service.

### January 1st—New Year's Day Service—9:00 a.m.—one service only

This is a traditional Lessons and Carols Service



**NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.**

# When Christmas Hurts.....



**Do you have the Holiday blues?  
 Could you benefit from physical, emotional, or spiritual healing?**

## ***A QUIET CHRISTMAS SERVICE***

**For those who are suffering in any way,  
 Including prayers of healing**

**Sunday, December 4th  
 8 & 10:30 a.m. Worship Service  
 Halfway Creek Lutheran Church  
 W6016 County Road W, Holmen**

**NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.**

**CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATION: GENDER, CLERGY, AND MARRIAGE**

In October, your Vision Board set aside a Sunday afternoon to prayerfully share their experiences and thoughts on issues of gender diversity. This issue relates to those clergy from which the call committee chooses to receive profiles. In addition, because same sex marriage is now legal in Wisconsin, clergy called to this congregation would need to know the congregation's position on blessing and/or marrying same gender couples.

Following conversation at two regularly scheduled meetings, the Vision Board would like to involve the congregation in this conversation in two ways. First, they will sponsor two opportunities, one in December and one in January for the same kind of prayerful sharing that they engaged in during October. This would involve prayer, a circle conversation, and the opportunity to both speak and/or listen to others. Educational and informational materials from the ELCA will also be made available.

Second, there will be an opportunity to express comfort level and preferences on a spectrum in a brief written survey. This survey will be conducted on two Sundays in January, at church. The survey will be a bulletin insert, to be completed and deposited on the same day. Surveys will be available, before, during, and after services.

The conversation will then be returned to the Vision Board for their consideration.

The Vision Board invites all confirmed members of the congregation to participate in this chance to hear from one another in a safe and respectful environment.

Conversation Times:	Saturday, December 3, 2016	9:30 am
	Thursday, January 19, 2017	6:30 pm

Survey Times, at church	Sunday, January 22, 2017
	Sunday, January 29, 2017

Please join us for the opportunity to be the church together.

Your Vision Board:

Dave Gates, James Bringe, Bob Bandoli, Rich Berger, Joanne Nichols, Joe Noth, Rick Jones, Jen Strangstalien, Jordyn Stasiak

## NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.

### VISION BOARD MEETING MINUTES—OCTOBER 2016

Minutes of Halfway Creek Lutheran Church Vision Board Meeting October 20, 2016

David Gates, Bob Bandoli, Rich Berger, James Bringe, Joanne Nichols, Joe Noth, Jen Stangstalien

Dave Gates called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm

For Devotion Pastor Wollam took time to ask each member of the Vision Board where they are at as we come together tonight.

Pastor then lead us in prayer and touched on what each of us our dealing with in our lives.

Bob Bandoli brought a motion to approve the minutes from September Vision Board meeting. James Bringe seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Pastor gave an update on Stewardship and as well as Consecration Sunday that is coming up on November 13<sup>th</sup>. She also asked that each member of the Vision Board and their spouses would attend a Stewardship Team meeting the week of Consecration Sunday on Monday November 7<sup>th</sup> at Coulee Golf Bowl. At this meeting we would get an update on the Stewardship process and also get information about reaching out to members who have not yet responded to the Consecration Sunday invitations.

We received an update on the Call Committee. They are finishing up the last couple of items on the Site Profile. Once the items are complete they will send to the Vision Board for review and approval. At that time the Site Profile can be sent to the Synod.

We had further discussion around the LGBTQ decision. The Vision Board would like to involve the congregation in this discussion. Two Congregational Conversation sessions will be setup to discuss this issue on Thursday December 1<sup>st</sup> and Saturday December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Bob Bandoli gave us an update on finances. We reviewed the September month end numbers as well as where we stand compared to budgeted numbers Year to Date.

Jen Strangstalien brought a motion to adjourn. Joe Noth seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 8:26pm.

Faithfully submitted,

Joe Noth

## NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

#### Important Sunday School dates:

- December 4 Sunday School 9:15 a.m., Christmas Program rehearsal
- December 10 9:00 a.m. Christmas Program dress rehearsal AT CHURCH (grades 3-5 at 9 a.m.; 2nd grade and under comes at 9:30 a.m.)
- December 11 Sunday School rehearsal at 9:15 a.m. at PRAIRIE VIEW ELEMENTARY  
Christmas Program at 10:30 am service at PRAIRIE VIEW ELEMENTARY
- December 18 Sunday School at 9:15 a.m. Kids will be making a gift for their families.
- December 25 NO SUNDAY SCHOOL
- January 1 NO SUNDAY SCHOOL
- January 8 Sunday School 9:15 a.m., Prayers, Pajamas, Pancakes and Pals Party



### CONFIRMATION CALENDAR UPDATE

December 7—Class

December 14—Class & white elephant gift exchange. Bring a random gift that costs no more than a dollar or you can bring something from home. Wrap it as you would like but NO NAME on it. We will play a game to see who ends up with the gifts...who knows what you will end up with?

December 21, December 28, & January 4th—NO CLASS

### THEOLOGY UNCORKED

Theology Uncorked will not meet in December at our regularly scheduled 4th Tuesday of the month. Instead, we are having a Christmas Gathering on Tuesday December 6 and will discuss our goals for this group in the new year.

Lori Schipper has graciously agreed to host us (N7916 Bluff View Ct Holmen). Please plan to bring an appetizer, beverage of choice, or both for sharing. Come and enjoy a relaxing evening of fellowship amidst the hustle and bustle.

## NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.

**You Are Cordially Invited to  
Halfway Creek Lutheran Church's**

**MUSIC MINISTRY SUNDAY**

**Featuring special Advent and Christmas music**

**DATE: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup>**

**Time: 8:00 & 10:30 a.m. services**

**Place: Halfway Creek Lutheran Church**

**W6016 County Road W, Holmen**

**2½ miles east of Holmen, WI**

**A COOKIE WALK WILL BE HELD DURING  
THE 9:15 A.M. FELLOWSHIP HOUR**

**COOKIES SOLD FOR \$6/LB**



## NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.

### INTERESTED IN SERVING ON OUR VISION BOARD?

Do you feel God is calling you to leadership within the church? Would you like to serve as a board officer? Vision Board is looking for candidates beginning February 2017. Vision Board members are responsible for overseeing the work of church. Vision board meets monthly and also has occasional special meetings. As church leadership, Vision Board members are also expected to worship regularly and participate in the life of the congregation.

If interested or have questions, contact Pastor Janet at [pastor@halfwaycreek.org](mailto:pastor@halfwaycreek.org) or a current Vision Board member.

### OFFICE STAFFING CHANGE

Kim Wagner has resigned as our office assistant to pursue another opportunity that will allow her to spend more time with her young daughter. Her last day in the office was November 29th. We wish her well and thank her for her time with us. The Vision Board has approved Lynn Wegner temporarily returning to the office position. In addition, Jodi Anderson will be assisting us in the office during the week and we thank her for helping us out. Office hours will remain the same. We will begin the hiring process after the holidays.



Thank you to everyone who took time to volunteer to ring the bells at Festival Foods for the Salvation Army.

### YOUTH GROUP MOVIE NIGHT

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27TH**

**6—8 PM**

All current 8th grade and high school students are invited to a movie night at church during Christmas break. Friends are welcome. Please RSVP by December 21st to Cassie Tolvstad at [ctremain14@gmail.com](mailto:ctremain14@gmail.com) if you plan to attend.

# NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.

## SERVING OTHERS IN OUR CONGREGATION

		ACOLYTE	SEXTON	ALTAR GUILD	OFFERING COUNTERS	LECTOR	COMMUNION ASSIST.	USHERS
D E C 4	8 0 0	Olivia Temp	Mike Martin	Carrie Payne Nicole Stumlin	Rhonda Britton Sonja Nelson		Carolyn Bjerke	Temp Family
	1 0 3 0	Max Hammond	Morgan Jostad			Ruth Jones	Kendra Bringe	Hammond Family
D E C 11		NO 8 am service	No 8 am service	Karla Johnson	Bette Pedretti Susan Jostad	NO 8 am service	NO 8 am service	NO 8 AM SERVICE
	1 0 3 0	Masen Harper At Prairie View	David Chase at Prairie View			Sunday School	Cassie Tolvstad at Prairie View	Harper Family at Prairie View
D E C 18	8 0 0		Archie Achterkirch	Diane Jostad Nancy Holley	Jodi Eide Patti Happel	Lee Anderson	Lee Anderson	
	1 0 3 0					Dave Gates	Patti Happel	
D E C 25	9 0 0		Dave Bringe	Barb Hale Bette Pedretti	Joe Noth			



# NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.

## Cookie donations

**We welcome cookie donations of any amount—1 dozen or 10 dozen, you decide. Cookies can be brought to the church narthex on Sunday morning prior to the early service. Cookies will be left in whatever container you bring them in during the walk. Be sure to label any containers you want returned and containers can be picked up after the walk.**

**You are not required to donate cookies to participate in the walk.**

**Empty bakery boxes will be provided for people purchasing cookies.**



## NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.

### COULEE REGION GOSPEL CHOIR

The Coulee Region Gospel Choir will present three performances of “*Christmas Fantasia*”.

Shepherd of the Hills, 1215 Redwood Street, Onalaska

Friday, December 2            7 pm

Saturday, December 3        3 pm

No tickets—A Free Will Offering will be collected at these concerts

### Holmen High School Performing Arts Center

Sunday, December 4            4 pm—Benefit concert; \$10 tickets sold at the door

The proceeds from this concert will benefit the Holmen Community Center

Halfway Creek members performing with the Gospel Choir include John Daily, Carolyn Bjerke, Jacob Thornton, Jameson Happel, and Patti Happel.

Savannah Horstman is also performing in the Fundraising Concert.

### SERVING OTHERS IN OUR CONGREGATION

DECEMBER 24—CHRISTMAS EVE			
	2:00 PM	4:00 PM	9:00 PM
<b>Usher/Acolyte</b>			
<b>Sexton</b>			Archie Achterkirch
<b>Lector</b>	John Daily	Amy Noel	Lee Anderson
<b>Communion Assistant</b>	Sonja Nelson, Cassie Tolvstad	Amy Noel, Jen & Kennedy Strangstalien	Sally Johnson

## NEWS AT HALFWAY CREEK—CONT.

### DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

<b>2</b> Maddy Arendt Karsen Nelson	<b>9</b> Troy Fiers Megan Sacia	<b>16</b> Cami Hill	<b>23</b> David Erdman Benjamin Heiser
<b>3</b> Matthew Payne	<b>10</b> Patricia Brandau Brooklyn Cook	<b>17</b> Meredith Conn Lindsay Tuquero	<b>24</b> Rebecca Moss
<b>4</b> Alice Jackson	<b>11</b> Katie Yahnke	<b>18</b> Daniel Daily Michelle Olson	<b>26</b> Jessica Pedretti
<b>5</b> Rita Johnson Cameron Legrave	<b>12</b> Kelly Hanson	<b>19</b> Owen Bringe	<b>27</b> Emily Arnold
<b>6</b> Laura Oines	<b>14</b> James Bringe	<b>20</b> Chad Brandau	<b>29</b> Elsie Barbour
<b>7</b> Jodi Eide	<b>15</b> Mark Thompson	<b>21</b> Kelly Anderson	<b>31</b> Jacob Thornton
<b>8</b> Mason Dokkebaken Trent Gander		<b>22</b> Alayna Ruhbusch	

### YOUTH GROUP NEWS—SUMMER 2017 TRIP

Our youth group will be joining the Holmen Lutheran youth again this year for their summer trip. The dates of the trip are July 23-28, 2017 (possibly 2 more days). The youth will be attending Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp in Lakeside, Montana, [www.flbc.net](http://www.flbc.net). They will be participating in Glacier Wilderness Adventures which includes activities like kayaking, white water rafting, and rock climbing. This trip is open to current 8th grade and high school students. **A deposit of \$150 will be due on December 30th for youth who are planning to go.** Total costs and fundraising will be determined by the number of youth attending. Please contact Cassie Tolvstad at [ctremain14@gmail.com](mailto:ctremain14@gmail.com) or 608-738-4761 with questions or to RSVP for the trip.

