

September

6 – 9:00 AM Worship; Patti

7 – Labor Day

10 – 6:00 PM Vision Board Meeting

13 – 10:30 AM Worship at the
Bandshell for God's work. Our hands.

20 – 9:00 AM Sunday School

20 – 10:00 AM Worship;
Rev. Ralph Kuespert

23 – 6:00 PM Confirmation
Parent/Student meeting

27 – 10:00 AM Worship;
Rev. Anna Gordon

October

7 - Card Ministry & Care Packages

7 - Confirmation (6th – 8th grade)

Begins October 7; 6 – 730 PM and will
meet the first 3 Wednesdays of each
month.

11 – HCLC Celebration! Message by
Hannah Scholze; catered lunch following
worship! See article for more
information. RSVP by Oct. 4.

16, 17 – Scrap and Craft Retreat; RSVP
to Shari in the office!

My Dearest Halfway Creek Family & Friends,

Sometimes we set out to do one small thing, never knowing just
how far that small thing might reach.

Recently, our Halfway Creek congregation had the opportunity to
participate in “A Birthday Party for a Friend We Don’t Know,”
collecting gifts, party decorations, and birthday cake kits for
children in our community who might otherwise not have the
opportunity to celebrate their birthdays. I want to say a heartfelt
thank you to everyone who participated, donated, packed a gift,
or helped in any way. Your generosity truly matters.

And then came a beautiful reminder of why we do these things.

When my friend Kim delivered all of the items collected
throughout the community to the Salvation Army, she had the
back of her trunk open, filled with boxes and donations. A
gentleman waiting in line for the community meal happened to
see a Pampers box and called over, saying that the diapers
would be very much needed.

Kim explained that the box actually contained gifts and supplies
for children who would soon be celebrating a birthday. She then
asked if he would like to come help unload the donations.

He left his place in line—his place in line for a meal—to come
help.

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VISION BOARD

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Synod Authorized Minister
Patti Happel
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He introduced Kim to his significant other and their son, and as they looked at some of the boxes, he asked, “Are those birthday cakes?”

He then shared that his little boy would be turning four in just nine days—and he had never had a birthday cake.

A worker at the shelter told the family that they would be able to prepare a cake for their son.

The excitement and joy of that family said more than words ever could.

A birthday cake may seem like a small thing. A package of decorations, a gift, or a cake mix may seem like an even smaller thing. But for that little boy and his family, it became something much bigger: a celebration, a memory, and a reminder that someone cared.

And isn't that what we at Halfway Creek are all about?

A little bit here, and a little bit there—and together, we can, and do, make a difference.

We may never meet the children who receive our gifts. We may never know their names or hear their stories. But through our generosity, we can help remind them that they are seen, they are valued, and they are worthy of being celebrated.

Jesus reminds us that whenever we care for another person, especially someone in need, we are caring for Him. Our outreach is one small way we live out that calling.

So, THANK YOU, Halfway Creek, for opening your hearts and your hands. Thank you for giving generously. And thank you for being willing to be a friend to someone we many never know.

Because sometimes, a simple birthday cake can become so much more than a cake.

It can become love in action.

With Love, Gratitude and Blessings ~
Patti Happel - SAM

VISION BOARD MINUTES

HALFWAY CREEK LUTHERAN CHURCH

VISION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

AUGUST 13, 2026

MEMBERS: Patti Happel, Carrie Payne, Bette Pedretti, Nancy Holley, Nicole Stumlin, Michelle Olson, Wayne Atchley

Guests: Jodi Anderson; Absent: Kent Kramer

Call to Order

- 6:00pm

Approval of Agenda/Timekeeper

- Agenda approved; CP motion; PH second; all in favor
- Timekeeper; NS

Devotion/Prayer:

- August Nancy
- Sept Michelle

Actions since last meeting: Approved 6/15/26 VB minutes via email

Financial Report:

- Update on Thrivent Accounts
- Update on Youth Account
- Recent charitable donations
- Noisy Offering:
 - September-Suicide Awareness / Prevention
 - October-Gratitude and Giving
 - November-Holmen's Hope Weekend Backpack Program
 - December-ELCA Good Gifts

Ministry/Office Update:

- SAMs report

Music and Liturgy:

- Fall service time
 - 10:00am starting Sunday, September 20th

Old Business:

- Team updates as needed
 - Blood Drive
 - Went well

- 20 units donated and busy the whole day
 - Had some walk-ins
- Hope to have another in November and look ahead to 2027
 - Scheduling in advance helps them include our drive on the website, which increases success
- Hope to get another individual to draw blood as some donors had a long wait time
- Planning outreach with Salvation Army to provide meals
 - Will be requesting meal items
- SIMS
 - Our streamed services are not technologically strong as we are using a software-based, free program that does not keep up with Microsoft updates
 - Recommended by other churches that we get a streaming device, instead of software
 - SIMS to provide a quote for a streaming device
 - Question needs to continue streaming services live and perhaps record them and then immediately post them after service so people can still watch them
- Review of Emergency Operations Plan
 - Working with City of Onalaska FD to get updated fire inspection reports
 - Working on plan to regularly check and document smoke detectors that are not hard wired
 - Working with Jess Cook to get building floor plan with exits, extinguishers, and shelters identified
- Update on God's Work Our Hands
 - We oversee the lunch this year
- Update on 170th Anniversary Celebration
 - October 11th
 - Hannah Scholze to do sermon
 - Fellowship Dinner
 - L & M to cater

New Business:

- Visioning the future
 - Sustainability discussed
 - Congregational meeting/discussions needed
- Technology fee
 - Currently the paperwork in the building use policy completed by non-members requires \$50 / hour fee
 - Consider having a fee schedule established for weddings and funerals as well

Closing Prayer

Adjournment

- 7:53pm

Next meeting(s): Thursday, September 10, 2026, 6pm

OUTREACH

Salvation Army Meal

Our donated meal to the Salvation Army will be delivered on August 31! We will be providing a pasta hotdish, homemade buns, and dessert to the shelter residents. A huge thank you to everyone who donated items, helped prepare the food, and held this outreach in prayer. We also extend a heartfelt thank you to the Thrivent Action Team program for providing the seed money to make this possible. We plan to provide another meal in September, so please watch for upcoming opportunities to support this ongoing ministry.

The Hunger Task Force in La Crosse also takes donations of packaged or canned foods that are “expired” as long as the containers are not open. So, if you are cleaning out your pantry and find some things that are past the date or that you know you are not going to use, please consider bringing them to church and we will see that they get delivered to the Hunger Task Force. They also take paper and plastic bags that are in good shape. Thank you!

SPREADING HOPE AND CONNECTION: CARING CARDS MINISTRY UPDATE

Our next gathering is set for **October 7th**. Along with writing and praying over cards, we'll also be putting together special care packages to encourage our college freshmen as they settle into their fall semester. ***We are looking for donations of pretzels, extra toasty Cheez Its, trail mix, peanut butter M&Ms, chocolate chip cookies, Nilla Wafers, and gifts cards for Taco Bell, McDonalds, and Culvers to fill the care packages. Please drop off items by September 30th.***

Whether you love writing notes, packing care packages, or simply sharing in prayer and fellowship, there's a place for you here. Mark your calendars for October 7th—we hope to see you there!

ANNIVERSARY PARTY FOR HCLC

Save the date for our 170th Anniversary celebration on **October 11**, during and after worship. We're excited to welcome Hannah Scholze, who will share a look back at HCLC's history. Afterward, stick around for a shared meal catered by L&M and time for fellowship. You won't want to miss this incredible milestone in our church's history! Anyone wishing to help are welcome to reach out to Bette! Please RSVP to assistant@halfwaycreek.org or call the office at 608-526-3701 by October 4th. Thank you!

FALL OFFICE HOURS AND WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Beginning September 8th, the HCLC Office will be open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9 AM – 3 PM. We will also resume our Fall Worship Schedule – Sundays at 10 AM. Please note that we will **NOT** have worship on Sunday, September 13. Instead, please join us for God's work. Our hands. worship service at 1030 AM at the Halfway Creek Bandshell. Bring your lawn chair and spirit of service!

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday school will be taking on a theme of Adventure this Fall! All children in PreK-5th grade are welcome to register and attend Sunday School. Our first class is on Sunday, September 20th from 9 – 9:45 AM. Hope you will join us and invite your friends! Forms are available on our [website](#) and at church.

CONFIRMATION

As we head into the new school year, we've got some exciting events and milestones coming up for our youth! Mark your calendars and keep an eye out for these key dates:

- **Registration is Open:** Forms are available on our [website](#) or at church!
- **September 23 at 6:00 PM | Parent & Student Meeting:** Join us for an informational gathering as we get ready for the upcoming Confirmation year. Both parents and students should attend!
- **October 7 (6:00 – 7:30 PM) | Confirmation Classes Begin:** Classes officially launch on October 7 and will meet on the first three Wednesdays of each month. We can't wait to get started!

ELCA Youth Gathering – Commitment Required by October 1st!

Youth 8th -12th grade during the 2026-27 school year are invited to attend the ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis from June 28-July 2, 2027! Our first informational meeting was held at Holmen Lutheran on August 9th. We'll be meeting on the 3rd Sunday of each month at Holmen Lutheran at 1 PM. We need all participants to try and attend those meetings. For more information or questions, please contact Shari in the office. Also take a moment to sign up with Holmen Lutheran so you can get updates on meeting days: <https://forms.gle/a1Qcmb6cTho5WoWb9>

NOISY OFFERING

Our **August Noisy Offering supported God's work. Our hands.** and our service project with WINN (What I Need Now) that supports the un-housed in the La Crosse Area! During September our collection will support Suicide Awareness and Prevention! Thank you for making a difference with your contributions & prayers!

SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Suicide affecting someone we love is not something that we ever would suspect to occur in our families or circle of friends. Suicide was responsible for 48,824 deaths in 2024. The number of people who think about or attempt suicide is even higher. In 2024, an estimated 14.3 million adults seriously thought about suicide, 4.6 million planned a suicide attempt, and 2.2 million attempted suicides. (CDC)

According to David Kessler, death and grief expert: Suicide is a complex medical issue. Suicide is not due to weakness or moral failure. There are changes in the brain that happen with people who are at risk for suicide. Suicide victims often appear normal on the surface, they do not give off many clues outside of themselves, it is an internal fight. They are going through unimaginable pain, something that has usually been going on internally for a long time.

Often the survivors of suicide hold secrecy and shame about how their loved one died. Their brain is trying to make sense of what happened. As a survivor, we tend to give ourselves a sense of "control" that no one actually has. We may feel that we "missed the signs" or "should have been able to save them," but this is usually not the case.

How can we be helpful for a survivor of a loved one who has died by suicide? Treat them the same as anyone who has lost a loved one from any other disease. Step forward, show up and help. Doing a task for them, bring food, walk their dog etc. Usually, they will want to remember memories and talk about the person, be there to listen. (grief.com) This year we will use our noisy offering to support the #WillPProject and the La Crosse Area Suicide Prevention Initiative.

FINANCIALS

2026	Total Offering	Rent Income	Expenditures	Difference
Jan	\$10,127.95	\$2,150.00	\$19,875.68	-\$7,597.73
Feb	\$11,569.00	\$2,150.00	\$12,512.22	\$1,206.78
Mar	\$23,088.22	\$2,150.00	\$13,334.57	\$11,903.65
Apr	\$14,533.00	\$2,150.00	\$18,343.66	-\$1,660.66
May	\$14,165.00	\$2,150.00	\$17,169.87	-\$854.87
June	\$20,037.00	\$2,150.00	\$11,676.07	\$10,510.93
July	\$12,371.00	\$2,150.00	\$17,084.92	-\$2,563.92
Totals	\$105,891.17	\$15,050.00	\$109,996.99	\$10,944.18

HALFWAY CREEK CEMETERY NEWS

Halfway Creek Lutheran cemetery is a place of sacred recollection. During the season of Lent, we say: **“Remember** you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” This passage comes from Genesis 3:19. When we celebrate the Lord’s Supper from Luke 22:19-20 “And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” “In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” You belong to Christ.

To **remember** your loved ones is to “re-member” to put the pieces (the members of something) back together again. The cemetery trustees work hard honoring your gravesites. A huge thanks goes out to Kelly, Jordan, & Blake Anderson for maintaining the cemetery. They have worked hard every week throughout the summer months cutting the grass and weed eating.

Halfway Creek Lutheran Cemetery Association is ready to help families make decisions for peaceful rest. 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: Mark Witte at 608-317-0183, Hannah Scholze at 608-797-9388 or Kent Kramer at 608-317-8699.



**God's work.
Our hands.**

September 13, 2026 *Halfway Creek Bandshell*

*Worship at 10:30 AM
followed by service project (WINN) and lunch
Bring your lawn chair!*

Donation Drive For WINN (What I Need Now)



WINN

- Men's large short and long sleeve t-shirts
- Individual drink mix packets for bottled water
- Bar soap
- Shampoo
- Bus tokens (Can be purchased in packs of 40 from MTU)
- \$10 Kwik Trip gift card
- \$15 McDonald's gift card

THANK YOU!

Donations can be dropped off at church or brought to worship!

**Holmen Area
ELCA Churches**

For More
Information
about WINN



Bring your friends!

Halfway Creek Lutheran Church

SUNDAY School FIRST DAY

September 20, 2026
at 9 AM

W6016 County Rd W,
Holmen WI 54636

www.halfwaycreek.org



You are invited to Halfway Creek Lutheran Church as we celebrate 170 years with worship, a special message from Hannah Scholze, and a catered meal!

**Sunday, October 11, 2026
Worship at 10 AM**

Meal catered by L & M following service.
Please **RSVP by October 4th** at church or
call: 608-526-3701
email: assistant@halfwaycreek.org.
www.halfwaycreek.org

Scrap and Craft Retreat

October 16 & 17, 2026

9AM - 9PM both days

Halfway Creek Lutheran Church

W6016 County Rd W, Holmen

Hosts: Shari Ireland & Jodi Anderson

Join us for two days of
creativity and connection.

Bring your own crafting projects & snacks.
We'll provide the table and lunch on **Saturday!**

Cost: \$30

Payable to Shari Ireland

(mail to church)

or VENMO @Shari-Ireland-1

RSVP by October 14

608-397-9928

stampwithshari44@gmail.com





SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS



1 Rachael Temp
 3 Adalyn Ruhbusch
 5 Gregory Britton
 6 Teagan Yahnke
 8 Angela Kinsman, Alison LeBrun
 11 Brody Happel
 13 Jason Bramwell, Emersen Strangstalien
 14 Darlene Feltes, Rochelle Thompson
 17 Kaden Casberg
 18 Diane Jostad, Emily Jostad
 19 Alyssa Shisler
 20 Dawn Rink
 21 Nicole Lepsch
 22 Hannah Wegner
 23 James Hansen, Morgan Jostad, Stan Schwier, Lila Sutherland
 25 Ruth Jostad, Richard Pedretti
 28 Aaron Balow, Jason Ruhbusch
 30 Jess Cook, Josh Kinsman, Maverick Ruhbusch, Nash Ulrich, Julia Yanke

SERVING AND WORSHIP

	WORSHIP TIME	SEXTON	ALTAR GUILD	OFFERING COUNTERS
Sep 6	9 AM Patti	Mike	Carrie Nicole	Rhonda Sonja
Sep 13	1030 AM	GWOH – worship at bandshell, lunch and service project		
Sep 20	10 AM Rev Kuespert	Archie	Nancy	Jodi E Andrea
Sep 27	10 AM Rev Gordon	Joe	Bette	Mike

IN OUR PRAYERS

We pray for friends and family of those who have recently passed: Betty Bender, Kenneth Pfaff, Susie Johnson, Carol Nedoba, Paula Hammes, Laurie Gillespie, Phoebe Kitzke, Glenn Schmidt, Bob Cottrell

We pray for Kay Schroeder, Anne Romskog, Alice Jackson, Heather Boardman, Alice Fonfara, Ron Christensen, Bill Baxter, Jackson Ammerman (grandson of Les and Susan Kolbo), Diane Jostad, Stacey Fredricks, Robin Ruhbusch, Laurie Noelke, Megan Sacia Ulrich, Marjorie Lee, Jean Latham, Thelma Severson, Katie Wier, Bill Kitzke, Gayle Kuespert, Cary Heyer, Jenny Lee, Mary Dokkebaken, Karla Johnson, Coats family

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

Halfway Creek Lutheran Church

608-526-3701

www.halfwaycreek.org

Worship on Sundays

9:00 AM through September 6

10:30 AM September 13 at the Halfway Creek Bandshell for God's work. Our hands.

10:00 AM Sept. 20, 2026 – May 30, 2027

Education

9 AM **Sunday School** begins September 20
6 PM **Wednesday Confirmation** (first three weeks of the month beginning in October)

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.

Office Hours

Sunday – worship

Monday - closed

Tuesday – 9 AM – 3 PM

Wednesday – 9 AM – 3 PM

Thursday – 9 AM – 3 PM

Friday & Saturday - closed

