

## February

*(Sunday School meets at 9:00 AM each week)*

1 - 10 AM Worship with Patti Happel

**11:15 AM Annual Meeting, Cemetery Meeting,  
Potluck**

3 - 8:45 AM Quilters meet

4 - 5 PM Pizza Making at Journey - Confirmation

6 - 6:45 PM Pizza Pick-up at Journey

8 - 10 AM Worship with guest Pastor Kathryn  
Thompson from LuMin Campus Ministry

11 AM Pizza Pick-up after worship

10 - 8:45 AM Quilters meet

11 - 6 PM Confirmation

12 - 6 PM Vision Board Meeting

14 - Happy Valentine's Day

15 - 10 AM Worship with Pastor Garman

18 - 6:30 PM Ash Wednesday Service

19 - 9:30 AM Bible Study

22 - 10 AM Worship with Ron Christensen & Patti

3 PM La Crosse County 4H Goat Project

25 - 5:45 PM Lenten Meal

6:30 PM Lenten Service

7-7:30 PM Confirmation

### **Dearest Halfway Creek Family,**

I don't know about you, but it sure feels like it has already been a long winter, and yet here we are heading into the second month of 2026.

February finds us standing at the doorway of Lent—a season that invites us to slow down, take an honest look at our lives, and turn again toward God's grace. Lent isn't about doing things perfectly; it's about making space. Space for prayer, for listening, and for letting go of what gets in the way of love.

Ash Wednesday begins this journey, grounding us in both humility and hope. We gather to receive ashes, hear God's promise of mercy, and remember that even in our frailty, we belong to God. As we move through this season together, may we be gentle with ourselves and one another, trusting that God meets us not at the finish line, but along the way. Wherever you find yourself this month, you are welcome here.

*Blessings to you all ~*

Patti Happel, Synod Authorized Minister

**Your attention is needed for the Annual Meeting:** Please review the December 11 Vision Board (VB) minutes, the Constitution changes approved by VB on Nov. 13, 2025, along with the Model Constitution changes in this newsletter. You can also request a hard copy by contacting the office. **Thank you!**

## VISION BOARD

### President

Bette Pedretti

bettepedretti@yahoo.com

608-526-3241

### Vice President

Nicole Stumlin

bigfarmer053@yahoo.com

608-769-3642

### Secretary

Amy Noel

noelpairie@icloud.com

608-386-0299

### Treasurer

Carrie Payne

payne.carrie@hotmail.com

608-790-4401

### Members

Wayne Atchley

atchleyw@charter.net

608-317-1638

Andrea Baxter

baxtera42@gmail.com

608-738-3896

Nancy Holley

5445nanh@gmail.com

608-526-3418

Michelle Olson

michelle@abeeinc.com

(608)780-9802

Olivia Nedoba

Ema Nedoba

### Synod Authorized Minister

Patti Happel

pastor@halfwaycreek.org

608-317-9525

## HALFWAY CREEK LUTHERAN CHURCH

### VISION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

*January 8, 2026*

**MEMBERS:** Patti Happel, Amy Noel, Bette Pedretti, Nancy Holley, Wayne Atchley, Carrie Payne, Nicole Stumlin and Andrea Baxter

**GUESTS:** Jodi Anderson

**ABSENT:** Michelle Olson, Olivia Nedoba and Ema Nedoba

**Call to Order** @ 6:03PM

**Approval of Agenda** - Motion made and seconded to approve agenda. Motion approved.

**Devotion/Prayer** - Amy

**Actions since last meeting:** Approved 12/11/25 VB minutes via email.

### **Financial Report :**

- We received the report with a review of the financials by Jodi.
- Noisy Offering:
  - **December:** We were able to raise \$465.55 for ELCA Good Gifts. This amount was doubled by ELCA.
  - **January:** Warming Center in La Crosse. Lacey Hein from Catholic Charities and the Warming Center spoke during the service last Sunday. Bette will identify a day when we can serve breakfast.
  - **February:** LuMin Campus Ministry
  - **March:** Outreach Ministries here at HCLC
  - **April:** HCLC Gardening
- We received thank you notes from the Suicide Prevention Task Force and Gundersen Foundation "Paula's Purse" fund for past loose offering donations.

**Ministry/Office Update:** SAMs report - Reviewed Patti's activity during the month of Dec.

**Music and Liturgy:** Meeting soon to make recommendations for Lent and Easter services.

**Property and Maintenance:** No report.

### **Old Business:**

- Safety plan/policies: Michelle has organized an informational meeting on January 28th, 6:00 to 7:30 PM with La Crosse County Sheriff's dept on ways to improve our safety and security as it r/t an active shooter or intruder. Target group: VB, SS and confirmation teachers, staff, others who frequently use building and anyone in the congregation interested. Communication has gone out.
- Sound system: Issue - Unable to hear announcements or worship team on Streaming. Anyone on line may not stay connected if they are unable to hear the beginning of the service. Next steps:
  - Wayne will set up an appointment with SIMS to integrate the new sound system into our streaming services.
  - When complete will create a communication plan about update and hopefully bring back on-line viewers.
  - Reevaluate when we might be able to purchase a keyboard.

- Pizza Fundraiser to support the Youth Fund - Order forms available now with delivery on February 8, 2026.
- VB nominees: One confirmed, another considering. These positions would replace Andrea and Amy on the VB.
- Church Policy Review: Patti and Andrea reviewed the following policies/forms and offered suggestions for the VB to consider. Most of these policies have not been updated since 2018/2019. They will do further updates and bring the policies back to the VB for approval at a future VB meeting. Policies/Forms reviewed include:
  - Weddings at HCLC
  - Building Use Policy
  - Building Use Requirements
  - Equipment/Property Use Requirements Form
  - Kitchen Use Policy
  - Memorial and Special Gift Policy
  - Funeral Policy

### **New Business**

- Annual meeting: February 1, 2026. Shari has a request out for team updates to be included in the annual report. Annual report will go out on January 18th.
- Church Cancellation
  - Received guidelines for posting a cancellation on WXOW and Fox 25. Will add WKBT if we receive anything from them. Will also cancellation info by email, on Facebook and on the church website. As always, if concerned, be safe.
  - If there is a consideration of cancelling, a text will go out to the VB for input. Final decision by President and/or SAM. Bette will write up process.
- Versiti blood drive dates in 2026 are April 10, July 31 and November 20. The last blood drive here was very successful. The goal was 15 units. We collected 22 units and that helped 66 people.

### **Closing Prayer**

**Adjournment: 7:31 PM**

**Next meeting(s): VB on Thursday, February 12, 2026 6pm**

### **agenda:**

- Approval of church policies: Andrea/Patti
- Orientation for new VB members
- Any follow-up on cancellation process
- Scheduling for Lent and Easter services
- Sound System update – Wayne

## **NOISY OFFERING**

Our January noisy offering supported the La Crosse Warming Center through Catholic Charities. Lacey Hein from Catholic Charities was our guest speaker on January 4th! We collected a total of \$227.73! Thank you!

Throughout February, our noisy offering will support LuMin Campus Ministry. We welcome Pastor Kathryn Thompson from LuMin to worship on February 8<sup>th</sup>. Keep making some noise!

## **OUTREACH MINISTRY**

Our **Card Ministry** had a wonderful session on January 14, mailing out 32 cards to brighten the days of our members and friends. **Looking ahead to April**, we are excited to expand this ministry by sending care packages to our first-year college students. Stay tuned for details on how you can help us support our students during their spring semester!

On January 23 and 24, we were delighted to host a dozen area crafters for a **Craft Retreat**. It was a joy to see our beautiful space at HCLC filled with creativity and fellowship.

**Looking Ahead: Outreach & Support** We have several exciting opportunities to serve our community in the coming months:

- February:** As the temperature continues to drop, our neighbors at the **La Crosse Warming Center** need our help more than ever. This month, we are continuing our collection drive to support the vital services they provide to our community. Whether it’s a cold-weather essential or a monetary gift, your generosity makes a direct impact on the lives of those seeking shelter. To make shopping easier, you can find a list of needed items in the shopping cart as you exit the church. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has already contributed items or funds—your kindness is the heart of this mission!
- March:** We will be collecting items for the **Holmen’s Hope Backpack Program**. Look for a full needs list in next month’s newsletter.
- May 7:** We’re heading to **Andy’s Main Street Union** in Holmen for a Chicken Q and Bake Sale to support our youth! A huge thank you to Andy for providing such a great space for this event. More details are coming soon.

## SAFETY PRESENTATION

On Wednesday, January 28, Sergeant Kevin Bauer and Deputy Cody Bernhardt delivered an informative session on active attack situations and their prevalence nationwide. They presented the “Run, Hide, Fight” video scenario training to illustrate appropriate response options during an active attack. The training offered valuable insight into preparedness, with considerations specific to our building and church community. Participants engaged with thoughtful questions and suggestions that will support the Vision Board Safety Committee in developing a written active attack preparedness plan. Thank you to all who attended!

## FINANCIALS THROUGH DECEMBER 2025

2025	Total Offering	Rent Income	Expenditures	Difference
Jan	\$11,212.00	\$2,150.00	\$13,676.56	-\$314.56
Feb	\$10,732.00	\$2,150.00	\$11,094.45	\$1,787.55
Mar	\$12,072.18	\$2,150.00	\$13,616.82	\$605.36
Apr	\$13,895.00	\$2,150.00	\$16,641.73	-\$596.73
May	\$10,455.00	\$2,150.00	\$13,958.96	-\$1,353.96
June	\$13,480.00	\$2,150.00	\$14,350.63	\$1,279.37
July	\$10,921.00	\$2,150.00	\$16,522.12	-\$3,451.12
Aug	\$12,859.00	\$2,150.00	\$13,651.15	\$1,357.85
Sep	\$20,966.00	\$2,150.00	\$20,754.31	\$2,361.69
Oct	\$13,611.00	\$2,150.00	\$15,242.75	\$518.25
Nov	\$12,419.00	\$2,150.00	\$11,351.96	\$3,217.04
Dec	\$17,434.00	\$2,150.00	\$11,451.28	\$8,132.72
Totals	\$160,056.18	\$25,800.00	\$172,312.72	\$13,543.46

### Pancakes & PJs Success!

On Sunday, January 4th, our Sunday School hosted a delicious Pancake and PJs party. We enjoyed pancakes and sausages both before worship and during fellowship. A huge thank you to the volunteers who donated, prepared, and served the feast—it was a hit with everyone! See you Sundays at 9 AM.

### Confirmation Updates

Confirmation is back in full swing! Our youth are currently busy with their pizza fundraiser. We will meet at Journey Lutheran on February 4th at 5:00 PM to assemble the orders. During Lent, students are encouraged to attend the Lenten meal and service; we will meet from 7-730 PM on March 4, 11 & 18.

## LENTEN WORSHIP SERIES — Teach Us to Pray

This year, our Lenten worship series, *Teach Us to Pray*, will focus on the spiritual practice of prayer. Each week, our 30-minute service will include an interactive experience exploring different forms of prayer and different ways to pray. Services will be held Wednesdays at **6:30 PM** beginning on **Ash Wednesday, February 18**. This series is designed to deepen your prayer life and is appropriate for all ages—from **3 to 93!**

Weekly themes include:

- **February 18 (Ash Wednesday):** Praying with Humility (Confession)
- **February 25:** Praying with Honesty (Lament)
- **March 4:** Praying with Jesus (The Lord's Prayer)
- **March 11:** Praying for the World God Loves (Intercession)
- **March 18:** When Words Fail (Journaling or Art as Prayer)
- **March 25:** Praying from the Cross (Meditative Prayer)
- **March 29 (Palm Sunday):** Into Your Hands — Prayer as Trust and Surrender

### Lenten Meals

Beginning **February 25**, we will offer kid-friendly meals at **5:45 PM** before worship. Sign up in the gathering space to bring food items.

- **February 18:** No meal
- **February 25:** Tacos
- **March 4:** Soup and Sandwiches
- **March 11:** Baked Potato Bar
- **March 18:** Casseroles and Dinner Rolls
- **March 25:** Pizza (provided)

Skip the cooking and join us for a simple meal and meaningful worship as we journey together through Lent.

## HELP LEAD OUR CHURCH: We Need Your Voice!

Ever wonder how our local congregation connects to the broader ELCA? We are looking for **two lay voting delegates** to represent HCLC at this year's **La Crosse Area Synod Assembly**. This is the perfect year to get involved! The event has been streamlined into a single day, the location is close by, and it's a wonderful way to meet others on a similar faith journey.

### Why Attend?

- **One Day Only:** A simplified schedule from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM.
- **Engagement:** Interesting breakout sessions and lunch are included.
- **Community:** Meet new people and learn what's happening throughout our Synod.
- **Synod Worship:** A special outdoor service at **Riverside Park** on Sunday, June 7 at 10:00 AM (open to all!).

### Key Dates:

- **Caucus Meeting:** Sunday, April 19, 3:00–5:00 PM at Our Savior's (West Salem).
- **Synod Assembly:** Saturday, June 6.

**Interested?** Please contact **Shari in the office, Patti, or Bette** if you'd like to represent HCLC. More details can be found on the La Crosse ELCA Synod website.

## NEW PROCESS FOR CANCELLATION OF CHURCH SERVICE/EVENTS

We are implementing a new process to notify members of cancellation of church services or events in case of inclement weather or other circumstances out of our control.

The vision board will make the determination of cancellation. The cancellation will be communicated in a variety of ways: Notification via our Facebook page, website and/or email will be sent.

Notification will appear on the cancellation list on TV via Channel WXOW 19 and Fox 25/48.

The cancellation for Sunday service will appear no later than 7 AM the day of service.

For other events during the week, such as Lent services a decision will be posted via the same methods as above at least 3 hours prior to the start time of the event.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to one of our vision board members. Thank you!

## HALFWAY CREEK CEMETERY NEWS

**Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted, Matthew 5:4.**

At some point or another, we will all suffer the loss of a loved one, and we will need the comfort that comes from God alone. Halfway Creek Lutheran Cemetery is here to help you plan for this difficult time in your life. If you have questions about lots, family locations, headstones please ask any of the trustees.

If you wish to purchase a lot for either full casket or cremation burial, please contact one of the Trustees below. Lots are \$300 for members of Halfway Creek and \$600 for non-members. A single lot can be used for either one full casket burial or up to four cremation burials.

For more details, or to reserve your resting place, call one of the cemetery trustees:

Dan Brudahl, 608-526-6950

A big thank you is extended to Dan for all his years of service on the cemetery board. His position will be voted on at the February 1<sup>st</sup> annual meeting.

Mark Witte, 608-317-0183;

Hannah Scholze, 608-797-9388

We pray that you will feel God's closeness to you as He carries you through this season of mourning.



*Ash Wednesday*  
February 18 - 630 PM Service  
Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

1 Alexa Shisler  
 2 Le Roy Holley  
 7 Lee Thoma  
 8 Judy Casberg  
 10 Nelson Holley, Matthew Tolvstad  
 11 Bear Gates, Berkley Gates, Sonja Nelson  
 12 Donald Graham, Brayden Wanie  
 13 David Bringe, Carter Thiele  
 14 Whitney Happel, Susan Jostad  
 15 Savannah Horstman  
 16 Jaxson Happel  
 19 Viviana Yahnke-Kolbo  
 20 Heidi Rosenow  
 21 Maison Payne  
 27 Bambi Daily  
 28 Josie Happel



## IN OUR PRAYERS

**We pray for** friends and family of those who have recently passed: Glenn Schmidt, Bob Cottrell, Amanda Anderson, Beulah Sanders, Harvey Miller

**We pray for** Ron Christensen, Bill Baxter, Jackson Ammerman (grandson of Les and Susan Kolbo), Gayle "Susie" Johnson, Laurie Gillespie, Diane Jostad, Betty Bender, Stacey Fredricks, Robin Ruhbusch, Pat Martin, Laurie Noelke, Megan Sacia Ulrich, Perry Voshage, Marjorie Lee, Jean Latham, Joan Vaughn, Bridget Ferk, Thelma Severson, Katie Wier, Phoebe & Bill Kitzke, Gayle Kuespert, Cary Heyer, Jenny Lee, Mary Dokkebaken, Karla Johnson, the Coats family.

## SERVING AND WORSHIP

	WORSHIP TIME	SEXTON	ALTAR GUILD	OFFERING COUNTERS
<b>FEB 1</b>	10:00 Patti	Mike	Carrie Nicole	Rhonda Sonja
<b>FEB 8</b>	10:00 Pr Kathryn Thompson, Patti	Stan	Jess Cook	Bette Susan
<b>FEB 15</b>	10:00 Pr Garman	Archie	Nancy	Jodi E
<b>FEB 22</b>	10:00 Ron & Patti	Joe	Bette	Mike

### Volunteer to help at Worship

Use Sign-up Genius button on the website or E-News; call the office or email [assistant@halfwaycreek.org](mailto:assistant@halfwaycreek.org)

Volunteer Clipboards are also in the gathering space.

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!

### Tell us what you think!

We have a new look! We've recently updated our newsletter platform and redesigned our layout to better serve you. We value your feedback—please let us know what you think of the changes so we can continue to streamline our updates and keep you informed. Thank you! Shari

Halfway Creek Lutheran Church  
W6016 County Road W  
Holmen, WI 54636

**Halfway Creek Lutheran Church**

**608-526-3701**

**[www.halfwaycreek.org](http://www.halfwaycreek.org)**

---

**Worship & Education**

9:00 AM Sunday School  
10:00 AM Worship

**Office Hours**

Monday -closed  
Tuesday – 9 AM – 3 PM  
Wednesday – 9 AM – 3 PM  
Thursday – 9 AM – 3 PM  
Friday – closed  
Saturday – closed  
Sunday – worship

**Pastoral Care**

If the need arises for Pastoral Care, please contact Patti Happel at 608-317-9525.

**Social Media**

Find us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and our website.

@halfwaycreeklutheranchurchholmen  
#halfwaycreeklutheranchurch  
#reachoutsharechristwithall

