

There's a bit of new-ness in each turn of the new year. January brings opportunity - new resolutions, new plans and new hopes and expectations for the year ahead and we wish away some of the not-so-great things of the previous year. YAY! YIPEE! YAHOOOO!

Yet, in the background of our souls, we may be weary still from the past. We humans tend to be inward leaning. Sometimes we live in our heads a lot; and as incredibly wonderful and complex our heads are . . . they allow us to spend a lot of time dwelling on countless things that are both in and out of our control. We carry the weight of those things and we may wonder if this year will be any different than last year.

There is another way to think about what lies ahead.

Walking in the footsteps of Jesus, most certainly we understand that life is not without turmoil, anguish, fear and death.

Walking in the footsteps of Jesus, certainly we see the gifts of mercy and grace, healing and new life, given freely to undeserving people. People like you and me.

Walking in the footsteps of Jesus, if we put these things side-by-side, we see that turmoil exists beside new life, each and every day. And each day builds on the last to form a new day and a new opportunity to live in the hope of God's resurrection promise, everlasting life, through Jesus Christ.

Starting each day, and pausing throughout the day, to take a minute or so to think about these gifts, freely given, surely will not change the circumstances of your day. However, this small practice may help to change your perspective and focus over time.

Even with all of our resolve to be more faithful, better followers of Christ, the reality is that we are God's created people; humans created in God's image . . . we will never be perfect or able to always love ourselves and love one another; or even to accept that God's okay with that.

Yet, as we follow in the footsteps of Jesus and learn to trust in God's mercy and grace, reminding ourselves that in all circumstances we are wildly and incomprehensibly loved, we may displace some of our daily angst and feel the peace of Christ rule our heads and our hearts.

May the love and peace of Christ infuse you,
Pastor Sue

¹ O sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.

² Sing to the LORD; bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.

(Psalm 96:1-2)

**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



Congregational Meeting

Sunday, February 8, 2026

after worship

Please plan to attend this important meeting as we're going over:

The 2026 Budget

Pastor Sue's Call Vote (paper ballot)

Updates from RIC, RIM and Pathways

Thank you!

Congregational Council meeting – December 21, 2025

Excused/Absent: Kim Luder, Miranda Luder

Called to Order: 11:23 AM

Devotions: Pastor Sue

Council Minutes: Becky Potenberg

(Motioned Becky V, 2nd Mark, unanimously approved)

Treasurer's/Financial Reports: Nancy Patterson

Staff Report: Sally Patterson

Worship Committee Report

Pastor Sue Report

Old Business:

Budget discussion:

Financial report shows a deficit; the church borrowed \$40,000 from endowment funds to cover about half of the deficit spending (Allison motioned, Pastor Sue 2nd, unanimously approved)

Finance Committee recommended 3% raises for staff (motioned Becky V, Mark 2nd, unanimously approved)

Kinza Maclin for music lessons - include renting chapel (\$400 a month for 6 months) if she plays for organ for a special service a deduction of \$50

Bonus for Bells (\$500) to Laura: Becky V motioned, Nancy 2nd, unanimously approved

Christmas Bonus for all staff \$300: Dave motioned, Mark 2nd, unanimously approved
2026 budget: Mark motioned, Becky V seconded, unanimously

Reconciling In Christ (RIC) update: approved! Certificate received!

Update on Safe Church initiative: No feedback yet, will bring a council vote next meeting

Update on condensate pump (\$2,500-\$2,800)

AED purchase price is ~\$1,700-\$2800, Grants and funds from church memorials and previous funds from the Parish Nurse

Continuing resolution (council vote) vs by-law (congregation vote) changes

New Business:

\$127,000-\$326,000K for World Hunger - Northern Illinois Synod results from Bishop Fidlar

Discussion on Pastor's call - specifically sabbatical leave

A sabbatical is granted 1 month after 3 years, used within their 4th year, or must be approved by council if after 4th year.

Deb needs to create a ballot for the congregation to vote

Becky V motioned for both above, Mark 2nd, unanimously approved

Bishop's request for a "thirteenth month" of mission support

Becky V motioned, Jessica 2nd, unanimously approved

Use of Salem facilities by not-for-profit organization, "Hey Janey and Co" (HJC), led by

Janey Locander

Becky V motioned, Becky P 2nd, unanimously approved

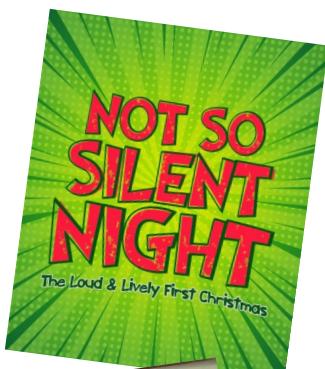
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Youth News

The Clark Family lights the Advent Wreath



Musicians - Laura, Wendy and Joseph



(Council Minutes continued from page 3)

Update on Pathways Values Questionnaire: Youth and Family at top, develop a tool a card game and survey to help the congregation

Consolidate with other churches for VBS, gain additional volunteers

RIM requests a written report to all churches

Motion in bulletin and 2 votes, Becky V motioned, Pastor Sue 2nd, unanimously approved

Motion to Adjourn: 12:43 PM, David motioned, Mark 2nd, unanimously approved

Adjournment/Lord's Prayer

*Memorials Received-
December 2025*

In memory of Claudette Swensson

Given by Dick and Margaret Castle

In memory of Jim Kron

Given by Dick and Margaret Castle

In Loving Memory of:

Claudette Swensson

Richard and Faye Lind

Rev Myrvin Holmberg

Merlin and Marilyn Swanson

Eric Black

Given by....Jeff Lind



**First Communion
for Walker Smith**

11/30/2025



**Congratulations
Walker!**

RIM Task Force Annual Congregational Meeting Report -

RIM Reality Check

What is RIM?

RIM is the Rock Island-Moline Task Force that has been created by 8 congregations to come together to ascertain what our future might look like as 8 separate congregations in a local Quad City area.

What is RIM not?

RIM is not a synod proposed group, but a group brought about by our own congregations. RIM is not here to close doors or tell you what has to be done to your congregation. All of those decisions are strictly your own within your specific congregation.

What has RIM discerned?

After completing church building and financial snapshots, we have come to the following discoveries:

- Almost every church is dipping into their savings or endowment due to a deficit
- Almost all churches have an average member age over 65
- Most of our churches have 0-15 youth/children
- Weekly worship attendance ranges from 30-110
- Not all churches have choirs (vocal, bell, or instrumentals)
- We have 8 congregations in 7 buildings that cost a lot of money to keep open, leading to redundant facilities and equipment. 65-90% of our annual budgets are going to our buildings and staff. This is just for rent/mortgages and yearly insurance for buildings, and does not include additional, often costly maintenance.
- Maintaining 8 congregations in Rock Island and Moline is not sustainable. If discussions on how to face this reality are going to move forward, consolidation of congregations has to be on the table.
- We need to consider God's purpose for us. Are we here to serve the community or ourselves and the people within our walls?

The RIM Task Force is asking you to consider these two questions. You will be asked for your anonymous response at the annual meeting.

1. Are you willing to intentionally and actively look for ways to participate in social and worship activities with other churches?
2. Are you willing to work with other RIM churches toward a shared mission that would help shape how we are using our resources?

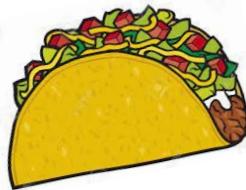


Elizabeth Otten	1/5
Declan Porter	1/5
Pastor Sue Hoff	1/9
Catherine Long	1/10
Marti Kernan	1/11
Beth Tagtmeier	1/12
Heather Locander	1/13
Richard Jones	1/14
Tyler Wilburn	1/16
Chase Curry	1/17
Benjamin Klocke	1/17
Sofia Starofsky	1/17
Linda Lundgren	1/19
Howard Findahl	1/20
Jay Morrow	1/21
Ali Wood	1/24
Catherine Tillberg	1/25
Laurie Figley	1/26
Emma Kelly	1/27
Owen Kump	1/28

Thank you

to those that joined us for the
Taco Luncheon after the
Christmas Program.

We raised \$362.00 that will be
sent to the River Bend Food Bank.



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, January 5

On Second Floor 12:30 PM

All the women of Salem are welcome!

Stewardship Statistics		Nov Actual	Nov Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
FINANCIAL INFORMATION	Income	\$15,054.13	\$17,845.23	\$190,229.23	\$177,677.72
	Expenses	\$36,539.10	\$21,749.06	\$269,128.56	\$251,553.46
	Net Income	(\$21,484.97)	(\$3,903.83)	(\$78,899.33)	(\$73,875.74)

A T T E N D A N C E	Date	Sunday	Public	Private	YouTube	Total
	Nov 2	73	5	41	3	122
	Nov 9	60	8	34	11	113
	Nov 16	62	6	35	7	110
	Nov 23	66	177	37	2	282
	Nov 30	38	76	21	4	139

Altar Flower Sponsor Schedule

January 2026

Jan 4	Dick & Margaret Castle
Jan 11	Wayne & Debb Thompson
Jan 18	Reynolds Family daughters
Jan 25	Laura Crumbleholme

Altar Guild / Worship

January 2026

Paraments - Suzanne Witcher
Communion Set up - Suzanne Witcher

Greeters

Jan 4	Rita Gustafson
Jan 11	Becky VanErstvelde
Jan 18	Linda Davidson
Jan 25	Marti Kernan

Assisting Ministers - January 2026

Sunday	Assistant
Jan 4	Becky Potenberg
Jan 11	Nancy Patterson
Jan 18	Jon Gustafson
Jan 25	Lizzie Dail

Salem Lutheran Church

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

www.salemomoline.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....



Augustana College has a “Campus Cupboard” that is accessible to students of Augustana. During the winter holidays and into January, this becomes more important, as the food services at Augustana are closed.

Students have some access to dorm kitchens, apartment kitchens and in-room microwaves. What they are in need of is non-perishable and shelf stable food stuffs (no fresh or frozen), along with personal hygiene items.

In January, we will hold a drive for Augustana Campus Cupboard. You are also able to contribute by a check made out to Salem Lutheran Church with the memo “Augustana Campus Cupboard”. We thank you in advance for your donations.

Non-perishable items to consider: Cereal, canned soup, juice, soy milk, and milk that is shelf stable is very popular. Mac and cheese cups (just add water), international individual microwave rice packets, canned chicken / tuna, salmon, protein bars, granola, canned fruits / beans, crackers, peanut butter, instant potatoes, breakfast bars, oatmeal packets, canned pasta sauce, packets of pre-cooked and microwave pasta, international ramen.

Hygiene products to consider: Shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrushes, razors, shaving cream, dryer sheets, laundry detergent, hand soap, dish soap, body wash, feminine products.

Campus Cupboard will be closed Dec. 24 through Jan. 4.

Please put your donations on the tables set up in the auditorium. Thank you in advance for your donations.