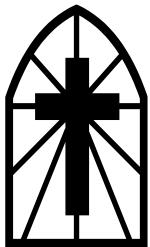


JANUARY 2026 HAPPENINGS

Pastor Paul Thompson Cell: 507-273-8504 Email: pthomp821@gmail.com

Office Hours: 9:00 am–Noon (Monday & Thursday ... or by appointment) **Websites:** eaststolaf.org ...OR.... weststolaf.org

Gina Moser, Secretary: Office: 365-8222 Cell: 507-951-4964 Email: eastwest@kmtel.com



January Worship & Annual Meeting Dates

WEST: EARLY SERVICE at 8:30 am (*West coffee 9:30 am*)

JAM: 9:30 am at West for all parish students

EAST: LATE SERVICE at 10:30 am (*East coffee after church*)

>>> EAST: ANNUAL MEETING & POTLUCK JAN. 25 (*backup date is Feb. 8*)

>>> WEST: ANNUAL MEETING & POTLUCK FEB. 1 (*backup date is Feb. 15*)

OFFERINGS: Our congregational councils ask you to prayerfully continue your financial support church.

Please be sure to make your check out to "West St. Olaf Church" or "East St. Olaf Church" and mail to:

West members mail to: Dave Peterson 25378 720th St., Hayfield, MN 55940

East members mail to: Bryan DeCook at 7583 80th Ave. SW, Stewartville, MN 55976

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,



We are taught in the Gospel of Matthew that wise men, scholars of the skies, saw a new star that they believed announced the birth of a great king to their west. They followed it to Bethlehem and saw that king living in a barn, and in spite of those humble surroundings, they continued to believe this child was a king.

The prophet Daniel says, *Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.* The largest, heaviest stars will only last 10 million years or so, burning brightly, but quickly under their own intense gravity. Our sun, smaller and lighter, will last 10 billion years. Red dwarfs, feather light, will last as much as 10 trillion years.

But 10 trillion years is nothing compared to eternity. We believers in the One Eternal God are promised eternity through our God-given faith.

On the Twilight Zone episode, "Ninety Years Without Slumbering", Sam Forstmann is an old man who thinks he will die if his grandfather clock stops ticking. He spends all his time working on the clock, upsetting his family with his obsession. The main point of the story is how Forstmann is held captive by a belief that is not based on fact. The episode ends with Rod Serling's words, "Clocks are made by men, God creates time. No man can prolong his allotted hours, he can only live them to the fullest."

Let us live this new year, 2026 to the fullest. Let us rejoice in the tiniest blessing. Let us share the tiniest gift. Let us love with our whole hearts.

In Christ's name, Pastor Paul Thompson

Membership Updates, WELCA News, Serving Schedules

MEMBERSHIP INFO

No updates at this time.

EAST WELCA NEWS

More East info on pg 3. Quilting and sack lunch at 10am Tuesdays.
WELCA meeting on Sat., Jan. 10 at 10am at church, to plan for 2026.

WEST WELCA NEWS

It's hard to believe another year has passed as we welcome 2026. We wish all of you a blessed new year with good health and peace in your lives.

We were blessed with three special Christmas events at West. We thank Donna Larsen and Heather Bamlet for planning a beautiful Advent by Candlelight service.

Thank you to Carma for again planning a wonderful program for our WELCA Christmas party. It was a stormy day but 22 brave people attended. Thank you to Deb Schuck for organizing the potluck lunch in the kitchen.

Thank you to Gail Laxen, Jenny Twaddle, Susie Thoe, Jana Hiam and Breanna Estby and other Board of Education members for having the Sunday School children tell the Christmas story in song and speaking parts. The children did well and we appreciate all the work that went into putting on this program.

Thank you to the altar guild women in December; Mary Brandt and Sandy Iverson.

Our WELCA calendar booklets will be completed later-on, so the JAN. schedule is as follows (see dates in column to the right):

JAN. Chairperson: Sue Hyland
JAN. Altar Guild: Mary Brandt and Sandy Iverson



HERITAGE DAY COFFEE AT WEST ST. OLAF will be Sun., January 11 at 9:30am. Join our JAM students as they learn to make some of our Norwegian favorites: Lefse, krumkake, rosettes, and rummegrut! *Free will offering will be donated to St. Olaf Heritage Association.*
AND THEN AFTERWARD, WE WILL TAKE DOWN Church Christmas decorations – HELPERS ARE NEEDED.



WEATHER-RELATED CANCELATIONS
To verify if there is a cancelation for worship OR a church activity, please check: KTTC TV (channel 10), or online www.kttc.com
Click on the tab for WEATHER - then click on Closings and Delays. Decided by the council presidents and pastor.

Happy New Year!

WEST WELCA JANUARY DATES:

JAN. 11 Heritage Days during our coffee hour (at 9:30)
JAN. 13 9 AM Take down chapel decorations, then we'll do our Quilting/Sack lunch
JAN. 14 9 AM Quilting/ Sack lunch
1 PM WELCA Meeting
Bible Study: Pastor Paul
Hostess: Donna Larsen

JAN. 18 After church, take down church decorations.
JAN. 27 9 AM Quilting/ Sack lunch
JAN. 28 9 AM Quilting/ Sack lunch

We would love to have more women join us at these events.

Happy New Year!
Sharon and Nancy



WEST—JANUARY

Ushers: Pete D. organizes
Deacon: Debbie Schuck
Altar Guild: Mary Brandt and Sandy Iverson
Acolytes: Ushers covering Stewardship:
1st Sun.— Luther League
2nd Sun.— JAM (or B.O.E.)
3rd Sun.— WELCA
4th Sun. – Council

=====

EAST—JANUARY

Acolytes: Ushers covering
Altar Guild: Danny Zieman
Deacon: Meghan Ohman
Coffee Servers:
1st Sun.— Quilting Sisters
2nd Sun.— Sarah Circle
3rd Sun.— OPEN: Contact Marilyn Carlson, if willing
4th Sun.— Circle 4
5th Sun.—S.S./Council

WOMEN OF EAST INFORMATION



East Lenten Dinners: Feb 25 is Circle 4 - that will get the schedule started. We will determine the rest of the servers at our January WELCA meeting (as those meals are in March).

Women of East News: December Meeting

The Craft and Vendor Sale made \$524.00 (\$320 in tables and \$104 for lunch).

The Meatball Dinner made \$867.00 Thank you to ALL who came and helped with prep day! You are so appreciated! A special thanks to Doyle and Elmer Jorgenson who donated the meat. Elmer also purchased the leftover meatballs for \$40. Next year we will be using a new recipe to add a little pizzazz!

Women of East Year-End Giving:

\$500 Dodge County Food Shelf

\$500 Possibilities

\$250 Mankato Campus Ministry

\$250 Winona Campus Ministry

\$250 Salvation Army

\$250 The Landing, Rochester MN

**Note: There will be one more disbursement of funds to the East Church after the Annual Meeting, and the financial needs are known. Treasurer Diane Severson will distribute checks.*

We discussed the potluck dinner at the annual meeting, on January 25, and will get into more detail at our January meeting (on Sat., Jan. 10).

Lenten dinners on Wednesday nights are coming in February. Circle 4 will take the first Soup and Sandwich dinner on Feb. 25. East has 3 dinners this year, as Ash Wednesday is at West St Olaf.

The idea for a potluck and silent auction was discussed, and we will choose a date in later spring, after Easter.

Our next women's meeting will be January 10 at 10:00 am. We will be planning for next year, so come with your ideas! Many hands make light work!

End of the year "Thank You's" go out to all who help, bring, serve, work, clean, create, read, sing, play, bake, cook, decorate, donate, and share your gifts in the house of the Lord. This church needs everyone, and we are so grateful you to all the wonderful members who took time out of their lives to share here. May God bless you and keep you forever.

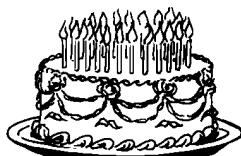
Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year!

OUR BIRTHDAY LISTS: If you are not on our birthday lists in the monthly newsletter and you wish to be listed, please email our secretary, Gina, at eastwest@kmtel.com

JAN. Birthdays: EAST

- 4 Dorothy Hesse
- 7 Keaton DeCook
- 11 Justin Mansfield
- 12 Brian Pyfferoen
- 14 Becky Brakke
- 15 Benjamin Petersen
- 17 Duaine Molde
- 20 Mark Evjen
- 22 Wendy Moore
- 22 Elanor Pyfferoen
- 26 Kaysie Peterson
- 28 Alexis Olson
- 28 Maddi Pyfferoen

**Happy
Birthday!**



JAN. Birthdays: WEST

- 3 Aleisha Lechnir
- 5 Eugene Trygstad
- 5 Kristie Larson
- 5 Nicholas Olson
- 9 Cynthia Orning
- 9 Mary Brandt
- 9 Karla Daleske
- 10 Craig Hanson
- 11 James Senjem, Jr.
- 11 Daniel Larsen
- 16 David Peterson
- 16 Neil Rabehl
- 19 Susan Thoe
- 19 Coty Stoppel
- 20 Gloria Pew
- 21 Benjamin Horejsi
- 22 Delano Senjem
- 22 Neven Horejsi
- 23 Gregory Brandt
- 24 Pete Danielson
- 25 Ella Rudlong
- 25 Jamie Smith
- 26 Travis Johnson
- 28 Kendyl Beyer
- 31 Wilma Kyllo
- 31 Ricky Johnson
- 31 Austin Dahle

Undecorating Dates

Annual Meetings & Potluck Dinners



EAST: HELPERS NEEDED TO UNDECORATE

East day to take down decorations at church is
Sunday, **January 11** right after worship



EAST: ANNUAL MEETING & POTLUCK DINNER!

Sunday, **January 25** with worship at 10:30 am; and potluck dinner following our annual meeting.
Backup date is February 8 (when East worship will be early at 8:30 am).



WEST: HELPERS NEEDED TO UNDECORATE

West day to take down decorations at CHAPEL: Wednesday, **January 13**—then we will enjoy our quilting/sack lunch after we're done putting away the decorations.



West day to take down decorations at CHURCH: **Sun., Jan. 18**—Helpers are needed.



WEST: ANNUAL MEETING & POTLUCK DINNER!

Sunday, **February 1** with West worship at 10:30 am; and our potluck dinner following our annual meeting
Backup date is Feb. 15 with worship at 10:30 am.

JANUARY

East & West St. Olaf HAPPENINGS ~ 2026 January edition

Page 5

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
				1 OFFICE CLOSED Happy New Year	2 <u>Pastor day-off</u>	3
4 8:30 am WEST Worship, <u>Comm.</u> 9:30 am JAM classes Also West Coffee 10:30 am EAST Worship, <u>Comm.</u> East coffee after svc	5 9:00am-Noon Pastor office	6 NEWSLETTER DAY at OFFICE for JAN issue 9:10- print 9:25- fold 9:35- collate/tape 10:00 am East Quilt/sack lunch 6:00 pm EAST <u>Council meeting</u>	7 7:00 pm BOTH CONFIRMATION Class at chapel	8 9:00am-Noon Pastor office	9 <u>Pastor day-off</u>	10 10:00 am <u>Women of EAST Meeting to plan for 2026—all women invited.</u>
11  8:30 am WEST Worship... <u>then West HERITAGE DAY COFFEE</u> 9:30 am JAM makes goodies for Heritage Coffee 10:30 am EAST Worship ... <u>then undecorate EAST CHURCH</u> East coffee after	12 9:00am-Noon Pastor office 7:00 pm WEST <u>Council meeting</u>	13 9:00 am West <u>Undecorate the CHAPEL</u> , then Quilt/sack lunch 10:00 am East Quilt/sack lunch	14 9:00 am West Quilt/sack lunch 1:00 pm WEST <u>WELCA meeting</u> <u>Study: Pastor Paul Host:Donna Larsen</u> 7:00 pm BOTH CONFIRMATION Class at chapel	15 9:00am-Noon Pastor office NOON: EAST <u>deadline to turn in audited reports to church secretary</u>	16 <u>Pastor day-off</u>	17
18 8:30 am WEST Worship, <u>Comm.</u> 9:30 am JAM classes Also West Coffee <u>Then undecorate WEST CHURCH</u> 10:30 am EAST Worship East coffee after svc	19 9:00am-Noon Pastor office NOON: DEADLINE to Submit info for the FEB newsletter	20 10:00 am East Quilt/sack lunch 10:00 am <u>PRINT EAST Annual Reports</u>	21 7:00 pm BOTH CONFIRMATION Class at chapel	22 9:00am-Noon Pastor office NOON: WEST <u>deadline to turn in audited reports to church secretary</u>	23 <u>Pastor day-off</u>	24
25 8:30 am WEST Worship 9:30 am JAM classes Also West Coffee 10:30 am EAST Worship, <u>Comm.</u> <u>ANNUAL MEETING & POTLUCK after our meeting</u>	26 9:00am-Noon Pastor office	27 9:00 am West Quilt/sack lunch NEWSLETTER DAY at OFFICE for FEB issue 9:10- print 9:25- fold 9:35- collate/tape 10:00 am East Quilt/sack lunch	28 9:00 am West Quilt/sack lunch 7:00 pm BOTH CONFIRMATION Class at chapel	29 9:00am-Noon Pastor office 10:00 am <u>PRINT WEST Annual Reports</u>	30	31

EAST OFFERINGS

(12/07/2025) Current \$3,641.
(12/14/2025) Current \$1,120.
(12/21/2025) Current \$11,340.²⁰ and Benevolence \$125.
(12/24/2025) Current \$870 and Benevolence \$2,468.

EAST COUNCIL MINUTES - December 8, 2025

East St. Olaf Council Minutes: December 8, 2025

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order.

Members Present: Pastor Paul Thompson, Gary Kearns, Bryan DeCook, Jane Williams, Terri Zieman, Danny Ziemann

Devotions: Given at the Joint Meeting.

Pastor's Report: Given at the Joint Meeting.

Secretary's Report: November's minutes were read and approved.

Financial Secretary's Report: Bryan presented the financial statements for Sept., Oct., and November. The reports were read and approved.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report from September was read and approved.

The Total Income for the month was \$7,812.00

Expenses for the month were \$8,314.91. The larger expenses this month included Pastor's salary/pension, insurance for the church, parsonage taxes, electric, phone/internet.

Deacon's Report: December readers are taken care of, and sign-up is in Narthex for readers to sign up.

Trustees Report: The septic tank was pumped, and everything looks good. Still waiting for the painter to come and look at the peeling paint under the balcony. This will be an "indoor" winter job.

Education Report: The Sunday School kids provided the Christmas program at East St Olaf this past Sunday.

WELCA served soup and sandwiches, along with lots of desserts. Next Sunday they will be at West. Luther League has a Christmas event coming up at the Hayfield Bowling Alley.

Parsonage Report: Both Carbon Monoxide Detectors need to be replaced due to age, they are over 10 years Old - Pete put new batteries in, but they are still chirping. Dan Williams will pick up a couple. There are some mice in the parsonage, so far 10 have been caught. Gary suggested asking Adams Pest Control Company to take on the Parsonage. He will contact Pete to see if this is a viable solution. Pressure in the boiler at the Parsonage was low, so Pete added water; and bled the air out of the lines upstairs. Working better now (two hour process).

Hans Estby, Norman Senjem, and Mark ?(remodeler) did a walk through the parsonage with Bruce Peterson. Norman Senjem and Nancy Thoreson sent a proposal to the joint committee on a plan for the parsonage. The Council reviewed the written proposal, with the understanding that it would be discussed at the joint meeting, however no action would take place at this meeting as we all need time to look through the proposal more closely.

New Business:

Annual Meeting will take place the 4th Sunday of January (Jan. 25), with the 2nd Sunday in Feb being our back-up date (Feb. 8).

Nominating Committee will be Bruce Peterson and Glenda Mueller.

Spring Dates for church and Lenten Services will be discussed at the joint meeting.

Adjournment: Gary Kearns made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Bryan DeCook seconded. We Adjourned the meeting, and moved to the Joint Meeting.

NEXT MEETING: January 6 at 6:00PM at East St Olaf.

Respectfully Submitted by Jane Williams

WEST COUNCIL MINUTES: December 8, 2025

Attendance (P = Present)

Pastor Paul	P	Dave Peterson	P	Deb Schuck	P	Ben Horejsi
Will Laxen	P	Sheryl Wohlers	P	Clay Hazelmann		Billie Jean Smetana
Hans Estby	P	Mary Brandt	P	Greg Brandt	P	
Cindy Stoppel	P	Sue Hyland		Chad Thompson	P	
Jenny Twaddle	P	Carma Bjornson		Del Senjem	P	

Meeting called to order by Will Laxen

Motion to approve agenda made by Hans and seconded by Deb, motion carried.

Secretary's Report: Report read, motion made to approve by Mary and seconded by Sheryl, motion carried.

Financial Secretary/Treasurer's Report: Reports reviewed and discussed. Motion made to approve both reports by Deb and seconded by Hans, motion carried.

Boad of Education Report: Report will be given at Joint meeting.

Deacon's Report: Cards sent: Sympathy to Wilma Kyllo and thinking of you to David Thoe.

Thank you to those who prepared & served food and helped clean up after Ralph Kyllo's funeral luncheon. Blessed be his memory.

November food shelf collection donations, organized by the Luther League and J.A.M kids, made to Dodge County food shelf and Hayfield Food Pantry, thank you.

Thank you to all who helped with decorating the church and chapel for the Christmas season.

Advent by Candlelight was a success and thank you to those who organized, participated, and attended. A mission offering (\$1507) was donated to Hayfield Share Christmas.

All are invited to attend the WELCA Christmas party tomorrow December 10th at 10:30am with program, fellowship, and potluck lunch.

December 14th J.A.M Christmas program will be followed by birthday cake & coffee.

Volunteers to serve at coffee hour on the 14th and 28th are needed.

Thank you to Carma for being the November deacon and Mary is December's deacon.

Trustees Report: Mailbox has been installed. Jetta Clean checked sewer lines, with all being functional.

Old Business: Parsonage will be discussed at the joint meeting.

New Business: Motion made by Greg to change communion from 1st & 4th Sundays to 1st & 3rd Sundays starting January 2026 and seconded by Deb, motion carried. End of year gifts were discussed, Cindy made a motion to give bonus to the lawn mowing company and custodian, seconded by Sherl, motion carried.

Motion to adjourn: Motion to adjourn was made by Hans, seconded by Cindy, motion carried.

Submitted by: Cindy Stoppel, West St. Olaf council secretary

Next Meeting: Next meeting will be January 12th, 2026, at 7:00pm



WEATHER-RELATED CANCELLATIONS

To verify if there is a cancellation for worship OR a church activity, **please check:**
KTTC TV (channel 10), or online www.kttc.com Click on the tab for **WEATHER**
- then click on **Closings and Delays**. Decided by the council presidents and pastor.

JOINT COUNCIL MINUTES: December 8, 2025

Attendance (P = Present)

Pastor Paul	P	Mary Brandt	P	Del Senjem	P	Mary Madsen
Will Laxen	P	Sue Hyland		Ben Horejsi		Pete Exe
Hans Estby	P	Carma Bjornson		Billie Jean Smetana		Meghan Ohman
Cindy Stoppel	P	Deb Schuck	P	Gary Kearns	P	Terry Zieman P
Jenny Twaddle	P	Clay Hazelmann	P	Bryan DeCook	P	Danny Zieman P
Dave Peterson	P	Greg Brandt	P	Randy Robinson		
Sheryl Wohlers	P	Chad Thompson	P	Jane Williams	P	

Joint meeting called to order by West President Will Laxen.

Devotions lead by Pastor Thompson.

Secretary's Report: Report read, motion made to approve by Deb Schuck and seconded by Danny Zieman, motion carried.

Pastor's Report: Report reviewed.

Board of Education Report: JAM Christmas program at East went really well. Program at West is on Sunday 12/14. There is no JAM on 12/21 or 12/28. Luther league November activity was helping at the Hayfield food shelf and having treats at Uncle Mony's. December activity will be wrapping giving tree gifts and a pizza party with games.

Parsonage Committee: Discussion occurred regarding the parsonage. Will & Randy will talk and prepare information about what has been done so far, to share at the annual meetings.

Old Business: An explanation of the MN Paid Leave Plan program was provided. Sheryl Wohlers made a motion to accept the paid leave plan, seconded by Jenny Twaddle, motion carried.

New Business: Lenten Services schedule:

WEST services Ash Wednesday 2/18, 3/4, 3/18, Good Friday 4/3, and Easter Sunday 4/5 10:30am.

EAST services 2/25, 3/11, 3/25, Maundy Thursday 4/2, and Easter Sunday 4/5 8:30am.

Discussion of staff compensation for 2026. Pastor spoke and suggested to give 2 additional weeks of vacation time in lieu of salary increase. After the Pastor left, salary guidelines were presented. Jane Williams made a motion to accept Pastor's suggestion of 2 additional weeks of vacation in lieu of a raise, seconded by Greg Brandt, additional discussion and motion carried. Deb Schuck made a motion to increase Gina's pay to \$20/hr, seconded by Terry Zieman, motion carried. Sheryl made a motion to give Christmas bonuses to Gina, Pat, & Pastor, seconded by Jenny Twaddle, motion carried.

Motion to adjourn: Motion to adjourn was made by Jenny Twaddle, seconded by Dave Peterson, approved and closed with the Lord's prayer.

Submitted by: Cindy Stoppel, West St. Olaf council secretary

NEXT JOINT MEETING: March 2026 (which will be at the EAST church).

East & West St. Olaf Lutheran



6200 County Road 3 SW
Byron, MN 55920

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Pastor Paul Thompson

Cell: 507-273-8504 Email: pthomp821@gmail.com

Church Office Hours: 9:00 am – Noon

Mon. and Thur. or by appointment

Office: 507-365-8222 Secretary: eastwest@kmtel.com

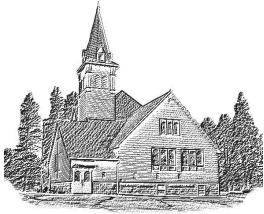
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HAPPENINGS

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