

Winter Wonderland

Falling snow, so beautiful, fluffy. Looking outside at the first snow heart may warm your heart, even if fingers and toes are chilly. This snow is a welcome sign of the season. It is a reminder of the advent of our Lord and we await with joy the coming of the Christ child.

If only that was all we had to do during this season. But it's not. There is the baking of cookies, the buying of gifts, the prepping for Christmas programs and planning meals for family and friends joining in joyful holiday parties. Whew! On some days, tired sets in and joy dissipates, replaced with frazzled weariness.

And for some, the joy of this season never really sets in. This happy season is a painful reminder of loves ones we've lost, trauma we've suffered, or disappointments we've faced. And joy doesn't come easy, if at all.

This season though, this season, reminds us that Jesus, the Christ child born in a manger and hung to die on a cross, meets us wherever we are in our joy and in our pain, tenderly holding our hearts; loving us through all of the seasons of our lives. Jesus carries us.

I pray that you will seek comfort and joy in this season; and that all the good tidings of the season may be revealed to you in a way that brings both comfort and joy to you.

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Sue



PRESIDENT

Rita Gustafson

VICE PRESIDENT

David Long

TREASURER

Nancy Patterson

SECRETARY

Becky Potenberg

LEARNING

Miranda Luder

PROPERTY

Mark Staes

WORSHIP

Becky VanErstvelde

SERVICE

Kim Luder

YOUTH

Ruby Clark

WITNESS

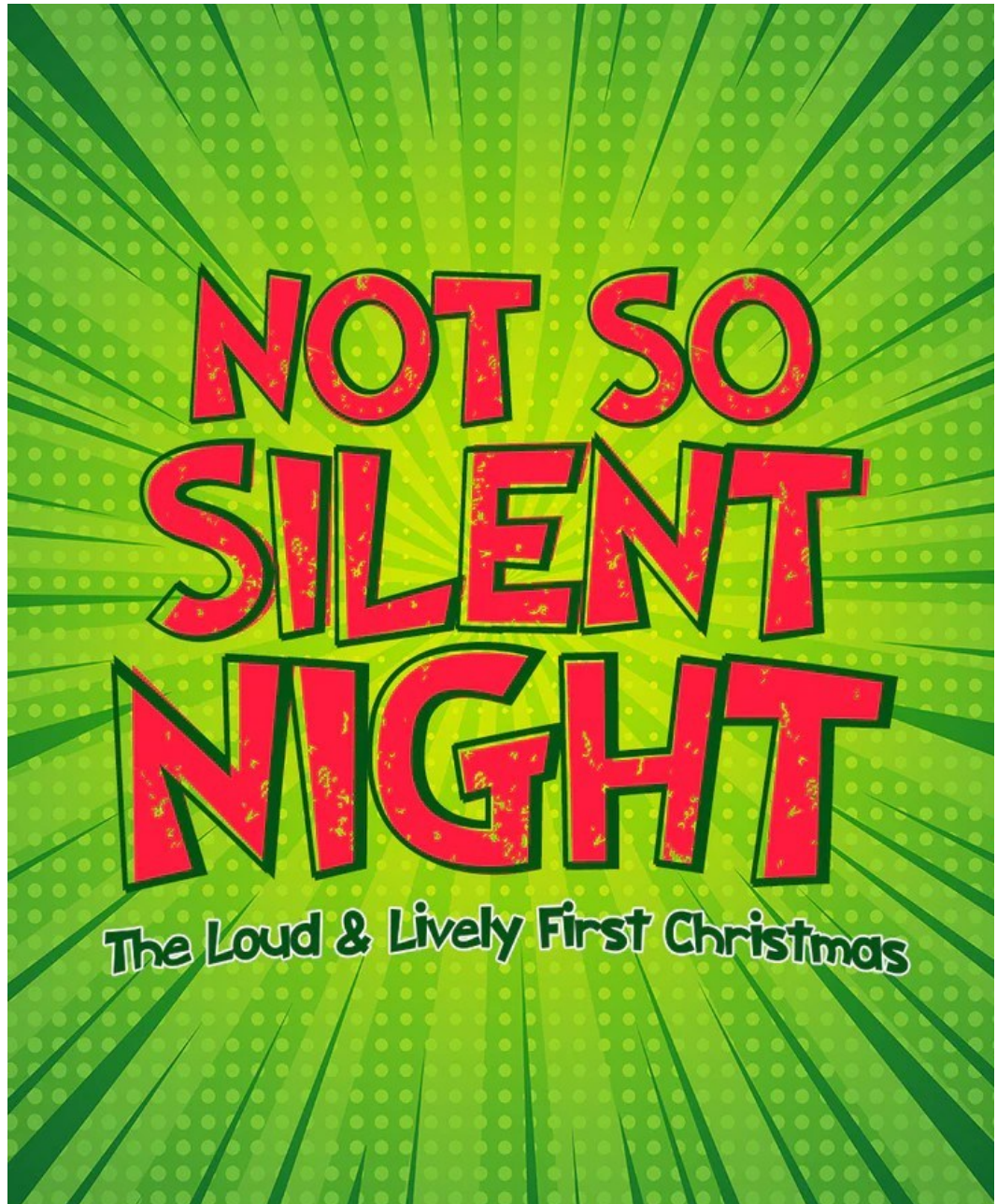
Jessica Clark

STEWARDSHIP

Allison Senkbeil

PASTOR

Sue Hoff



Sunday School Christmas Program

Sunday, December 14 10:00AM

We look forward to seeing you there!

Let's do LUNCH!!
Sunday, December 14
after the Christmas Program



Happy Joe's Tacos

Whitey's Ice Cream

and Cookies



**Sponsored by
Serenity Circle**

This is a FREE WILL Offering.

**A minimum of \$5.00 per
person is requested, anything
above that would be greatly
appreciated.**

Children 5 and under are free

**Proceeds will go to
River Bend Food Bank**

Congregational Council meeting – November 9, 2025

Present: Rita Gustafson, David Long, Becky Potenberg, Nancy Patterson, Miranda Luder, Mark Staes, Becky VanErstvelde, Kim Luder, Allison Senkbeil

Excused/Absent: Pastor Sue, Jessica Clark, Ruby Clark

Called to Order at 11:13 AM

Devotion: David Long

Council Minutes: Miranda motioned to approve council minutes from last meeting, Miranda 2nd, unanimously approved

Treasurer's/Financial Report: Nancy still needs to send out

Nancy is working on 2026 budget. Requested that council share their proposed budgets ASAP, Nancy will include a 3% staff raise for 2026

Property Items:

Proposed adding a quarterly clean-up day on Saturdays

All parking lot lights have been replaced with LEDs by MidAmerican at no cost

Recycling pump for boiler needs replacement; awaiting bid from JL Brady

Kitchen ventilation system not working; licensed electricians from congregation may help diagnose

AED grant opportunity, Becky will forward email to Deb and Mark

Fire safety concerns: elevator doors being blocked open with chairs; need to be kept clear

Sound system upgrade estimated at \$30-40K; only \$6K is currently available in memorial fund

Old Business:

Safe Church Policy

Hunger Drive

Blood Drive

New Business:

- Proposal of having service on 12/7/25 at First Lutheran in Moline for their 175th Anniversary
- Sharing financial information with Rock Island Milan (RIM) church group
- Thanksgiving questionnaire responses needed for service and Pathways participation Values Survey

Mark Staes for Devotion next month

December council meeting rescheduled to December 21st due to Christmas program

Miranda motioned to adjourn meeting, Mark 2nd, unanimously approved

Adjourned 12:16 PM

Recited Lord's Prayer



*You are
not alone*

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

A Longest Night service will be held

Thursday, December 18, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

As we approach the Winter Solstice, this service is meant to offer comfort and hope to anyone struggling with grief, loneliness, or sadness at a time when holiday cheer may be very difficult to imagine.

We will provide a sacred, quiet space for people to acknowledge their loss and find solace in shared humanity and faith. If you are hurting for any reason, this service may be of comfort.

If you are unable to drive at night and would like a ride to the service, please contact Pastor Sue or Deb.



*You are cordially invited to
Christmas Eve at Salem*

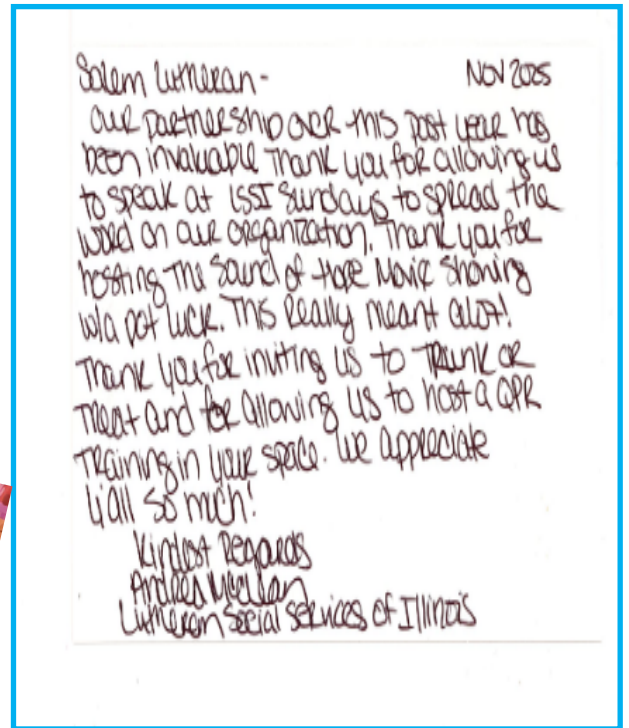
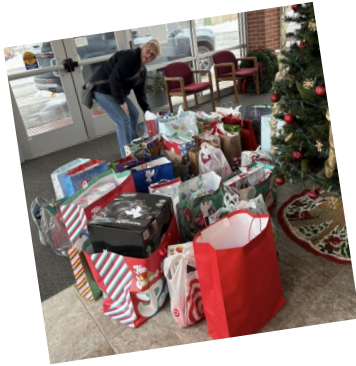
*Musical Interlude will be at 9:00PM
Candlelight Service will be at 9:30PM*

*Please join us to celebrate
this wondrous night!*



Thank you to all
who donated to
the Angel Tree!

You helped make
Christmas better
for 25 foster
children.



Memorials Received - November 2025

In Loving Memory of Claudette Swensson

Given by.....

Karin Martin

Jay Morrow and Wendy Hilton-Morrow

Cathie Anderson

Frank and Karen Ege

Rod and Nancy Lindstrom

Tom and Rebecca VanErstvelde



**Health and Wellness
Committee** made up
Hygiene Kits and
delivered them to
Willard School.

What an awesome
group!

GREAT JOB!





Karin Martin	12/6
Jamie Trapkus	12/6
Bobbi Luken	12/11
Joann Anderson	12/13
Michael Clark	12/14
David Luken	12/17
Kaitlin Staes	12/17
Joshua Morrow	12/19
Nancy Patterson	12/19
Tina Lagerquist	12/20
Grace Bergeson	12/21
Greg Beierlein	12/22
Jon Gustafson	12/23
Marilyn Aushman	12/26
Seth Kelly	12/27
Zane Roseman	12/28
Andrew Doyle	12/29
Angela DeCook	12/31

World Hunger Relief Update

We reported last month that Salem raised \$1,714.00 for this drive.

The Northern Illinois Synod in total raised \$326,612.11

AMAZING!

2026 Giving Envelopes

Are ready for pickup at the back door. Please take yours, someone you can deliver to.

Thank you!



all anew
WOMEN OF THE ELCA

SERENITY CIRCLE

**Please join us
Monday, December 8**

On Second Floor 12:30 PM

All the women of Salem are welcome!

Stewardship Statistics

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

	Oct Actual	Oct Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Income	\$18,022.15	\$18,865.70	\$175,275.10	\$159,026.95
Expenses	\$22,789.84	\$21,557.35	\$232,589.46	\$229,804.40
Net Income	(\$4,767.69)	(\$2,691.54)	(\$57,314.36)	(\$69,971.91)

A T T E N D A N C E

Date	Sunday	Public	Private	YouTube	Total
Oct 5	61	0	0	0	61
Oct 12	58	0	13	9	80
Oct 19	65	0	13	4	82
Oct 26	58	3	13	4	78

Altar Flower Sponsor Schedule

December 2025

Dec 7	Frist Lutheran 175th
Dec 14	Christmas Program
Dec 21	Poinsettias
Dec 24	Poinsettias
Dec 28	Poinsettias

Altar Guild / Worship

December 2025

Paraments - Becky and Camiel
VanErstvelde

Communion Set up - Becky and Camiel
VanErstvelde

Greeters

Dec 7	First Lutheran 175th
Dec 14	Rick Jones
Dec 21	Suzanne Witcher
Dec 24	Becky VanErstvelde
Dec 28	Camiel VanErstvelde

Assisting Ministers - December 2025

Sunday	Assistant
Dec 7	First Lutheran 175th
Dec 14	Christmas Program
Dec 21	Allison Senkbeil
Dec 24	TBD
Dec 28	Jim Kernan

Salem Lutheran Church

1724 15th Street
Moline, IL 61265
309-764-5614

www.salemmoline.org

Worship:

Sunday

Fellowship: 9:00AM

Sunday School: 9:00AM

Worship: 10:00AM

Office Hours:

Monday thru Friday
8:00AM to 12:00PM

Last, But Not Least....

An Update on Our Support for Rethabile in Lesotho

We are delighted to share that, thanks to your incredible generosity, we have raised **\$3,125** to cover Rethabile's college tuition in South Africa—enough to support her studies for the year. Your response demonstrates Salem's deep commitment to supporting young people, whether they are members of our own congregation or strangers living halfway around the world. Rethabile and her mother have both written heartfelt thank-you notes to express their gratitude. They are included below for you to read: Please pass this message to the good-hearted people at Salem church on my behalf.

When my daughter Rethabile was midway in high school, she spoke to me about her desire to work harder in her grades to prepare for the right graders so she could stand a chance to study either medicine/ forensics or others in the medical framework.

From then on I did my best to help pay for extra classes in Subjects where she felt she needed. She worked very hard right up until she finished high school and indeed she got the grades to qualify.

Now, we live in south Africa but are naturally from Lesotho. This meant getting scholarships was going to be impossible. The first year after high school she could not study all year as I could not afford to pay to further her studies. The second year I took on a sales /commission paying job so that I could work harder so she could go to school.

Life became very hard as she is not my only child but as a family we committed to be supportive to their future each in their own time. In March this year my department had complications and I was removed from commission earnings. Rethabile's dad, whom I am no longer married to, used to contribute here and there but now he is not able to due to layoffs in the factories in Lesotho

Things got worse than they already were, I had no idea what else I could do. I tried writing and publishing a book but that did not even take off. I then spoke to my brother, Abuti Pat [She's referencing Dr. Tšooane Molapo; Patrick is his middle name] and with much faith, fasting and prayers hear we are., completely unable to thank God enough for all of your sacrifices, efforts, time and prayers as well.

I can not tell you how grateful we are, she was at the verge of dropping out and giving up, also understanding that we tried.

Thank you for allowing God to use you to answer our prayers and being vessels in his hands so she will have a brighter future. God bless you all. May you never lack or want. Warmest regards
Joalane Kutoane, Rethabile's mom

To members of the congregation of the Salem Church

I would like to express my most heartfelt gratitude for the donations I have received towards my school tuition. I am overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity of so many people who took from what they have, out of the kindness of their hearts, to help my mother pay for my tuition. This blessing has lifted a great burden off the shoulders of my family, words are barely scraping the surface in describing how grateful and overjoyed I am by your help. I am and will always be eternally grateful.

kind regards
Rethabile Rapitse