



CURRENTS

JULY 2024

Reach Out , Share Christ with All

FROM PASTOR CHRIS

This month we are taking 5 of our young people to the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans, Louisiana. They will experience an amazing week of Jesus-filled everything: top notch speakers, inspiring worship, interactive education experiences, service projects, and an electric atmosphere with almost 16,000 Lutherans gathering all together.

The theme of the Gathering is “Created to Be” and has an amazing message for our teens, and for us all. Each day we will develop that theme, exploring how we are Created to Be: Brave, Authentic, Free, Disruptive, Disciples. Here’s a bit of what that all means (find the sources for these descriptions and more at the Gathering website, <https://www.elca.church/gathering>).

We are created to be Brave – which doesn’t mean we are without fear, but God is with us to risk vulnerability for the sake of the gospel. And God gives protects us with community, with siblings in Christ who will be there to give us support, comfort, and connection as we face what lies ahead.

We are created to be Authentic - Christ has called you not just as you are but because of who you are. You bring something unique to this community. Your voice, your thoughts, your ideas are not just desired – they are needed. God’s creativity knows no bounds.

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We are created to be Free - We live in a world that feels limited. But we called to believe that when we follow Jesus, nothing is impossible. To be free in Christ is to be transformed by the love that has been extended to us through the gift of grace, and be freed to extended that love to others without barriers or restrictions.

We are created to be Disruptive – Creation has grown into ways of being that need to be disrupted, though changing how we live or think can be counterintuitive. But as Jesus' followers, we are called to disrupt the ways the world has grown away from God. The church throughout history has been a place of change, and we are called to be the change makers. We gather together in community because we have hope for a better future. And that takes disruption.

We are called to be Disciples – Disciples are created to bear witness to God's love with both words and actions. We are created to be disciples, to be sent out into the world to love our neighbor just as we are

loved by God. Disciples are sent into the world to love our neighbor just as we are loved by God. The whole Gathering is an experience of discipleship.

We will come together for five days to experience God's love, to hear again "You are loved. You are fearfully and wonderfully made. You were created — on purpose — by God." We will gather for five days to experience being sent into community, in our neighborhoods, and our world.

This message is for all of us:

You are brave. You were created to be disruptive. You are a disciple. Every day is an opportunity to experience God's love and be that love in your world. You were created to be ... brave, authentic, free, disruptive disciples.

New Orleans, here we come!

-Pastor Chris

2024 VISION BOARD

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Please contact the vision board with any input you may have.

Next Vision Board meeting is on Thursday, July 11 at 6 p.m.

Noisy offering: June's Noisy offering supported the Youth Gathering trip. We collected \$97.80 as of June 23rd! Thank you for your generosity, continued support and prayers. We will send off the group on Sunday, July 14th at 9:00 a.m. worship. They will return July 22. Please continue to pray that the Holy Spirit will open their hearts and minds throughout the Gathering.

July's Noisy Offering will be presented to Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin. Read more on page 6.

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



**HALFWAY CREEK LUTHERAN CHURCH
VISION BOARD MEETING MINUTES
June 13, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Pastor Chris Sesvold, Patti Happel, Amy Noel, Carrie Payne, Bette Pedretti, Nicole Stumlin and Kari Washburn

ABSENT: Andrea Baxter and Nancy Holley

Member Absent: Call to order @ 5:59 PM

Devotion: From Christ in our Home - "Creating God, your works are wonderful. Help us to see creation, including ourselves, as good. AMEN"

Approval of Agenda: Motion made and 2nd to approve agenda.

Actions since last meeting: Motion made and seconded to approve May 9, 2024 VB meeting minutes. Approved May 30, 2024.

Pastor's Report received

1. There has been wonderful congregational support for the youth going to the National Gathering. Next fund raiser is a Chicken-Q on July 9, 2024.
2. LuMin Ministry has begun call process.
3. Looking for a volunteer to organize a special reception this fall for all new members who have joined us in the past couple of years.
4. Encourage congregational members to take advantage of meeting with the pastor this summer. There is flexibility in when and where to accommodate schedules.

Financial Report received

1. The difference between Total Offering (electronic, envelop and loose offering) and expenses averages -\$5672 per month.
2. Thrivent Accounts as of June 7, 2024 have a balance of \$26,300.

Noisy Offering

May: Holmen's Hope Lunches - Note: they are still looking for volunteers to prepare and deliver lunches.

June: Youth going to National Youth Gathering

July: Lutheran Social Services - Note: This was highlighted at Synod Assembly.

August: School Lunch debt and school supplies in preparation for God's Work, Our Hands celebration on September 8th.

Future focus: Care for Creation

Worship and Liturgy: Meeting this summer to discuss fall schedule.

Call/Prayer Team:

1. This team was formed under the leadership of VB President Patti Happel. Members include: Kathy Hagel, Cassie Tolvstad, Lynn Wenger and Mike Martin.
2. Purpose: Explore a shared ministry model as directed by the congregation as a result of a vote at the annual meeting.
3. Their work has included: Meeting with Bishop and Asst. Bishop, other congregational leadership (Holmen Lutheran) and review of Synod and other resources. There have been good conversations and they have already identified a few options.
4. Next steps include: Further investigation and conversation, then an informational congregational meeting either later this summer or early fall.

Property Team:

1. Thank you to Bette Pedretti for getting a Thrivent grant to put wood chips around the building.
2. Mike and Rich have asked us to consider if we might trim large trees that create border between parking lot and parsonage. Will consider over the next month.
3. Patti will followup on status of installing a fire door to the exit outside the old office space.
4. Rent for Jazzercise increased to \$300 on June 1, 2024 with the understanding that we will reassess at the beginning of 2025.

Old Business: Thank you to Rich and Bette Pedretti, along with Pastor Chris for representing HCLC at the recent Synod Assembly. More updates will be out over the next several months.

New Business: No new business.

Visioning:

Conversation on how we might begin the process of becoming a "Reconciling In Christ" Congregation and further defining the "all" of our mission statement. Next Step: Over the next several months, Pastor will invite a speaker to a Sunday morning worship.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer.
Meeting adjourned at 7:25.

Next Meeting: July 11 at 6PM.

SUMMER FOOD COLLECTION

Ever notice the shopping cart at the front entrance to church or perhaps as you enter the sanctuary? All year long we collect food items for the Holmen Lutheran Food Pantry and put the items in the shopping cart. The Pantry is accessed by many local families and often the shelves run short of food. This month we are collecting baking supplies like brownie and cake mixes, flour, sugar, oil, baking soda, etc. Thank you in advance for supporting this ministry.

SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

This summer we'll have Sunday worship services at 9:00 a.m. We'll also worship outdoors at Whispering Pines at 7 p.m. on July 24 and August 28! Please note these dates on your calendar!

Sign-up to volunteer at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0444A9AA22A3FC1-fall#/>

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES (LSS) OF WI

Back in 1882, Pastor EJ Homme opened a home for orphan children in Wittenberg, WI. Since then communities have been empowered to better health and well-being through LSS. Today LSS is one of the largest and most experienced health and human service organizations in the Midwest.

What does LSS do? They assist people all along their lifespan with variety of services: affordable housing, in-person care, mental health programs in schools, telehealth, early intervention programs for preschoolers, addiction treatment, support groups, mental health treatment and adoption.

This year there is a 2024 Loving Lutheran Challenge. A generous donor is willing to match up to 1 million dollars of any gift from a congregation. This gift will be matched in whole if the congregation has not given before or if they regularly support LSS the gift needs to be increased by 10%. HCLC has not been a regular contributor to LSS, so the month of July we will be collecting noisy offering to send to LSS. You can also drop off or send a check to church noting that it is for LSS by the end of July to be included in this worthy donation to a much needed organization!

PROPERTY TEAM UPDATE



When you have a chance, check out HCLC's historic display case— items were recently polished and arranged beautifully. Thanks to Hannah Scholze for stopping in to arrange the items. We also updated the framed images of all

our pastors and included name plates and years! They were beautifully done by The Frame Gallery. These framed pictures are hanging right next to the display case! Stop by and reflect on the amazing history of Halfway Creek Lutheran Church.

FINANCIAL UPDATES

We've been doing what we can to keep everyone informed about how the finances of our church, trying things from posting reports in the monthly newsletter, to including the numbers in our weekly E-news. But sometimes those numbers just get lost or become meaningless. So, here you will find one of what will be a periodic report of where we are. Hopefully simple and clear, and spaced out enough that it creates a good snapshot.

First the good about our extra projects!

By the end of April we fully funded our repairs project for our building of \$37,645!

And by the end of June, our Youth Group raised just over \$11,100 for their trip to New Orleans with various fundraisers that have reached out and engaged the community. Thank you, everyone, for your support!

Where we stand for the regular stuff:

You can see in the charts on this page and the next page where our giving has been short. To balance our checkbook, rental income and fees have been helpful, and we have used money from our reserves (which are not on any charts in the newsletter). By the end of May, we used **\$8,200** of our reserves leaving a balance of \$22,501.86.

Thank you for your attention to our church's finances. If you are considering giving a gift this summer, please know that it will be very appreciated! Summer tends to be a lower time of giving, and making up for the beginning of the year, or setting us up well for the summer, is a wonderful, faithful, and very appreciated act of generosity.

	<u>Total Offering*</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Difference</u>
January-24	\$10,466.00	\$16,888.24	-\$6,422.24
February-24	\$14,996.75	\$19,778.94	-\$4,782.19
March-24	\$16,901.55	\$18,997.07	-\$2,095.52
April-24	\$11,649.00	\$17,423.61	-\$5,774.61
May-24	\$11,480.00	\$20,764.22	-\$9,284.22
Year To Date Total	\$65,493.30	\$93,852.08	-\$28,358.78

*Total Offering includes electronic, envelope and loose offering but does not include any rent income.

FINANCIAL UPDATES

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Halfway Creek Dedicated Funds

5/31/2024

	<u>Balance</u>
Liturgy/Music*	\$1,498.83
WELCA*	\$3,453.19
Undesignated Memorials	\$6,130.74
Keith Krause Memorial	\$3,154.98
Sabbatical Reserve	\$3,210.39
Bibles	\$500.00
Quilters	\$735.83
Windows	\$100.00
Building Repairs	\$14.77
Sunday School Children & Youth	\$109.65
Confirmation	\$22.13
Parsonage	\$263.86
Parsonage Security Deposit	\$1,000.00
Parsonage Property Taxes	\$1,409.95
Technology Fund	\$1,000.00
Income for Lift Rental	\$96.50
Subtotal	\$22,700.82
Interest	\$93.40
Ending Balance	\$22,794.22

*\$628.81 remaining balance - designated for new microphones

WE ARE LOOKING FOR COUNTERS

Each Sunday we have volunteers count the offering, place it in a bank bag and drop it off at Park Bank in Holmen. Each counter commits to volunteer one Sunday a month. You would count with another HCLC member. This summer, with only one worship service, would be a great time for new people to learn this role. Please prayerfully consider volunteering as a counter.

Email Jodi Anderson at jodi.anderson@halfwaycreek.org to volunteer. Thank you!

SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Thank to all who attended the La Crosse Area Synod Assembly this year! Great speakers, fellowship, food and fabulous weather for worship! Bette Pedretti has put together a summary from the weekend. Read on for this great information:



La Crosse Area Synod Assembly 2024

The Synod Assembly was a packed couple of days with a lot of information and stimulating discussion. There are handouts from the Synod Assembly on the bulletin board and buffet in the gathering space if you would like more information.

There were 7 resolutions voted on. The following resolutions encourage active participation by our congregation.

1. Care for Creation Resolution: Basically an invitation for synod congregations to demonstrate their devotion to caring for God's creation through tangible acts, selecting specific measures suggested by the Creation Care Team. Urging congregations to **raise up at least one creation care leader** to be a part of synod network people working to share education and planning for future creation work and calling on the appropriate synod committee to launch an initiative encouraging all synod congregations to develop and submit affirmations for care of creation, and outlining a Care of Creation Plan. Rec-

ommended the theme for 2025 Synod Assembly to be caring for the climate of creation.

2. World Hunger Resolution: La Crosse Area Synod will bring to a close our **Water Is Life** focus by Advent 2024. Throughout this year and 2025, they are celebrating 50 years of ELCA World Hunger. They are encouraging congregations and members to participate in World Hunger in meaningful ways in their settings, with funds raised going to the general work of ELCA World Hunger or a project of their choice. Urging congregations of the synod to **raise up at least one hunger leader** to be a part of the synod network of people who will work together to share education and planning for future hunger work led by the synod subcommittee.

There were many reports from throughout the Synod, all doing remarkable work. There were a wide variety of breakout sessions also. To get more information on what is going on in the Synod, the website is www.lacrosseareasynd.org.

Take-a ways from the breakout sessions:

The Climate of Creation/Becoming a Cool Green Congregation

We were charged from the beginning of time to care for God's creation. Have we done a good job?

We all need to start somewhere, doing something is better than not doing anything.

What can we do as an individual and/or congregation? Here are some suggestions:

-Reduce our food waste and eat sustainably. Buy less excess. Compost your food waste.

-Reduce energy use. Use cold water for laundry and other tasks. Install a smart thermostat, you can program to turn down at night or when you are not at home.

-Rethink transportation. Drive less, combine your trips for errands etc. Carpool-even if it's just once a week.

-Reduce, reuse and recycle. Buy less. Second-hand items save energy and reduce waste. Buy products made with recycled content.

-Preserve and protect the natural world. Plant trees and support organizations that do. Don't use chemicals on plants.

-Go electric. Consider replacing your car with a hybrid or electric.

-Contact our elected officials. Be an example to others of caring for creation.

Synod Lay Pastoral Care Network—Assuring That Your Congregation Always Provides Quality Pastoral Care

There is a shortage of Pastors, long pastoral vacancies and sometimes frequent vacancies. A grant was obtained to launch a Lay Pastoral Care Network of trained lay pastoral care people, using the Befrienders Ministry. This is a 40 year old national ecumenical ministry providing a training program and ongoing support so

congregations can provide listening, prayerful ministry of care. A training session will begin this fall.

Hello Isn't Enough

How do we engage new people in our church? We need to be more intentional in welcoming others, inviting others to participate in our ministries within the church. We also need to be intentional in thanking our church staff, council and leader!

There is no such thing as a stable church anymore—we are either shrinking or growing. The way we talk about our church to ourselves or others is very important. We can look at all the things/people that are no longer there OR we can look at who is there, the ministries that are happening and the people who are yet to come. If we are small—we have a lot of room to grow! Our mindset is very important.

The church has layers of participants:

Community-interfaith relationships with other churches, neighbors, local business owners

Crowd—those that come to community events, may attend Easter and Christmas service

Congregation—come once a month (not necessarily members), give regularly, may have kids in youth group

Committed—come 2 times a month or more, volunteer in the church

Core-leaders, staff

The idea is to try to move some participants of each of the groups to the next level of involvement. There were many examples of how to do that.

As a church we need to look different or tell our story of who we are in a more bold way.

Instead of saying "All are welcome" would it be better to say "We welcome all", which then puts the onus back on the congregants to fulfill that welcome.

OUTDOOR WORSHIP



This summer we'll have outdoor worship once a month! We had a beautiful evening of worship on June 26. The breeze kept most of the mosquitos and gnats away. We learned some Camp music and were reminded that we are all the same even during our stormy times, beloved children of God. Amen.



Worship outdoors at Whispering Pines
 Wednesday July 27 and August 28 at 7 PM

Summer means vacations. Please check your E-news for updates on office hours. For Pastoral Care July 2-7 contact Pr. Joe Iverson at 608-865-0203; July 14-22 contact Pr. Emma Grinde at 515-203-1915; all other days contact the office or Pastor Chris Sesevold at 608-397-1578. Have a great summer!

YOUTH GATHERING UPDATE

It's finally here! The Youth Gathering group: Jillian, Ema, Olivia, Anna, Gracie, Tonya, Jodi and Pastor Chris will depart La Crosse train station on Sunday, July 14th after worship and will return on Monday, July 22st. Please keep them in your prayers. May the Holy Spirit open their hearts and minds and fill them with God's goodness.

"We are created to be disciples, to be sent out into the world to love our neighbor just as we are loved by God"



Our last fundraiser:

Chicken Q—at Journey Lutheran

Tuesday, July 9th—11:30 a.m.—5:30 p.m.

Stop by on the 9th and get a great meal for \$15!

A LITTLE FUN—TIE DYING SHIRT FOR THE GATHERING



Thank you Bette for getting a Thrivent Grant for HCLC t-shirts, and tie dye shirts/kits for the Youth Gathering group! They will be wearing their shirts in New Orleans this month!



HALFWAY CREEK LUTHERAN CHURCH CEMETERY NEWS

We are familiar with the passage from Ecclesiastes 3 that starts: “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die . . .” The rhythms of life, to remember the life of your loved ones buried at Halfway Creek Lutheran Cemetery. Your purpose is to walk daily with God and trust that He is in charge. The photo below was taken in 1956 at the 100th anniversary of the church. The church replica in the middle of the picture represents where the original church stood in the cemetery.



It's never too early to purchase your final resting place. If you plan to be buried — or cremated and buried — in Halfway Creek Cemetery, it's to your benefit to choose your location and purchase your lot(s) well in advance of your demise. Contact your Halfway Creek Cemetery trustees:

Dan Brudahl, 608-526-6950;

Mark Witte, 608-317-0183;

Ruth Scholze, 608-797-9391

Your cemetery needs your support. Remember Halfway Creek Cemetery when you're making your charitable contributions — and please consider a donation to the cemetery.

JULY BIRTHDAYS

If your birthday is missing, please notify the office.

1	11	17	26
Braxtyn Jensen-Pralle	Heather Dokkebakken	Gracie Holley	Camden Lee
2	Jacob Wegner	19	28
Ryan Happel	Adria McDowell	Richard Gran	Erin Hale
4	12	Macie Larson	Lane Hansen
Alya Humphrey	David Chase	Darren Nelson	30
6	Leann Theisen	Alyssa Rink	Robyn Shisler
Ryan Beville	13	21	31
Ron Christensen	Jessie Booth	Bryson Happel	Kendall Yahnke
Brianna Cook	Jerin Rink	23	
Daryl Holley	14	Landry Hill	
Ann Stasiak	Mike Bramwell	Addison Wille	
8	Joel Oines	24	
DeeDee Kolbo	15	Joanne Nichols	
9	Cassandra Bandoli	25	
Bette Pedretti	16	Ella Gander	
10	Carolyn Bjerke		
Nola Anderson			



We pray for ... Kannon Happel; Ray Cook, Kathy Johnson's father; the family and friends of Rod Sutherland, Judy Campbell, Raymond Lee, Mike Nedoba and Curt Nedoba; Marjorie Lee, Jean Latham, Bob Loper, Joan Vaughn, Bridget Ferk, Thelma Severson, Lisa Herrera Evans, Katie Wier, Phoebe Kitzke, Gayle Kuespert, Beulah Sanders, Cary Heyer, Eric Erdman, Dawson Reed, Jenny Lee, Mary Dokkebakken, Karla Johnson, Alice Fonfara, Marie Jezova, Coats family

SERVING AND WORSHIP

		SEXTON	ALTAR GUILD	OFFERING COUNTERS
JULY 7	9:00 Pastor Tara Shilts	Mike Martin	Carrie Nicole	Rhonda Sonja
JULY 14	9:00	Stan Schwier	Bette P	Bette P Susan J
JULY 21	9:00	Archie	Nancy H.	Jodi Eide
JULY 24	Wed: 7:00p	Ushers/Communion Assistants needed		
JULY 28	9:00	David Chase	Bette P	Mike

Check out our Google Calendar now on the home page of our [website!](#)

Counters Needed

If you would be interested in helping count money one Sunday a month, please contact Jodi at jodi.anderson@halfwaycreek.org.

Volunteer to help at Worship

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

Giftng 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!

Thank you!



PowerPoint and AV-tech operators are so important to our worship volunteer team! We are looking for more people to learn how to help in this area! Sign-up in the office or email Shari: assistant@halfwaycreek.org.

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

WORSHIP

Through Sep 1
Summer Worship:
One Sunday service at
9:00 a.m.
and Wed. July 24 at 7
pm outdoors

OFFICE HOURS

Monday—By Appointment

Tuesday—9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Wednesday—9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Thursday—9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Friday—Closed

Saturday—Closed

Sunday—Worship

Office Closed:
July 4th, 17th, 18th

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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