



CURRENTS

JULY 2023

Reach Out , Share Christ with All

FROM PASTOR CHRIS

So there I was walking slowly, looking down and observing every single step. Each new step was on one of those paving stones, small, circular, with a phrase, or a message, the name of a church, or maybe a symbol or some shiny gemstones. Having not looked up, only keeping my eyes on the road in front of me, a couple minutes into the walk I couldn't tell you how far I'd come or even which direction I was facing. I was completely disoriented. But it wasn't much the matter because after a couple more minutes of the exact same thing... I was just as lost if not more.

A prayer labyrinth can be a disorienting experience. It takes one on a journey, through repetition and a kind of meditation, in order to put one in a more vulnerable place. It's a place to better hear God's voice. It's a place that strips the one praying of the need to know, or have the answers, or be in control. At least that is how I've experienced it when it's been most moving for me.

Many times in life are like this, too. We hear God best in times when we let go of control or lose it, when we can set aside our assumptions or the idea that we already know all the right answers. Amazing things can happen when we realize we don't already know the answers and we instead open ourselves up to what God has to say.

The practice of prayers opens us up to God's will. Every prayer calls us to suspend or challenge what we know to be right, and to come into God's presence submitting, asking, looking for God to show us the way, to show up, to intervene in our lives.

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More than that, when we feel lost or out of control, when we don't feel like we have the answers, when the world is changing around us and we don't know how to integrate our traditions and patterns of faith into the new ways and demands of the world – or when our bodies or lives are changing and we find our old ways of operating and contributing to the world are not a faithful a way to – prayer can be a solid ground and place of comfort and security.

We don't have to know to follow God faithfully. We don't have to be the ones with the crystal-clear vision of what happens next. God is already there by our side. Sometimes speaking. Sometimes consoling. Sometimes guiding or even working ahead of us. Prayer helps us remember that.

Some of you reading today are wrestling over changing health. Some of you are contemplating directions in life, or career, or family. Others of you are thinking about ways our church is called to minister to and with our families and the wider community. And, of course, there is more.

Let prayer be your ground. Let this community of Halfway Creek be a place where you can come, feel welcome and belonging, with all the questions and uncertainty you hold, and practice putting it all in God's hands. As we walk this road together – the road of life, the journey of faith – may we uplift one another be God's reaching hands for one another.

-Pastor Chris



HALFWAY CREEK LUTHERAN CHURCH VISION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

May 11 , 2023- 6pm

ALL MEMBERS Present: Pastor Chris Sesvold, Gaye Johnson, Amy Noel, Mike Martin, Kari Washburn, Diane Jostad, Patti Happel, Andrea Baxter

Call to Order **@ 6:00.**

Approval of the Agenda: **Amy made motion to approve revised agenda. Andrea 2nd, motion passed.**

Approval of the April minutes: **Patti made motion to approve minutes. Mike 2nd, motion passed.**

Actions since the last meeting: Approval of March 2, 2023 minutes done electronically. **Kari made motion to approve minutes, Andrea 2nd, motion passed.**

Pastor's Report

-Sunday School and confirmation meeting scheduled May 21st at 1000, for anyone interested in hearing about, helping with or have questions about these education programs.

-We've been invited, along with other faith communities to participate in a conversation with LGBTQ+ community, in the beginning stages of creating a coalition that embraces, welcomes and affirms all people. We had several VB members along with pastor interested in attending the June 6th meeting.

-Great Confirmation Sunday for our 8th graders.

-Shared a list of options/resources for stewardship training. Needs further discussion.

Finance Team

Treasurer's Report – Mike reported that

-Yearly giving is up in 2023, but behind budget (Variance -\$3206). April was a strong month with five Sundays and Easter. **THANK YOU!**

-Expenses under budget (-\$276) Balance of income to expense as of 4/30/23 is -\$2043.

Patti made motion to approve financial report. Kari 2nd. Discussion: The updated weekly expense average based on expenses of 1st quarter 2023 is \$4427 and this is being reported to the congregation. **Motion passed**

Other financial discussion:

Jodi removed the pass-through income and expenses in the proposed 2023 budget and sent an updated copy to the VB. **Discussion:** Will ask Shari to put a link to it and have copies in the office for anyone who is interested in looking at it.

Patti made a motion to increase our emergency fund limit to \$10,000 with money to be borrowed from Thrivent accounts. Andrea 2nd. Discussion: We previously had set a limit of \$6000 and are seeking to raise it with anticipation of lower giving in the summer. **Motion passed**

Property Team

- Yard and Cemetery Cleanup- done
- Railing Stain - Need to let the wood cure for a few months and then will plan to stain.
- Tree Removal - Mike will work with Raymond Lee to set dates to remove the pine tree hanging over the parsonage driveway.
- Received a message from Schindler elevator company that we have a \$0 balance.
- Parsonage: Recommendation by the VB at April meeting to increase rent by \$200 at yearly anniversary in June based on increases in utility costs. Current occupant will be moving out at the end of August, so no change in rent was requested. **Discussion:** Create a check out list to review with current occupant before returning security deposit. Will discuss a way to reach out and thank her for positive impact in our first renting of the parsonage. Create a plan to find another occupant.
- Lockbox - Mike will research options for a lock box that can be placed outside the church when offerings and other paperwork is dropped off and no one is in the office.
- Technology Upgrades - Consider two projects, no decision until we have more information and consider possible sources to finance projects.
 - Update connection for up to four TVs so that we can connect to the internet and worship system. Have a quote.
 - Sound system upgrade for worship team - Need a quote. John Daily and pastor Chris will be meeting with SIMS on June 2nd.

New/Other Business:

Worship & Liturgy

- Memorial Weekend – May 28 will be a Pastor vacation Day. Planning worship with Journey at HCLC. Pastor Dennis Hallemeier will be here with us.
- Summer worship
 1. Summer worship will focus on accessibility and safety for the whole congregation and not occur in the outdoor worship areas except for extra and special events. We are planning a parking lot service.
 2. Theme of the summer will be connecting Faith and Body. Special activities/events will be planned throughout the summer.
- Fall Services: **Amy made a motion to have two services (8:30 and 10:30) beginning after Rally Sunday. Patti 2nd. Discussion:** - Will need more volunteers, seeking consistency compared to last year when we tried just once per month in the fall, would broadcast just one of the two services. Worship team supports. We would evaluate that decision as needed if it doesn't seem to be working. SS would be at 9:30 between the services, almost the same time as now.

Motion passed

- Synod Assembly: Friday evening worship at Holmen Lutheran. Assembly at La Crosse Center on Saturday. Sunday worship at Riverside Park.

Spent the remainder of the meeting sharing responses to the following questions:

1. Reflecting on your entire experience at HCLC, remember a time when you felt the most engaged?
 2. What are the most important contributions HCLC has made to your life?
 3. Tell us about a time when you made an important contribution to our church?
- We will spend the next meeting with the next three questions.

Next meeting June 8, 2023 @ 6pm. No meeting in July

June: Sunday school and education team will be invited to give an in person report

Kari made motion to adjourn the meeting at 8pm. Diane 2nd, motion passed.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer

2023 VISION BOARD

Gaye Johnson, President

gayemj3@gmail.com

Kari Washburn Vice President

kari.washburn@yahoo.com

Andrea Baxter, co-Secretary

baxtera42@gmail.com

Amy Noel, co-Secretary

noelprairie@icloud.com

Mike Martin, Treasurer

michaelmartin49@charter.net

Diane Jostad—608-526-3597

Patti Happel—patiszoo@yahoo.com

*Please contact the vision board with any input you may have. Vision Board meetings are scheduled for the second Thursday of each month. **No meeting in JULY.***

Your giving helps with our mission - ***Reaching Out to Share Christ with All***

May	Actual	Budget	Y-T-D Actual	Y-T-D Budget
General Fund	13,194.59	19,187.00	86,711.78	95,935.00
Expense	19,097.73	19,283.00	96,051.51	96,523.00
Debt Reduction	340.00		1,500.00	

**HALFWAY CREEK LUTHERAN CHURCH
VISION BOARD MEETING MINUTES
June 8, 2023- 6pm**

ALL MEMBERS Present: Pastor Chris Sesvold, Gaye Johnson, Amy Noel, Mike Martin, Kari Washburn, Diane Jostad, Patti Happel, Andrea Baxter

Devotion: Focused on PRIDE month. We finished by singing “Guide My Feet”. A song that will be used throughout Synod Assembly this week.

Call to Order @ 6:17

Approval of the Agenda: **Amy made motion to approve agenda. Andrea 2nd, motion passed.**

Approval of the May minutes: **Patti made motion to approve minutes. Andrea 2nd, motion passed.**

Discussion: We would like to get the minutes to the congregation more quickly in the newsletter. After the meeting, the minutes will go out electronically for review. Revisions and approvals will be considered “actions since last meeting”.

Actions since the last meeting: No Action

Pastor’s Report

-Pastor will be on vacation July 2nd. VB endorsed having the service with Journey Lutheran that day.

-Moving Forward on Stewardship - training options are available. Please contact pastor in interested. Still looking for someone in the congregation to lead our stewardship effort.

-Participated with other faith communities in a conversation this week with LGBTQ+ community They are in the beginning stages of creating a coalition that embraces, welcomes and affirms all people.

-Getting Visible - Scheduling some faith practices that are movement focused and an opportunity to get out in the community.

-Education Meeting in May had a good turnout. Since this was done, we did not invite them to participate in this Vision Board meeting. Introduced the opportunity to add a “Faith Formation Staff Member”. VB discussion on opportunities and challenges of adding this role right now.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Patti offered to create an ad hoc group of congregation members to talk more about this.

2. Meeting planned for July 13th at 6PM. Pastor will facilitate.

3. Gaye offered to be present as VB president.

-Andrea volunteered to organize a summer event for the congregation. Stay tuned!!

Finance Team

Treasurer’s Report – Mike reported that

-Yearly giving is up in 2023, but behind budget (Variance -\$5992). YTD behind budget (Variance -\$9223)

-Expenses under budget (-\$185), YTD under budget (-\$471).

May Balance of income to expense is -\$6718. YTD variance of -\$8776.

Andrea made motion to approve financial report. Patti 2nd. Motion passed

Other financial discussion:

1. Envelopes: Patti made motion to approve recommendation for simple internally printed offering envelop to be available to anyone who wants them. Kari 2nd. Motion passed

2. Recommend continuing to set up offering plate and loose change pan at the back of the church. Will only pass on special occasions.

3. Lock box will be installed outside the church soon for offering and special papers when office is not open. Communication will go out to the congregation.

4. Loose offering

-June: ELCA World Hunger

-July: Local free lunch packages for kids

-August: Recommendation from Synod Assembly

Property Team

-Parsonage: Will begin looking for new occupants to provide housing for families or individuals in transition from one housing situation to another in carrying out our mission of "Reaching out to share Christ with all".

-Technology Upgrades - Considering two projects, no decision until we have more information and consider possible sources to finance projects.

1. Update connection for up to four TVs so that we can connect to the internet and worship system. Have a quote.

2. Sound system upgrade for worship team - Waiting for a quote. John Daily and Pastor Chris met with SIMS on June 2nd.

New/Other Business:

Discipleship - Cultivating Relationships: Endorsed a book study on "God and the Gay Christian". Lynn Wenger will facilitate this. Patti will communicate our support to Lynn.

Spent the remainder of the meeting with a brief discussion on the final chapter of our book study by reviewing the theme of each of the chapters.

Ezra 3: 11-13 "And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy. No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping because the people made so much noise. And the the sound was heard far away."

Next meeting August 10, 2023 @ 6pm. No meeting in July.

Andrea made motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30pm. Patti 2nd, motion passed.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HCLC?

GIVING at HCLC

Giving at HCLC has been made even easier. You can now go directly to Paypal and search for Halfway Creek Lutheran church. Or scan this QR code. Thank you for helping us further our mission.



NOISY OFFERING

In July our Noisy Offering will go towards local free lunch packs for kids! Let's make some NOISE.

BOOK STUDY

A new book study group is forming to read and discuss the book "God and the Gay Christian" by Matthew Vines. We are hoping to begin in late July or early August. Please contact Lynn Wegner at 414-305-4803 if you are interested in joining our discussion group.

BIBLE JOURNALING

We are meeting Wednesday, July 26 at 6:00 p.m. in the Gathering Space. Bring your Bible and some ideas on what you'd like to journal based on these readings: Proverbs 1:1-7; 3:1-8 and Matthew 13:34-35. Contact Shari in the office for more information.

WORSHIP THIS FALL

We are excited to introduce a second worship to our Sundays coming this fall. The new schedule will begin Sunday, **September 24** and will look like this:

8:30 a.m. Worship

9:30 a.m. Education Hour/Fellowship/
Sunday School

10:30 a.m. Worship

BIKE.BUILD.HOME 500

Habitat for Humanity La Crosse Area has teamed up with Bike.Build.Home 600 to raise funds for affordable housing! This event is coming to the La Crosse Area July 12 -16.

HCLC Members and Friends: Base Camp for the bikers is Luther High School in Onalaska - area churches will be helping with hospitality and food!! HCLC day to help is July 12 from 6:00—8:30 p.m. We are looking for at least 5 people to help serve and clean up the evening meal. Sign-up at church or email the office! What a great way for us to Reach Out and Share Christ with All!

If you are interested other ways to volunteer at this event, check out their page titled: Get Involved.

GARDENING GROUP

Gardening group members will meet Wednesday mornings this summer. The garden is looking great, and we have already harvested 2 full bags of radishes for the Salvation Army. Interested in helping in the garden? Contact Nancy Holley for more information, or just come on out and join us!!

HOLMEN LUTHERAN ACTIVITY TO JOIN

You are invited to: FAITH AND FIRE SMALL GROUP MINISTRY THURSDAY, JULY 20 AT 6PM at Holmen Lutheran Church! These groups are for ALL ages. Please contact Jeff at jeff@holmenluth.org if you would like to be in a group!

Faith and Fire Small Groups: Bring your lawn chair and a friend for monthly small groups! From May through October, groups will meet on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6PM: 7/20, 8/17, 9/21, 10/19.

FLAT JESUS

Hey families, don't forget to take Flat Jesus on your daily adventures and vacation this summer!! Take pictures and share on social media or email them to Shari at assistant@halfwaycreek.org. We are

looking forward to keeping in touch with you this summer! (See the insert for Flat Jesus (color, cut out and take with you!)). Check out where Flat Jesus was spotted (page 14)!!

HOLMEN COMMUNITY CENTER

You are invited to an **after church gathering on Sunday July 16th from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.** at the Holmen Area Community Center. The purpose of this event is to build community, see the amazing facility, and share breakfast treats and conversation. Pastor Chris will be attending after worship and would love for you to join him. If you know for sure you can go, please RSVP to Shari by July 12. Thank you!!

PARSONAGE UPDATE

The parsonage will be available for new occupants the middle of September. We are using the parsonage to provide housing for families or individuals in transition from one housing situation to another in carrying out our mission of "Reaching out to share Christ with all". If you know of someone in this situation, please contact Mike at 608-797-4858.

JULY BIRTHDAYS

If your birthday is missing, please notify the office.

<p>1 Braxtyn Jensen-Pralle</p> <p>2 Ryan Happel</p> <p>4 Alya Humphrey</p> <p>6 Ryan Beville Ron Christensen Brianna Cook Daryl Holley Ann Stasiak</p> <p>8 DeeDee Kolbo</p> <p>9 Bette Pedretti</p> <p>10 Nola Anderson</p>	<p>11 Heather Dokkebaken Jacob Wegner Adria McDowell</p> <p>12 Gladys Albers David Chase Leann Theisen</p> <p>13 Jessie Booth Jerin Rink</p> <p>14 Mike Bramwell Joel Oines</p> <p>15 Cassandra Bandoli Raymond Lee</p>	<p>16 Carolyn Bjerke</p> <p>17 Gracie Holley</p> <p>18 Diana Berger</p> <p>19 Richard Gran Macie Larson Darren Nelson Alyssa Rink</p> <p>21 Bryson Happel</p> <p>23 Landry Hill Addison Wille</p> <p>24 Joanne Nichols</p>	<p>25 Ella Gander</p> <p>26 Camden Lee</p> <p>28 Erin Hale Lane Hansen</p> <p>30 Robyn Shisler</p> <p>31 Kendall Yahnke</p>
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We pray for ... Ed Scholze, Bob Loper, Joan Vaughn, Bridget Ferk, Pat Krause, Thelma Severson, Lisa Herrera Evans, Katie Wier, Phoebe Kitzke, Alya Humphrey, Gayle Kuespert, Mark Sanders, Beulah Sanders, Cary Heyer, Eric Erdman, Dawson Reed, Jenny Lee, Mary Dokkebaken, Karla Johnson, Alice Fonfara, Marie Jezova, Coats family



Attention Members: If you ordered weekly or monthly offering envelopes, they are ready for pick up in the Gathering Space. If you would prefer that we mail them to you, please let Shari or Jodi know in the office! Thank you for responding to the envelope survey and helping us reduce our costs and be environmentally responsible.

SERVING AND WORSHIP

		SEXTON	ALTAR GUILD	OFFERING COUNTERS
JULY 2	9:30	Worship AT Journey Lutheran		
JULY 9	9:00	Mike Martin	Carrie Nicole	Bette Sonja
JULY 16	9:00	Archie Achterkirch	Nancy Holley Diane Jostad	Jodi Eide
JULY 23	9:00	David Chase	Barb Hale Bette Pedretti	Diane Jostad Mike M
JULY 30	9:00	Archie Achterkirch	Diane	Mike M John D

UPDATED OFFICE HOURS

Monday—By Appointment

Tuesday—9:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Wednesday—9:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Thursday—9:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Friday—Closed

Saturday—Closed

Sunday—9:00 a.m. Worship

Volunteer to help at Worship

Use Sign-up Genius button on the website or E-News; call the office or email assistant@halfwaycreek.org.

Gifting your time is important to help meet the needs of this congregation at each service.

Thank you so much for sharing your time and talents!

Volunteer Roles

Acolyte
Greeter
PowerPoint
Usher
Reader
Communion Assistants

These volunteer roles are needed at each service. The duties for each of these roles may be found in the Gathering Space. If you have any question, please contact the office.



This summer, bring Flat Jesus with you on your adventures—to the park, your camping trip, VBS, and even the pool!

Where will your journeys take you and Flat Jesus?



Email: assistant@halfwaycreek.org Or use: [#reachoutsharechristwithall](https://www.instagram.com/reachoutsharechristwithall) on Instagram.

Kid Zone—Summer Activities

This summer instead of hosting VBS we have decided to support the wonderful programs in the area. We encourage you to try one or all and let us know your favorite part!!

Vacation Bible School

Holmen Lutheran Church

August 13, 14 and 15 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Contact Jeff at jeff@holmenluth.org for more information! Anyone wishing to help can meet with the planning committee on Sunday, June 4 at 10 a.m. at Holmen Lutheran.

Mindoro Area

July 24—17 from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the Mindoro Lions Club Shelter. The VBS theme is River of Life! Kids 4K—6th grade can attend. A FREE supper will be provided each night.

Register each child separately at...

MINDORO AREA VBS REGISTRATION

Galesville Area

VBS is August 7-10 at Living Hope Lutheran Church—Galesville.

Summer Camps

Sugar Creek Bible Camp

Sugar Creek offers 17 unique and powerful summer camp programs, plus retreat ministries for youth in Elementary School, Middle School, and High School – and adults and families! Your camp is located on 660 acres in the bluffs and valleys of Southwestern Wisconsin. Come learn, relax, encounter Christ, and have fun at **Sugar Creek Bible Camp!**

Luther Park Bible Camp

Summer camps begin June 11 for all age groups! Check out the programs, staff, location and more at **Luther Park Bible Camp!**

Synod Assembly Success!

Thanks to our HCLC voting members: Kari and Diane for attending Synod Assembly this year! A huge shout out to those who participated during the event, through prayers, or by donating socks and underwear for the Sunday offering! What a great offering!



Bible Journaling this Summer

We are meeting the last Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. to study the Sunday scripture and journal through words and art.

July 26—Proverbs 1:1-7; 3:1-8 and Matthew 13:34-35

August 30—1 Corinthians 1:18-25 and John 1:1-18

No experience is needed. Just prepare by reading through the scripture listed and listening to the Sunday sermon. We'll have discussion and spend sometime journaling. You are welcome to bring ideas with you. We'll have a variety of mediums to use from watercolors to color pencils and markers. Feel free to bring any other supplies you'd like.

Please RSVP: 608-526-3701 or email: assistant@halfwaycreek.org

In May we gathered for a special techniques class.

Thank you to Marna Holley for teaching us about using watercolor in our Bible Journaling.



July 2023 Currents

Halfway Creek Lutheran Church
608-526-3701
www.halfwaycreek.org

WORSHIP

9:00 a.m. **Sundays**

OFFICE HOURS

Monday—By Appointment

Tuesday—9:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Wednesday—9:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Thursday—9:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Friday—Closed

Saturday—Closed

Sunday—9:00 a.m. Worship

PASTORAL CARE

If the need arises for Pastoral Care,
please contact Pastor Chris at
608-526-3701 or 608-397-1578 .

SOCIAL MEDIA

Find us on Facebook, Instagram,
YouTube and our website

@halfwaycreeklutheranchurchholmen
#halfwaycreeklutheranchurch
#reachoutsharechristwithall

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