



## West Clermont Lutheran Church

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**Office Hours:** Monday thru Friday  
8:30am-1:30pm

**Council President**  
*Randy Wiedenhoff- ProTem*  
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## February 2025 Newsletter



### From Pastor Mike: Tax Collectors and Sinners

I was reading through a devotional the other day and came across a passage in Mark that I really like so I thought I would share it with you in the newsletter. It comes from Mark chapter 2 verses 14 -17.

<sup>14</sup> “And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he rose and followed him.

<sup>15</sup> And as he reclined at the table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. <sup>16</sup> And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, ‘Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ <sup>17</sup> And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.’”

So, the Pharisees were upset that Jesus would hang out with the tax collectors and the sinners. They thought that any good Jewish person would not associate with “those” kinds of people. It is important to look at the historical perspective of tax collectors of the day. Tax collectors worked for the Roman government collecting various taxes and tolls. Jewish people thought of them as sinners of the first order. It was easy for tax collectors to inflate the amounts owed and to pocket the difference—so people believed them to be guilty of extortion. As agents of the Roman government, tax collectors were part of the system that keeps Israel in subjugation. Tax collectors also came into frequent contact with Gentiles, rendering them ritually unclean. Jesus was hanging out with the lowest of the low according to Jewish authorities.

Read this passage again. Think about which group you identify with. Are you more like the tax collectors and sinners, or are you more like the smug hypocrite Pharisees that are so sure they have it all figured out and have done everything right? I think I would rather think of myself as the tax collector and sinner crowd. I know that I am sinful. I know that I am not better than anyone else. And I know that there is nothing I can do to save myself. I must rely totally on Jesus. Regardless of who we are and how we may see ourselves, we are all in need of Jesus forgiveness. I am so thankful that Jesus chose to hang out with the tax collectors and the sinners! Amen.

Peace,  
*Pastor Mike*

Present: Randy Wiedenhoff, Tasha Massman, Kathy & Kyle Wander, Rodney Wagner, Teagan Schrader, Wendy Steffens, Diane Butikofer, Kenny Monteith, Pastor Mike Erickson.

Randy called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. Pastor Mike opened with prayer.

Motion made by to Rodney approve the agenda. Wendy second, motion carried.

Dec minutes read. Motion made Diane to approve the minutes. Diane second, motion carried.

**Treasurer report:** All routine receipts for December. Motion made by Kyle to approve the December invoices. Kenny second, motion carried. Noisy can from last quarter was the biggest funds raised going to Cindy Thias \$1,200. \$2,000 transferred from general fund back into property maintenance that was borrowed this fall. Motion made by Rodney to transfer \$2,000 that was borrowed from property maintenance from general. Kenny Monteith second, motion carried. Motion made by Tasha to approve December treasurer report. Diane second, motion carried.

**Pastor's Report:** Boiler still functioning and plugging along. Confirmation starts next week. Christmas Eve Service attendance was a record thus far service for Pastor Mike.

### **Old Business/Committee Reports:**

#### **A. Budget for 2025**

a. Final adjustments.

**B. Annual Meeting** is on January 19, 2025 with January 26<sup>th</sup> as the snow date. Updated copies budget will be available in the office this week. Final adjustments have been adjusted until the annual meeting. Rodney made motion to approve proposed 2025 budget. Wendy second, motion carried.

a. **Annual Reports** will be available by Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup>.

**C. Installation of Council** will be on Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup>.

**D. Lent 2025-** Pastor Mike is in the planning steps to have our own lent services in 2025.

### **New Business**

- A. **Flag Replacement-** Rodney donated new flags that were installed outside recently.
- B. **Noisy Can** recipient for 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, 2025- Upon recipient approval of JoAnn Bishop. Kenny made a motion, Teagan second, motion carried.
- C. **Nominating Committee-** Tasha Massman, Isaiah Ruckdashel and Wendy Steffens. Any nominating names will let Deb know to put on the ballot.
- D. **Christmas Decorations Removal-** No epiphany service will be held next week. Plan to take down Christmas decorations after this Sunday after church.

### **Announcements & Important Dates**

- A. **Copper Creek Service** is Wed., January 8<sup>th</sup> @ 10:30am.
- B. **Pr. Liz Bell** from the Synod will be at the **February 2025 Council Meeting**.
- C. **Quilting** resumes on Tuesday, January 7<sup>th</sup> @ 9am.
- D. **Senior Fun Day** is January 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> from 2-4pm.
- E. **Sunday School** resumes on Sunday, January 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **Closing Prayer/Adjourn**

Motion made by to Tasha adjourn at 6:38 p.m. Diane second, motion carried. We closed with the Lord's Prayer.



**West Clermont Lutheran Church Annual Meeting  
January 19, 2025**

**Present: 31**

Randy Wiedenhoff called the meeting to order at 10:30 am. Pastor Mike opened with prayer. Motion made by June Swenson to adopt agenda. Marcia Wiedenhoff second, motion carried.

Motion made Kay Schrader by to approve reading the 2024 annual meeting minutes. Jean Hoeck second, motion carried.

**Treasurer Report-** Kathy Wagner pointed out the payroll program has been updated, expense report does show taxes included. Motion made Teagan Schrader to approve treasurer report. Aric Steffens second, motion carried.

**Audit committee-** Denise Nelson and Marcia Wiedenhoff stated that books were in good order, everything looked good. Motion made by Aaron Steffens to approve audit report. Kenny Monteith motion carried.

**Election of Council and Committee Members:**

**Church council:** Jed Dean, Stacy Cummings, Aric Steffens

**Youth council member:** Lainey Donnelly

**Nominating committee:** Randy Wiedenhoff, Diane Butikofer, Kyle Wander

**Parish Education:** Kirstin Nelson-Lerch, Tasha Massman

**Property Management:** Kenny Butikofer, Ralph Hoeck

**Auditing Committee:** Marcia Wiedenhoff & Aaron Steffens

**Worship & Arts:** Kay Schrader

**Memorial & Scholarship:** Marcia Wiedenhoff, Wendy Steffens

Synod assembly delegates- June Swenson, male & youth are open yet. June 7, 2025 in Cedar Falls.

Ralph Hoeck made motion to call for unanimous ballot. Jean Hoeck second the motion.

**Unfinished Business:**

**Solar Panels:** Discussion was had on this large capital venture on the two quotes from Ken's Electric and Walvatne Electric that we got in 2024. Current balance in the solar fund \$2,484. Roof fund \$18,270. This project quoted in 2024 was roughly \$30,000. Roof would need to be replaced prior to putting solar panel. Our congregation will focus to host fundraiser efforts for this project. Need to get new roof & solar quotes for estimates. Will need to check insurance riders for the roof project on steel vs. shingles.

**Topics of Consideration:**

Proposed budget for 2025.

Budget was dropped from 2024. Custodian hours are capped weekly at 6 hours. With ability to contact council based on events being held. Organist wages have increased in our area. 2025 wages increasing organist & secretary. Bob Swenson made a motion to approve the proposed budget. Kay Schrader second, motion carried.

**Other Business:**

SOTH video was reviewed and their efforts of giving different events like lent service, or elect noisy can offering. SOTH does organize back pack program start of school & Christmas for kids. WELCA has support SOTH events of hog roast, quilt auction.

Giving tree. In the past we have sponsored two families in Fayette County working with Fayette County Parent Share and Support. We are given a specific “needs” and “wants” list from families chosen for us. The list is specific to that individual and everything is coded so the families remain anonymous. Tags are generated from this list, trying to have an average cost range of \$10-\$25. That being said, it is up to the individual who takes a ticket to decide how much they want to spend. The Giving Tree is a voluntary event. The congregation will continue to commit to this project. Deb will shop if you wish to donate money.

Made a motion to adjourn the annual meeting. Al Steffens/ Kayleen Schrader  
 Closed with the Lord’s Prayer.  
 Adjourn 11:44am.



**WELCA Board did not meet in January**

**Sunday coffee Schedule:** January – Sarah. February – Mary March - Ruth.  
**2025 Yearly Tasks:** Coffee Hour Area-Mary. Kitchen: Ruth. Flowers/plants & Seasonal Décor: Sarah  
**Altar Duties:** January-April, 2025- Ruth  
**Next Meeting:** February 5, 2025 @ 1:00pm  
**Submitted:** Marcia Wiedenhoff, Board President/Secretary.



**Worship Assistants- February, 2025**

DATE	READER	ACOLYTE	COMMUNION	BREAD
*2/2	Stephanie Spain	Lainee Steffens	Stephanie Spain	Stephanie Spain
2/9	Mark Nelson	Josh Dirksen		
2/16	Diane Butikofer	Kyla Massman		
*2/23	Karen Miller	Ryan Dean	Kathy Wander	Linda Hyde

**February Ushers: Vince Spain, Greg Larson and Kyle Wander**



- |                         |                        |                         |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 02/03 Swenson LaVerne   | 02/06 Dean Nora        | 02/07 Hyde Dean         |
| 02/07 Ruckdashel Jaynee | 02/09 Guyer Deborah    | 02/09 Nelson Judy       |
| 02/10 West Karen        | 02/11 Wagner Diane     | 02/13 Erickson Mark     |
| 02/13 Wilker Jeanette   | 02/15 Guyer Jessica    | 02/15 Phillips Benjamin |
| 02/16 Severson Ray      | 02/17 Bassett Declan   | 02/17 Bassett Raleigh   |
| 02/19 Hyde Linda        | 02/19 Yauslin Marlene  | 02/20 Lerch Declan      |
| 02/20 Sampson Gladys    | 02/21 Dirksen Isabella | 02/23 Stevenson Jakobi  |
| 02/27 Amundson Albert   |                        |                         |



Please keep the family and friends of Lois Miller in your thoughts and prayers. Lois passed away on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Funeral services for Lois will be held at West Clermont on Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 11am with visitation prior to service.



**Offerings: December 24, 2024 – January 19, 2025**

**Tuesday-Christmas Eve, December 24, 2024**      **Attendance: 127**

Loose: \$190.00      Copies: 4.00  
Regular: \$30.00      Christmas: \$980.00

Noisy Can: \$65.73  
**Total General Fund: \$1,269.73**

**Sunday, December 29, 2024**      **Attendance: 39**

Christmas: \$100.00      Loose: \$38.00  
Regular: \$4,065.00      Noisy Can: \$27.20

Custodial Supplies - Rebate from Clorox: \$93.17

**Total General Fund: \$4,323.37**  
Roof: \$180.00

**Sunday, January 5, 2025**      **Attendance: 54**

Loose: \$21.00      Noisy Can: \$144.47  
Regular: \$890.00      Flow Thru (pic \$): \$15.00

**Total General Fund: \$1,070.47**  
Bldg. Fund (Roof): \$90.00

**Sunday, January 12, 2025**      **Attendance: 51**

Loose: \$38.00      Noisy Can: \$141.85  
Regular: \$2,680.00      Basement Rental: \$50.00

**Total General Fund: \$2,909.85**  
Bldg. Fund (Roof): \$90.00

**Sunday, January 19, 2025**      **Attendance: 31**

Loose: \$6.00      Noisy Can: \$528.32

Regular: \$3,380.00  
**Total General Fund: \$3,914.32**  
Bldg./Roof: \$90.00



**Youth Clothing Drive.**

Luther League and Confirmation students are organizing a clothing drive to donate to Shepherd of the Hills in St. Olaf. They are currently accepting Spring, Summer Clothing, Newborn-Adult sizes for boys/girls/men/women; Shoes, including flip flops, sandals, sneakers and shoes with open toes.

When donating, please make sure items are either new or used in good condition (clean; no holes/tears; zippers work; no missing buttons, etc.)

**Sunday, February 23, 2025- “Step up and share the Love”**  
Donate shoes and sandals this Sunday!

**Sunday, March 2, 2025- “Warm hearts start with warm feet”**  
Bring NEW socks and undergarments to give this Sunday!

**Sunday, March 9, 2025- “Self-Care Sunday”**  
Help us spread hygiene and hope - donate hygiene items this Sunday!

**Sunday, March 16, 2025- “Clothing Care Sunday”**  
Change a life with kindness - donate clothing this Sunday!

Luther League/Confirmation students will volunteer at Shepherd of the Hills the night of March 19 and deliver the items collected from this drive. All items donated are appreciated!







*February reminds us of love. Love for the Lord, love for our partners, and love for friends and family. We offer you this story of the power of love between a mother and daughter.*

**“Without Amy’s support, I would still be an addict, and I wouldn’t be where I am today,” said Michelle, an LSI client.**

Michelle was struggling with substance abuse, legal issues, and mental health issues when she found LSI therapist Amy Davis back in 2021.

“God helps us in ways we don’t always want him to,” said Michelle. “When the coronavirus pandemic hit, I lost my job. The unemployment lines were long at the time, so we went several months without a paycheck, so I decided to get creative with my finances. I started selling drugs and was later arrested with a large quantity of drugs. They came in, took my kid, and I went to jail. After that, I was referred to work with Amy at LSI.”

Michelle and Amy worked through Michelle’s childhood trauma, processing the significant losses in her life due to drug overdose and death. Amy helped Michelle work on building a positive support system, a list of future goals, and a relationship with her daughter, Rachel.

“Rachel and I had a lot of problems when we entered therapy because I was a drug addict, and there was a lot of broken trust between us,” said Michelle. “LSI therapists helped us rebuild that trust and helped show her the progress I had made when she couldn’t see it herself.”

Rachel, in therapy as well, has been seeing LSI Therapist Chelsea Zaragoza since 2019. In addition to one-on-one therapy sessions with their respective therapists, Michelle and Rachel also do family therapy sessions with Amy and Chelsea. These sessions help the mother and daughter have time set aside to talk about issues they are having in a healthy, productive way.

“Michelle has had a lot of struggles, loss, and a lot of people who didn’t believe in her, and her daughter was one of them,” said Amy Davis, LSI Therapist. “We have worked hard doing family and individual therapy to bring those two back together, and it has worked. Where they are now, I don’t think I’ve seen a mother-daughter relationship as healthy as the two of them are.”

Today, Michelle has her daughter back in her home, she is thriving as a general manager at a coffee shop, and she is going to school for substance abuse counseling. She just received her one-year sobriety chip, and she has a good support system.

**“To see how far Michelle has come since I met her is truly remarkable,” said Amy. “She built the ladder, and she climbed out.”**

“I was a mess when I first came to LSI,” said Michelle. “Now, I’m sober, in college, have a high-paying job, and have my daughter back. Amy believed in me when no one else did, not even myself. She gave me hope.”

For more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI’s Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at [Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org](mailto:Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org) or 563-676-2065.

*LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at [LSIowa.org](http://LSIowa.org) and [facebook.com/LSI.iowa](https://facebook.com/LSI.iowa).*



## **WELCA’s Homemade Soup Sale**

Sunday, February 23 after worship  
Quart and pint size available.  
A wide variety to choose from.



## **Prayer List**

**Requested:** Karen Kohls, Jeanette (Davisson) Cain, Don Erickson, Jake Noggle, Karen Guyer, Ardell Fortune, Julie Albertson, Larry Kohls, Sarah Updegraff-Murray, Eric Clubb, Bill and Cindy Thias, JoAnn Bishop.  
**Assisted Living, Nursing Homes & Shut-Ins:** Betty Erickson, Bud Siebrecht, Karen Follett, Judy Nelson, Madonna Stumme, Doris Guyer, Evelyn Tague.  
**In the Military:** Jeff Kleppe, Nathan Guyer, Kennedy White.

# Shepherd of the Hills Ministries

## NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2025



*And that is a “wrap”! Christmas for Kids is now completed, Thank you does not seem to cover the outpouring of support we received for this project. The donations are greatly appreciated. The quilts were beautiful, the books were a great assortment and let’s just say... I may have tested some of the pretty cool toys! I can only imagine how the kids will feel opening up these gifts for Christmas. All of you should feel a little joy knowing you were a big part of a brighter Christmas for these families!*

### Clothing Center Updates:

*We will not be accepting any Christmas items until next year. Winter items will only be accepted from now until March. We appreciate a scheduled day for your donations to maintain the flow and schedule volunteers accordingly. Just a side note... My mom has decided to take a small step back from volunteering so if you are interested in volunteering, please call the office.*

### Shepherd Conference News:

*Congratulations to Pastor Michael Ashman (St. Paul Lutheran and St. John Lutheran- both in Guttenberg) on the anniversary of his ordination on January 3, 1993.*

*I will be working on the Conference Assembly paperwork. If you are wanting to serve on the SOTH board, we will have openings for secretary (2 yr term) property (2 yr term) and the Synod Representative (3 yr term). If you have an interest in joining the board, please let me know by January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025.*

The **Operating Fund** pays the utilities, insurance on the building, supplies, salaries and Lawn/Snow Care.

The **Crisis Fund** is used to help families with emergency rent or utilities and our sponsored events throughout the year

Please utilize the **MEMO LINE**

on your check to specify

Crisis or Operating Fund!

Please indicate what church you are from as well to provide better bookkeeping.

### IMPORTANT EVENTS/DATES:

**Conference Assembly  
February 16th @ 2pm  
(snow date of Feb. 23)  
St. Paul, Volga**

\*Any event may be subject to change

### Shepherd of the Hills:

Heather Hageman

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**Business Hours: Monday-Friday  
9am-12pm and 1pm-4 pm**





 **Noisy Can Offering** for 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter will go to JoAnn Bishop to help with expenses incurred during this time of illness.

 **Direct Deposit Offering** is available for your weekly/monthly offering. Simply contact the office for account and routing information. It's fast and easy!

 **Luther's Nordic Choir 2025 Tour** kicks off with performance @ the Luther College Center for Faith and Life on Thursday, Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> @ 7:30pm. No charge for admission.

 **LL "Souper Bowl" Collection** will take place on Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup>. This will replace the Noisy Can on this day. Funds on this day will be donated to Open Hands Food Pantry.

 Senior Game Day is Wednesday, February 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, from 2-4pm. Please come for fellowship, snacks, cards, games, and FUN! Bring a friend!

 **Thank you** to Tasha Massman, Wendy Steffens, Isaiah Ruckdashel, and Teagan Schrader for serving on the West Clermont Council.

 **2025 Summer Camp Program Guides** are now available in the entryway downstairs. Early bird registration deadline is February 28<sup>th</sup>. ***West Clermont Camperships are available.*** Please contact the church office for the form.

 **Ash Wednesday** is March 5<sup>th</sup>.