

LIVING WORDS

LIVING WORD LUTHERAN CHURCH

438.9672 CHURCH

AUGUST 2026 NEWSLETTER



WHAT'S INSIDE



Karen Kiefer
Rally Sunday/Thank You
VBS/LCMC Gathering
Playground
Thank You's
VBS

Council President/Noisy Change
Pastor's Letter
Impact the World Minutes
Bible Study/Women's Fellowship
Men's Retreat Recap
Devotional

Thank You
Women of the Word Gathering
Council Minutes May
Council Minutes June
August Calendars

A Heartfelt Thank You to Karen Kiefer

On Sunday, June 21, our church family had the privilege of honoring Karen Kiefer for her years of faithful service and dedication to the children and ministries of Living Word Lutheran Church.

Karen has been a wonderful blessing to our congregation. Whether helping with Vacation Bible School, sharing her time and talents with Dynamic Disciples, lending a hand in the kitchen, participating in Bible studies, or serving through various mission opportunities, Karen has always answered God's call with a willing and joyful heart.

For many of our children, Karen has been a source of encouragement, kindness, and guidance. Her gentle spirit, warm smile, and genuine love for others have touched countless lives. Through her faithful service, she has helped nurture the faith of our young people while also strengthening our church family as a whole.

While we are saddened to see Karen move closer

to family, we are grateful for the many memories, friendships, and acts of service she leaves behind. We thank God for the blessing she has been to our congregation and pray that He surrounds her with comfort, joy, good health, and many new opportunities to share His love in her new community.

Karen, thank you for the countless ways you have served, encouraged, and cared for the people of Living Word. You will be greatly missed, but you will always remain a cherished part of our church family. If you would like to send Karen a card or note, her new address is:

Karen Kiefer

1425 15th Ave. SE, Apt. 222
Aberdeen, SD 57401
Cell: (605) 949-1394

May God bless you, Karen, and keep you in His care as you begin this new chapter.



YOUTH

Rally Sunday & Youth Ministry Kickoff!

Get ready—it's time for a new year of faith, fun, friendship, and learning at Living Word Lutheran Church!

Rally Sunday is September 13, and we can't wait to welcome everyone back as we kick off another exciting year of Sunday School. Join us at 8:45 am for snacks, followed by music, opening activities, and time together as we begin our new season of growing in faith.

There will be something for everyone! Children and youth will gather in age-appropriate groups, including:

- Preschool
- Kindergarten–1st Grade
- 2nd–4th Grade
- 5th–8th Grade
- High School

Whether you're returning or joining us for the first time, we look forward to seeing your smiling faces and sharing God's love together. Bring a friend and come be part of the fun!

DYNAMIC DISCIPLES RETURNS!

The excitement continues as **Dynamic Disciples resumes on Wednesday, September 16!** This beloved after-school ministry is a wonderful opportunity for children to grow in faith through music, activities, lessons, games, and friendships.

NEW YOUTH GROUP LAUNCHING!

We are especially excited to announce a brand-new **Youth Group for students in 5th grade and up!**

Our first gathering will be **September 16 from 5–7:00 pm**. Youth will enjoy supper together, play games, and spend time building friendships in a fun and welcoming environment.

The group will meet monthly for a meal, service projects, mission opportunities, special events, and activities designed to help youth connect with one another and strengthen their faith.

This is an exciting time for our children and youth ministries, and we invite everyone to come and be part of what God is doing at Living Word. We can't wait to begin another amazing year together!

THANK YOU



THANK YOU FOR
Celebrating
WITH US!

Thank you everyone for your support, gifts, quilt, and to the church for their scholarships. We are grateful to be apart of such a caring church family and are thankful for the prayers over the years. Thank you again for everything!

-Ryan + Sean Keeton

LWLC FAMILY

...more VBS



Farley Fest Parade



Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ

LCMC Annual Gathering & Convention

October 4-7, 2026 at Lutheran Church of Hope (West Des Moines, IA)

Early bird registration pricing ends on 7-31-26, so register today!

<https://www.lcmc.net/annual-gathering>

LWLC FAMILY



A New Place for Laughter, Friendship, and Faith

What happens when a church family comes together with generous hearts, willing hands, and a love for children? You get a playground filled with laughter, smiles, and countless opportunities to make memories!

We are excited to share that our new church playground is now complete and already bringing joy to children and families. This wonderful addition is much more than swings and slides—it is a place where friendships are built, families gather, and conversations about faith, church, and the love of Jesus naturally take place.

This project would not have been possible without the generous memorial gift that helped fund the playground, along with the many individuals who donated their time, talents, resources, and financial support. We are truly blessed by the generosity of our church family and community.

A special thank you goes to **Kyle Schwandt, Tim DeJong, and Scott Maas** for preparing the site and generously loaning equipment to help make this dream a reality. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to **Tim, Sue, Scott, Adam, Alex, Kyle, Melanie, Claire, and Bob** for helping unload and spread the mountains of mulch. If you've seen the size of the mulch pile, you know that was no small task!

Their hard work turned a construction site into a welcoming place for children to play.

We would also like to give a huge shout-out to our biggest cheerleader, **Pastor Melanie**, whose love for our church families and children shines brightly in everything she does. Her enthusiasm and encouragement helped keep the excitement going every step of the way.

And the project isn't finished yet! We are incredibly grateful to everyone who has donated toward the picnic tables and benches that will complete the area. These additions will provide comfortable spaces for parents, grandparents, and friends to gather while children play, creating even more opportunities for fellowship, conversation, and community.

As we watch children race down slides, swing toward the sky, and fill the air with laughter, we are reminded of God's blessings and the importance of creating spaces where families can connect. We look forward to seeing this playground become a place where memories are made, friendships grow, and God's love is shared for years to come.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this joyful project possible. Together, we have created something truly special!

THANK
YOU

Dear Friends

It has been a difficult time
for me as of late and I am
still missing Kay so much. I want
to say thank you to all of you
who drove all that way ^{to Ferns} for Kay's
funeral. I counted over 30 milbank
people there. WOW! you blew
my socks off. I was deeply moved.

You are my family and I love you
all so much. I have such fond
memories of milbank. So sad to
leave. Thank you. Thank you! Thank
you! you are wonderful.
Jesus is faithful. Kent

Thanks for all your cards,
calls, and prayers. ~~the~~ ^I felt
your support & concern

Thank you guys for the quilt i really appreciate it!!

Love - Lowell Magish

Rainforest Falls VBS: Exploring the Nature of God

What an incredible week we shared at Rainforest Falls Vacation Bible School, held May 31–June 4 at Living Word Lutheran Church! Throughout the week, nearly 50 children explored the nature of God and discovered just how deeply they are loved by Him.

Through lively music, engaging skits, Bible adventures, crafts, games, and hands-on learning experiences, children were immersed in the beauty of the rainforest while learning important truths about God. They discovered that God is our Creator, that He knows us completely, that He is our refuge, that He is love, and that His promises last forever.

One of the highlights of the week was a special visit from Bramble Park Zoo. The zoo staff brought a van full of fascinating animals for the children to see, learn about, and even touch. Amazingly, even the three snakes didn't scare anyone away! The children were captivated by the opportunity to experience God's amazing creatures up close.

Another favorite event was Water Night, where children—and even a few adventurous adults—got completely soaked while enjoying an evening filled with laughter, fun, and friendship. It was wonderful to watch new friendships form as everyone splashed, played, and celebrated together.

The week concluded with our VBS Program on Thursday evening. If you were unable to attend, we encourage you to visit the church Facebook page to watch the program and experience the joy for yourself. The sanctuary was filled with smiles, laughter, music, and the enthusiasm of our little VBS "monkeys" as they shared all they had learned throughout the week.

We were also honored to celebrate a special commissioning ceremony for Hunter Reede and TJ

Wojahn following the program. These two young men have been tremendous role models and inspirations for the children of Living Word Lutheran Church through their faithful service in Vacation Bible School, Dynamic Disciples, and Sunday School. We pray God's richest blessings upon them as they continue their ministry journey.



Our local mission project this year supported Building Our Families. Thanks to the generosity of our congregation and VBS families, we raised over \$200 and collected a large cart overflowing with supplies for infants and young children. What a wonderful way for our children to put God's love into action!

A heartfelt thank you goes out to every teacher, helper, group leader, skit participant, musician, pianist, sound and lighting volunteer, kitchen worker, and countless others who helped make Rainforest Falls such a success. Your time, energy, creativity, and love made this week possible.

Finally, thank you to the congregation of Living Word Lutheran Church for your prayers, donations, encouragement, and support. Together, we created a week filled with faith, joy, learning, and unforgettable memories for our children. We are truly blessed by your partnership in helping our young people grow in God's love.

Until next year, thank you for helping make Rainforest Falls VBS an amazing adventure!

Come, Get Involved

GREETINGS EVERYONE,

As we begin the month of August, it is usually a signal that summer is starting to wind down and a new school year is about to begin. It also means that certain activities and programs that take a break during the summer will resume shortly.

Here at Living Word, there are many opportunities to get involved, so please watch the bulletins, read the newsletter, or stop by the office to learn about the ways you can serve others, be a part of a ministry project, or simply grow in knowledge and faith as you study God's Word. Small group Bible studies will begin again this fall, a weekly prayer team has started meeting, and there are plans to bring back something similar to the once-loved "Food & Fellowship" gatherings. More information will be coming soon.

Although the Call Committee has received few applicants so far, they have been busy reaching out to pastors, seminaries, and people they know as well as reviewing their website posting. How can you help? Pray.

Let us not grow tired of praying and anticipating

that God will provide a pastor for Living Word. We can continue to pray that God works within the heart of the one He has already chosen for us, that He prepares us to be ready to receive him or her, and that He helps us trust His timing, knowing it is always perfect.

It's hard to wait and feel like we are doing nothing or to feel as though the circumstances around us are bleak. It is tempting to want to figure it out ourselves and just "get it done." But waiting upon the Lord is not sitting idle. Rather, it can be a time of focusing our attention on God's character and promises and of having a patient, confident trust in the Lord.

As we move into a new season together, may we continue to encourage one another, serve one another with joyful hearts, and keep our eyes fixed on Christ. God has been faithful in the past, He is faithful today, and we can trust that He will continue to lead Living Word according to His perfect plan.

Have a blessed August!

Jackie Olson, Council President

OUTREACH

August Noisy Change

Noisy Change for the month of August will go to Building Our Families. This organization functions as a community hub that links families to the support they need. Rather than creating new systems, they connect and strengthen existing ones. They help families access services, stay engaged, and move between programs without falling through the cracks. This coordinated approach improves outcomes for families while reducing the strain on emergency, healthcare, and child welfare systems.



PASTOR'S LETTER



Freedom: God's Greatest Gift

"So, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." JOHN 8:36

DEAR CHURCH FAMILY OF LIVING WORD,

As we continue to celebrate 250 years in this great nation during 2026, we find ourselves reflecting on what our freedom really means to us.....

There are so many voices offering very differing opinions on what "Freedom" in today's world really means—most of which are found in some reference to the freedoms found in worldly things and activities.

As followers of Christ, we are called to a much higher and richer standard. We have been given the freedom to worship as we choose, and for that, we must be grateful and make every effort to protect that freedom. In 1 Peter 2:16, the apostle Peter gives us the framework for our daily lives when he said this: *"Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God."*

We must ask ourselves, "What is it God wants **ME** to do?" And, believe me, he has something in mind for all of us! We close each Sunday morning with the words, "The Lord asks, 'Whom shall I send?'" Our response is "Here am I, send me!" He is sending us, no matter our age, our strength, or our weakness

to "Plant A Seed" for him at every stage of our life. Many times, we know there is something we must do, and I fully believe it comes by the prompting of the Holy Spirit. We just need to be listening and discerning what he desires of us; then, we set out to make it happen!

Be reminded always of the words of the Apostle Paul in his writing to the Galatians 2:20, when he declared: *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

As we mark historic milestones for liberty throughout this 250th year, let us make a commitment to guard our faith and our religious freedoms. May we always use our voices to stand up for righteousness, truth, and grace.

Let us never take for granted the liberties we enjoy as citizens nor the ultimate eternal freedom we have received in Jesus Christ. Let us use our freedom as an open door to love and serve those around us in some new, effective way in this year of celebration!

*In Christian love, **Pastor Melanie***



IMPACT THE WORLD MINUTES



LWLC JULY 14, 2026 IMPACT MEETING REPORT

We are thankful for Hunter Reede and TJ Wojahn's successful mission trip and safe return from Vietnam and Cambodia this month where their team spread the Gospel of Christ to the people.

Requests were sent to the council to approve the following donations:

- \$1,600 to Central Global Vision for bathrooms and painting at the Network for Children Orphanage in Sierra Leone.
- \$2,500 to ALWM for water filtration systems
- \$2,000 for the education center in Cambodia.

Noisy Change was designated to Building Our

Families in August. In September Noisy Change will be given to Dr. Yeh for his work with Ebola in the Congo.

A discussion was held concerning providing a local mission for the community. Ideas would be welcomed.

The Impact Committee extends their thanks to the congregation for their generosity in support of the various mission projects of our church.

The Impact Committee will meet again on September 8 at 1:00 pm.

Vicki Strege

UPCOMING BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

1. Romans (15 weeks)
2. James (5 weeks)
3. Experiencing God (12 weeks) (book and study by Henry Blackaby)

All studies will start the week of September 7.

Sign up in the fellowship hall if you are interested in any of these opportunities.

Registration deadline:
August 19.



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY

"Gal Pals" – Once a month, a social event will be offered. Women can sign up every time or when it works for them. We will gather input each time from the group before planning the following month's event. Sign up in the fellowship hall if you are interested in attending.

First Event: Thursday, September 10
Shady Beach Restaurant
Dinner 5:30 pm

2026 Men's Retreat Recap

Seventy-four fathers, grandfathers, brothers, uncles, friends, and neighbors gathered at Christ the King Lutheran Church on Saturday, April 18, for the Augustana District's inaugural Men's Retreat—a day centered on faith, fellowship, and the freedom found in Christ. Under the theme "Prodigal: The Road Home," men of all ages revisited one of Jesus' most beloved parables through the lens of their vocation as husbands, fathers, sons, friends, and servants in the world.

From the opening worship service led by Pastors Steve Olcott and Brian Nehring alongside the worship team at Christ the King, to keynote presentations from Pastor Randy Freund, the day was filled with Gospel-centered teaching, honest conversation, encouragement, and practical wisdom for daily life. Attendees had the opportunity to participate in three breakout sessions, choosing from topics including "Faithful Parenting and Grandparenting,"

led by Pastor Randy Freund; "Facing Conflict," led by Augustana District Coordinator Pastor Aaron Deutsch; and a hymn sing led by Pastor Paul Koch.

More than anything, the retreat served as a reminder that no man walks alone. Christ continues to call sinners home, speaking forgiveness, restoring the weary, and strengthening His people for lives of service and love. Plans are already underway for next year's retreat, which will once again be hosted at Christ the King Lutheran Church on April 17, 2027.

A heartfelt thank-you goes out to our gracious hosts, speakers, volunteers, and especially Wendy Magruder for the countless behind-the-scenes efforts that helped make this first-ever Men's Retreat such a tremendous success. Mark your calendars now—we hope to see you there next year!



Devotional:

Yet I Will Rejoice: Hope in a Summer of Empty Spaces

School's out! Church life has waned (maybe): a new season. Vacations. Time with family and friends. Longer days to read. Relax. So much to be thankful for.

YET, the reasons to feel anything and everything (but thankful) are hard to ignore. Why is there so much sadness, longing, and annoyance in this tiny little YET? Our lives are overflowing, yet we feel empty. Summer is a slowdown, yet everything feels like a chore.

In full honesty, I don't spend a lot of time in the Old Testament without some prodding from The Table's youth. Maybe it feels too daunting, or hard to connect to today's life. But this past weekend, I stumbled on Habakkuk (thanks to my adult son—kids, they're wise and weirdly wonderful, sometimes) and was struck by the YET.

"Though the fig tree should not blossom,
nor fruit be on the vines,
the produce of the olive fail
and the fields yield no food,
the flock be cut off from the fold
and there be no herd in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the Lord..."
Habakkuk 3:17-18

Fig tree disaster. Barren fields. Hungry. Lonely. And still a reason to rejoice? (What was I saying about hard to relate?!)

YET. Is there really good news in a sea of heartbreaking headlines? Is it possible I never really felt the freedom in such a

simple, unwavering conjunction? Have you heard the promise of YET?

The world is going to deal us ugly hands: a family hearing the words "palliative care," marriages breaking, jobs sucking the life out

of us. Loneliness. Despair. Longing. Smiles masking the worry. Faking our way through our days (and nights). YET, God is there. In your empty. The bare. The devastating. The darkness. In whatever mess is left over at the end of a hard day, His goodness trumps whatever it is choking the life out of us.

This—this is the hope our hopeless is promised. We are weak, yet He is our strength. We doubt (a lot!), yet He gives us faith. It's not about us, what we do, but what has been done for us. For you. Wherever this word finds you, there is a YET for you.

This is a promise, not just some hollow platitude. So now, friends, as we head into a new season, let the YET bless you and keep you: light in the darkness, joy in the junk, reason to rejoice. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Pastor Erica Varcoe,
The Table Ministry





MISSION OPPORTUNITIES SHORT TERM

Impacting the World for Jesus Christ Through Short Term Missions

655 Phoenix Drive Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108

most@mostministries.org 734.994.7909 www.mostministries.org

June 30, 2026

Living Word Lutheran Church
101 E Northridge Ave
Milbank, SD 57252-1501

Dear Friends In Christ,

On behalf of our teams, I want to express my gratitude for your donation of supplies that make it possible for short term missionaries to serve throughout the world. We know it takes time and energy to collect and/or make supplies and then get them sent to MOST Ministries. We appreciate your efforts. Your kindness is more than just a gift - it's a vision of hope for those who have been living in a world out of focus.

While serving in Guatemala in May, the MOST Ministries team shared on their blog about their daily devotions together. They were discussing Matthew 5:14, "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden." They write, "Our morning started with a devotion discussing how we are called to be the light of the world. However, we cannot shine the light on our own, rather we must let God's light shine through us. Through our mission, God uses us, flawed but forgiven people, to be the light of Jesus for the people of Guatemala." Because of your support, this mission team was able to serve nearly 600 community members and deliver more than 800 pair of glasses.



Every lens, frame, case or witness bracelet you've contributed helps someone see their loved ones more clearly, read with ease, experience the beauty of the world in a new way or remember the Gospel message that was shared with them at the clinic. As the team in Tanzania was defriending about serving together, they agreed "the biggest blessing of the trip is the look in someone's eyes when they were able to see well for the first time."

Your generosity not only equips our teams with the tools they need, but also inspires us to serve with even greater compassion and dedication. You are a vital part of this mission, and the impact of your gift will be felt in every smile, every grateful tear, and every life changed. Thank you for partnering with us to bring the gift of sight to those in need. We are truly blessed to have you as part of our mission family.

Kelly Bone

734-929-1164

Business Manager and Volunteer Coordinator

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news, the good news of peace and salvation, the news that the God of Israel reigns! Isaiah 52:7 (NLT)

THE RESURRECTION



THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING



About Our Gathering

The resurrection of Jesus changes everything. Through baptism, we are united with Christ in his death and resurrection. Because Christ lives, we no longer live in fear, shame, or despair, but in freedom and promise. Join women from across the district as we gather around God's Word, prayer, worship, and fellowship to explore what it means to die and rise with Christ each day. Together we will reflect on how the resurrection shapes our identity, hope, relationships, and life together as God's faithful people.

Augustana District Fall 2026 Women of the Word Gathering

September 19, 2026

Resurrection Lutheran Church
1735 East Main Street – Mankato, MN 56001

AGENDA

9:00am: Registration and Coffee Fellowship 9:45am: Worship
3:00pm: Dismissal

WHY JOIN US?

*inspiring speakers – engaging breakout sessions
delicious luncheon – uplifting worship – real connections*

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Julie Smith



The Rev. Julie Smith is an author, speaker, theologian, mentor and currently serves as the national Service Coordinator of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ. An LCMC-certified and Augustana District-endorsed pastor, Julie is a graduate of

Gustavus Adolphus college in St. Peter, Luther Seminary in St. Paul, and widely sought after as a teacher and preacher. Along with serving on the faculty of St. Paul Lutheran Seminary, Julie travels thousands of miles across the United States each year proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 7TH

Questions? Contact Myrna Chamberlain at 605-290-3974 or myrnach@charter.net

The worship offering will be designated to the Madagascar Health & Wellness Project. Please make checks payable to Global Health Ministries.

PLACES TO STAY

Courtyard Marriott	Motel 6	TownePlace Suites
901 Raintree Road Mankato, MN 507-388-1234	1731 Premier Drive Mankato, MN 507-345-6666	911 Raintree Road Mankato, MN 507-344-1234

COST

In-person: \$25 | Individual Online: \$25 | Church Online: \$50

Send Registration & Payment To:

WOW Treasurer – c/o Gail Telecky
607 Bluff Street NE – Hutchinson, MN 55350

Pay checks to: Women of the Word



2026 WOW Gathering Registration Form

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State: _____
Email: _____
Phone Number: _____
Church Name: _____
Dietary Needs/Special Accommodations: _____

2026 WOW Gathering

September 19, 2026

Resurrection Lutheran Church
Mankato, Minnesota

COUNCIL MINUTES



LWLC COUNCIL MEETING REPORT MAY 13, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT: Pastor Melanie Reiners, President Jackie Olson, Laurie Maas, Tim DeJong, Deb Buttke, Sharon Hyde, Kyle Schwandt, David Kruger, Shannon Vietmeier and Julie Berger were present.

Jackie Olson opened with prayer.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Laurie made a motion to approve the agenda and Kyle seconded. Motion carried.

IMPACT REQUESTS: Jackie made a motion to approve the Impact Committee request of \$500 for any incidental expenses for Hunter and TJ for the Vietnam mission trip. Deb seconded and the motion carried. Laurie made a motion to approve a \$375 Impact request to ALWM for the reading glass program in Cambodia and Vietnam. Tim seconded and the motion carried. David made a motion to change our giving to Bible Alive to the Network for Children Orphanage per Impact request. Jackie seconded the motion; motion carried.

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS: June 7 communion assistants are Julie, Laurie, Shannon and Sharon.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Laurie made a motion to approve; Sharon seconded and the motion carried.

PASTOR'S REPORT: Pastor Melanie expressed thanks for being allowed time away from Living Word to do mission work in Sierra Leone. There will be a formal commission for Hunter and TJ at the May 31 service. Previous mission trip members Steve and Vicki Strege and Craig and Kippy Randleman will meet with Hunter and TJ to provide them formation on what to expect. Julie Smude will be speaking on June 21 during the church service. Ministerial is in full support of Building Our Families in the community. More information will follow in the months to come. Deb made a motion to approve the pastor's report; second by Laurie. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT/FINANCE REPORT: Shannon gave an overview of the financial report. The audit for 2025 was reviewed and recommendations discussed. David made a motion for Kelly, Shannon and Deb to talk about combining our three accounts into one account with sub-accounts. Also, they should provide

any other suggestions they may have to make easier work for themselves and more access to detailed reports if requested. They should bring a proposal to the July council meeting. Laurie seconded, and motion carried. Deb motioned to accept the Treasurer's report; seconded by Laurie. The motion carried.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT REPORT: The coffee machine is working properly; the wiring behind the coffee machine was the issue, and that has been fixed. The refrigerator will be checked as it does not appear to be cooling efficiently. Several of the kitchen drawers do not close tightly, and that will be checked into. No action will be taken regarding the purchase of an electric piano at this time. Laurie made a motion to approve the report and Sharon seconded. The motion carried.

WORSHIP & EVANGELISM REPORT: The June/July newsletter will be combined. There was nothing new to report this month.

YOUTH & EDUCATION REPORT: There are 49 children signed up for VBS. Support from the congregation has been very generous. Offerings during VBS will be used in supporting Building our Families. Preparation of ground work has begun for the playground. There has been a donation toward a bench for the playground. Discussion was had regarding adding a small bathroom to the Den and utilizing the storage side for an additional classroom/meeting area. David made a motion for a small committee to look at a plan proposal for renovation of the shed for youth and education and a separate storage shed. Tim seconded and the motion carried. Discussion was had regarding an education/youth group for grades 5th and up. Julie made a motion to approve the report with a second from Jackie. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS: The office will be closed on Friday, July 3rd, for the 4th of July holiday. Discussion was had regarding the need for 2 additional people to serve on the investment committee. The photocopy machine lease will be renewed. Craig Randleman has been added to the call committee.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: June 10 at 5:30 pm.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Newsletter items are due by May 22, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT: Kyle made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Laurie. The motion carried. The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Julie Berger, Council Secretary

COUNCIL MINUTES



LWLC COUNCIL MEETING REPORT JUNE 10, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT: Pastor Melanie Reiners, Jackie Olson, Shannon Vietmeier, Sharon Hyde, Laurie Maas, David Kruger, Tim DeJong, Deb Buttke, and Kyle Schwandt.

The meeting was called to order with an opening prayer by Pastor Melanie.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Laurie Maas made a motion to approve the agenda. Deb Buttke seconded the motion. Motion carried.

PASTOR'S REPORT: Pastor Melanie reported that the LCMC Annual Gathering will be held in Des Moines, Iowa, in October. Registration is due by September 10. Anyone interested in attending should contact the church office for additional information.

Pastor Melanie shared that the church has welcomed many visitors over the past several months. She has been sending personal notes to visitors as a way of extending hospitality and encouraging continued involvement.

She also reviewed the "Plant a Seed" initiative, which encourages members to invite others to worship, participate in church activities, and become more involved in the life of the congregation.

Plans are underway for a New Member Sunday in the coming months.

Council also recognized Dale Prisinger for creating beautiful metal room dividers for the church. Gloria, Marcia, and Karen H. provided fabric inserts that completed the project.

Kyle Schwandt made a motion to approve the Pastor's Report. Tim DeJong seconded the motion. Motion carried.

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS FOR JULY: Tim DeJong, Kyle Schwandt, David Kruger, and Deb Buttke.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Corrections were made to the Secretary's Report. Deb Buttke made a motion to approve the report as corrected. Sharon Hyde seconded the motion. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Council discussed providing monthly revenue and expenditure reports in the church bulletin to keep members informed.

There was also discussion regarding developing a Profit and Loss Budget report for dedicated funds.

Council reviewed donations received for picnic tables and benches. Shannon Vietmeier will obtain an exact total of donations received to date.

Shannon is also checking on the status of the Pigs for Pastors fund and the distribution of those funds to the organization.

Dave Kruger made a motion to add Annette Redepening, as church secretary, and Shannon Vietmeier, as treasurer as check signers at the bank. Second by Shannon. Motion carried.

Shannon Vietmeier made a motion to move the #2 Kids Dedicated CD in the approximate amount of \$50,000, into the Dedicated bank account in order to do as the council previously voted; which is to use youth earmarked monies to pay for the playground equipment. Dave seconded the motion and the motion carried. Sharon Hyde made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Kyle Schwandt seconded the motion. Motion carried.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT REPORT: Tim DeJong will remove the drum set from the shed and relocate it to the church storage attic.

Kyle Schwandt will coordinate replacing the ceiling light bulbs above the altar.

Council discussed the condition of the parking lot and various sealing options, including long-term maintenance value. Tim will

gather additional information and estimates from several companies.

Deb Buttke made a motion to approve the Property Management Report. Laurie Maas seconded the motion. Motion carried.

WORSHIP AND EVANGELISM COMMITTEE REPORT: David Kruger shared ideas regarding a long-term vision for Living Word Lutheran Church and ways to engage parents and families within the community.

David and Deb will form a small committee to begin developing a strategic visioning process for the congregation.

Council discussed maintaining the church Facebook page and website, including keeping them current with photos, articles, and church activities. Several individuals will be approached to determine interest in helping coordinate these communication efforts.

Tim DeJong made a motion to approve the Worship and Evangelism Report. Kyle Schwandt seconded the motion. Motion carried.

YOUTH AND EDUCATION REPORT: Vacation Bible School was a tremendous success, with 48 children participating and a large number of adult volunteers assisting throughout the week. The closing program on Thursday evening was well attended by families and congregation members.

The theme for next year's Vacation Bible School will be Crave.

A committee will meet to review and discuss potential curriculum options for next year's Sunday School program.

Council discussed several ideas for creating a youth group for students who have completed Dynamic Disciples and are seeking additional opportunities for fellowship and faith development.

There was also discussion regarding the need for additional educational space. Council considered the possibility of converting the remaining portion of the den into an additional classroom and youth ministry area, including the addition of a restroom. Tim DeJong, Kyle Schwandt, and Laurie Maas are gathering cost estimates and evaluating timelines for the project.

Tim DeJong made a motion to approve the Youth and Education Report. David Kruger seconded the motion. Motion carried.

CALL COMMITTEE UPDATE: There have been no applicants received at this time.

The Call Committee will be meeting at the end of June to discuss ideas and possible next steps for moving the call process forward.

OLD BUSINESS: The church's new copy machine was delivered this week and is now in place.

NEW BUSINESS: The completion of the outside play and fellowship area was discussed. Kyle Schwandt, Tim DeJong, and Scott Maas will be completing groundwork for the project over the next several weeks.

A bulletin insert will be provided to the congregation regarding the design and plans for the picnic tables and benches.

Kyle will purchase security cameras for the exterior of the church, focusing on the front entrance and playground areas.

Pastor Melanie shared ideas that she and Annette have been discussing regarding summer gatherings on Sundays following worship services. The council encouraged them to continue planning and implementing these fellowship opportunities.

The carpets in the church sanctuary and den will be professionally cleaned later this summer.

Council discussed the need for emergency procedures related to severe weather warnings and fire emergencies. Plans and procedures will be developed jointly by the church office and the Property Management Committee.

NEXT MEETING: The next council meeting will be held on July 8, 2026, at 5:30 pm.

ADJOURNMENT: Laurie Maas made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sharon Hyde seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The meeting concluded with the praying of the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Laurie Maas

August 2026						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 9:00 Worship/Communion 10:00 Coffee Fellowship	3	4 11:00 "What About Me" Study	5	6 9:00 Community Coffee Fellowship	7	8
9 9:00 Worship 10:00 Chapel Communion 10:00 Coffee Fellowship	10	11 11:00 "What About Me" Study	12 5:30 Council Meeting	13 9:00 Community Coffee Fellowship	14	15
16 9:00 Worship 10:00 Coffee Fellowship 10:00 Sept. Servant Team Meets	17	18 9:00 Faith Circle Meets 11:00 "What About Me" Study 7:00 Love Circle Meets	19	20 9:00 Community Coffee Fellowship	21 Newsletter Items Due	22
23 9:00 Worship 10:00 Coffee Fellowship	24	25 11:00 "What About Me" Study	26	27 9:00 Community Coffee Fellowship	28	29
30 9:00 Worship 10:00 Coffee Fellowship	31					
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Beverly Buth (b.) Carol Weber (b.)	3 Aaron & Lacey Busack (w.) Betty Dockter (b.) Heidi Meister (b.) Joel Steltz (b.)	4 Douglas Forster (b.) Rita Raffety (b.)	5	6 Kent Sime (b.)	7	8
9	10 Dale & Linda Prisinger (w.)	11	12 Karen Kiefer (b.) Presley Peschong (b.) Arnold & Donna Rehn (w.)	13	14 Marcus McMahon (b.)	15 Dale Aker (b.) Cody McMahon (b.) Oliver Weinkauff (b.)
16 Susan Capp (b.) Collis Dahle (b.) Andrew Maas (b.)	17 Darrel Gullickson (b.)	18 Koda Campbell (b.) Phil Seehafer (b.)	19	20 Todd Seehafer (b.) Shannon Vietmeier (b.) Cali Weber (b.)	21 Lillian Colberg (b.)	22
23	24 Howard Heinje (b.)	25 Marlin & Janice Fenner (w.) Charles Myklegard (b.)	26 Bernie Balling Jr. (b.) Aaron Busack (b.)	27	28 Zoe Lewno (b.)	29 Collis & Brenda Dahle (w.)
30 David & Linda Wagner (w.)	31 Donald & Carol Weber (w.)					