

SCANDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH

Worship Windows

January 2026



The annual meeting will be Sunday, January 25, 2026.

Organizations and committees need to have their reports to Sherrie office@scandialutheran.com

as soon as possible.

The annual meeting will follow a potluck lunch after the morning worship hour. Please plan to attend.

**ANNUAL
MEETING**

The logo features four stylized arches in orange, yellow, orange, and red above the text "ANNUAL MEETING". "ANNUAL" is in a large, gold, serif font, and "MEETING" is in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Good and gracious God, help us to see you in the faces of others. Help us to hear your voice in the voices of others. Please give us the ability to love each other even when we think you are not looking. In the name of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit, amen.

We know Jesus comes to us and is present with us through the bread and the wine. In our gospel, Jesus is making another promise of presence. Jesus is not the next-door neighbor lady we just took some food to. He is not the homeless man we just gave five dollars to, wondering, as we did, whether he would buy food or beer. Jesus is not the person we just stood in line behind at Walmart, or the person we cut off in traffic. But in some mysterious way, Jesus also comes to us through them. The least of these. The best of these. All of these. Jesus claims solidarity with them, and in the final tally, we just as well count everyone twice because Jesus is totally sincere about being present in them.

We could argue the point. "This is not you, Jesus, with the foul mouth and the foul breath." "Were you kind to me?" Jesus asks. Exactly here we see the challenge. Jesus isn't asking about us helping some unnamed "them." What he is asking is, "Did you help me?" We might not think it matters much in the big picture, but we are wrong: our future appears to hinge on these hasty decisions. When all is said and done, how we treated others is what will matter most.

Don't confuse this with the old "What Would Jesus Do?" movement that swept through a few decades back. That is not being asked or expected. If you ever wore one of those bracelets you quickly found, out as did I, we can't do what Jesus would actually do. What is required is to treat others as though we care. As though their well-being matters.

I noticed that, along with some basic care items, Jesus also mentions some that really intrigue me: "Did you visit me?" "Did you welcome me?" In other words, did we share more than our stuff? Did we share some kind of meaningful fellowship? Did we really listen, did we really see them, did we give some measure of ourselves, and did we receive some measure of them?

This is what Jesus is asking us, and is pretty clear about it. But we aren't buying into it. For the most part, we have tucked this question somewhere in the back of our minds, in the place we keep the stuff we don't want to think about, right behind all of the stuff we never think about. This is too bad, because if we thought about it even a little, some of those thoughts might include whether Jesus means what he is saying. And are we willing to bet our future on it?

This is the newsletter I wrote years ago, and the parable of the sheep and goats reminds me of it.

"This morning, the sound I wakened to was a bit out of the ordinary, a crop duster spraying my neighbor's field. I hurried up the stairs, made coffee, toast, grabbed a colander of freshly washed cherries, and settled in one of my deck chairs to watch the show. The hummingbirds were already up and about, though slightly less enthusiastic than they will be as the day warms up. The competition soon starts between them, three feeders with twelve available self-feeding ports to share, but they will not share. They refuse to ever consider sharing and fight off the weakest, the slowest, the smallest.

My neighbor drops by to admire the crop duster and the hummingbirds' avocational prowess, and we talk about our children. He bemoans gently the fact that a father's advice is not always taken, and I remind him that God wholeheartedly

agrees, and we laugh for a while. I thought about it after he went home. The hummingbirds cranked up their mini war again. I am amused and entertained by their antics, but for them, the struggle is real. What if I could point to the empty ports and say, with some hope of being heeded, "You guys just share! Learn to get along, please. There is more than enough for all of you!" I just realized how like three-year-olds, and hummingbirds we are!

My mind went back many years ago to a dream I had. In the dream, I was asking God, How long? How long till Jesus comes back, how long until the holy city welcomes all, and none are turned away? How long until wisdom and healing are as common as the grass in the field, and the leaves on the trees? How long until there is peace at last? In my dream, the answer was not given in words; instead, it was a picture of an almost instantaneous spread of understanding that swept across the nation like an invisible wave.

One person after another suddenly realized their enemy was someone they could love, did love in fact, and weapons of wounds and words ceased. Each suddenly saw in the faces of each other, even the face in the mirror, the face of Christ. One by one, as quickly as the Holy Spirit of life blew across them, their hearts filled with love for one another. Hatred ceased. Bigotry was gone, as though, in that instant, it had been exposed for the lie it was. The lie it has always been. All evil was suddenly visible and repugnant; no person, animal, or plant would ever have anything to do with it again.

Like the sun rises around the world in one day, in less than 24 hours, the true Son was finally visible, and God's kingdom was finally visible. When I realized it was always here, always waiting for us to notice, my heart broke. Perhaps it broke in this one instance the way God's heart breaks every day, every moment we continue to refuse to see.

When I woke up and realized it was a dream, I wanted to go back to sleep and try to recapture the promise I had held, even for so fleeting a moment. Of course, I could not. This dream has never been forgotten, like so many other dreams dissolving like dew in the light of day. This dream has, ever since, hovered just beyond my vision, just beyond my grasp. It colors my world still today, as I am convinced it holds more reality than any reality.

I believe as strongly today as I did then, the moment will come. The moment when even the hummingbirds will see there is enough to share, enough for all, enough to praise God for, and love each other with, for all of eternity. Luke 17:20-21, "The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; 21 nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you." (NRSV)

Seriously, if you and I were watching how people treat each other, believing that this is how they will also treat us, it would be a cold day in hell before we came back. One of these days, may we finally take Jesus at his word and start treating each other the way we would if we care about them. If we do this, and do this well, suddenly we may realize Jesus is here. Right where he always said he would be.

Love all ways, Pastor Elan Ashby



Romans 11:33-36 – Paul's Doxology

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

“Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?”

“Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?”

For from him and through him and to him are all things.

To him be the glory forever! Amen

Paul has laid out his case for God's amazing work of grace in Jesus Christ. He began by prosecuting the entire human race, convicting all mankind, from believing Israelites to pagan gentiles. Paul based the case against us on the obvious revelation of God in nature and the human conscience, which we as humans have ignored in favor of our own desires. Humanity has invented its own religious ideas and systems for getting what it wants from the spiritual realm. None of these ideas (including turning God's revealed religion into a work for wage system) will gain us eternal life.

Eternal life is a totally free gift including the faith necessary to access the gift. Logically from God's point of reference that leads to an inevitable dichotomy: the elect, the chosen and saved over against the non-elect, the passed over and the unsaved. I emphasize that this is God's perspective because none of us can know exactly who the elect are and who the non-elect are. We should always be careful about making judgments concerning any other soul. We can't know what God has planned for others that we (like Paul) worry about. God has mysterious and amazing ways of reaching people that seem beyond redemption.

So, from the human perspective, just what can we know. First, we can know who we were – we were guilty with all the rest of humanity before God. Anyone who is truly honest must conclude that he/she doesn't deserve the perfection of heaven. The fault lies in us and no amount of theological gymnastics can pin it anywhere else. Second, we can certainly know we are among the elect if we love Jesus. Knowing that we are saved from judgment, the devil, hell and even ourselves should make us break out in spontaneous Hallelujahs. That is where Paul is in this doxology, his “word of glory” about God. God's judgments are unsearchable, he says, but they are so good for us! None of us can ever repay Him for His grace. We can't even figure out where to mail the thank you card because He is beyond our tracking. Yet, from Him through Him and to Him are all things. Our grateful thank-you will be the lives we now live for Him.

Think on this for the New Year,
Vicar Brent

Blessings for the New Year Christian

As the clock strikes midnight and we step into a new year, there's an undeniable sense of hope that fills the air. It's a time when many of us reflect on our past experiences, celebrate our past victories, and seek blessings for what lies ahead. For Christians around the world, this moment is not just about resolutions or celebrations; it's deeply rooted in prayer and faith. Imagine gathering with loved ones as you share your hopes for 2026. You might start by expressing gratitude for God's mercy throughout the previous year—acknowledging both challenges faced and lessons learned. It's on these moments that heartfelt prayers can serve as guiding lights. Our powerful way to embrace the New Year is through prayer— a conversation with God where we lay our desires and fears while seeking His guidance. Here are some beautiful blessings to consider: **A PRAYER FOR BLESSINGS IN THE YEAR AHEAD:** “Father, thank you for your great love over our lives. As we embark on this journey together, may your favor shine upon us like never before. Open doors that lead us closer to You while closing those that distract from it.” This simple yet profound plea encapsulates a desire not only for personal growth but also alignment with divine purpose. In addition to personal aspirations, let's remember community—those around us who need support or encouragement as they navigate their own paths in life. A collective prayer could be:” **Almighty Lord God, grant us true faith so that we may serve others according to Your will.**” This reflects how interconnectedness enriches our spiritual journeys, As you move forward into 2026, consider incorporating specific themes into your prayers each month—perhaps focusing on wisdom one month followed by peace another month: **PRAYER FOR WISDOM:** “God, fill me with discernment so I may follow Your truths Faithfully amidst life's uncertainties.” **PRAYER FOR PEACE:** “Lord Jesus Christ, lift my burdens today; grant me peace beyond understanding even when circumstances feel overwhelming.” The beauty of a new lies in possibilities— the chance at redemption if needed or simply embracing change wholeheartedly without fear because He walks beside us every step along this path called LIFE!

January-December we hold onto faith tightly like an anchor in turbulent seas.



January 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1 9:30am Coffee Hour	2	3 8:00am Men's Bible Study
4 10:30am Worship 1:30pm Brent's Bible Study	5 9:30am Coffee Hour	6 7:00pm AA	7 9:30 Coffee Hour 11:15am CCRC 5:30pm & 6:30pm	8 9:30am Coffee Hour	9	10 8:00am Men's Bible Study
11 8:45am Pancakes 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship	12 9:30am Coffee Hour	13 7:00pm AA	14 9:30 Coffee Hour 11:15 CCRC Worship 5:30pm & 6:30pm Confirmation 7:00pm Rachel	15 9:30am Coffee Hour	16	17 8:00am Men's Bible Study
18 NO SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30am Worship 1:30pm Brent's Bible Study	19 9:30am Coffee Hour	20 9:30am Ruth Circle 7:00pm AA	21 9:30 Coffee Hour 11:15 CCRC Worship/Buffer 5:30pm & 6:30pm Confirmation 7:30pm Council	22 9:30am Coffee Hour	23	24 8:00am Men's Bible Study
25 8:45am Pancakes 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship Potluck & Annual Meeting	26 9:30am Coffee Hour	27 7:00pm AA	28 9:30 Coffee Hour 11:15 CCRC 5:30pm & 6:30pm Confirmation	29 9:30am Coffee Hour	30	31 8:00am Men's Bible Study



Our Prayer Concerns ... Jean (Paul) Peterson; Floyd Anderson; Sherrie Knudson; Tootie Begeman; Bob Eilmes; Justin Martz; Joan Knutson; Steve Orr (Sherrie Knudson's Brother in Law); Marie Tesch (Kathleen Blake's mother); Jayne Ratzlaff & Gary Johnson, (Steven's relations); Denise Smidt (Quint Pease Fiancé); Annette Sarringer; Adam Nelson; Amy (Norling) Peterson; Elaine Tatge (Floyd Anderson's sister); Curtis & Patti Tesch (Kathleen Blake's brother & sister-in-law); World Leaders; those whom we name in our hearts.



GIVING STATEMENT

Please contact the office if you would like a statement of your giving for last year (605-563-2458).

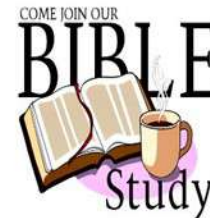
The nominating committee will soon be filling the slate of officers to be presented for election at the annual meeting, January 25, 2026. Church council positions and committee openings need to be filled. If you are contacted to serve in one of these capacities, please give the request prayerful consideration. Thank You.

Thank you Scandia! Your kindness fills plates and hearts at the Banquet. Because you care, hundreds of families in our community find nourishment, hope, and warm welcome every week when they need it most. Since starting in 1985, we now serve 180,000 meals, including 30,000 children. We depend on private donors like you to keep our doors open. We hand out 700 hygiene bags & 7,000 student school supplies to start the year strong. Your gift makes a real impact and creates positive change.

Thank you for your generous gift of \$600.00 made on October 24, 2025. Your gift makes a difference. The Banquet



The Men's Breakfast and Bible Study meets on Saturdays at 8:00am in the room off the kitchen. Come join us. All are welcome!



Sympathy to the family of Donald Albert Hookie

Born 8/9/1942
Died 12/23/2025
Funeral 12/27/2025

REMINDERS:

**Confirmation resumes January 7, 2026.
Sunday School resumes January 11, 2026.**

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

Scandia Church Council held its regular meeting on December 17, 2025. Council members present included Daniel Knutson, Kory Muller, Char Adamson, Cheryl Drew, Kevin Hecht, Philip Christofferson, Ruth Stevens, Vonni Knutson, Kim Preheim, Andrea Anderson, and Joyce Vasgaard. Pastor Elan was not able to attend due to confirmation class Christmas event.

The meeting began at 7:00 pm; Char gave devotions.

Pastor's Report: Movie Nights (or Afternoons!) Light of the World, an animated movie about Jesus, or The Gift of Christmas, narrated by Kevin Costner, is available at the Parsonage. Please make arrangements with Pastor Elan for your family to come over to watch.

Some of the confirmation class helped Pastor Elan and Marsha Rist make sugar cookies. Sugar Cookie Kits will be offered for sale this Sunday after church. The kits will include sugar cookies, tubs of frosting, and sprinkles.

The 7th and 8th Grade Confirmation classes will be having their Christmas Party at the Parsonage on December 17. They will bring treats to share, and we will watch The Gift of Christmas. One of the moms is bringing pizza!

The Bam Quilting Class was held on November 22, and we had a great time. You can see the results on Pastor Elan's Facebook page.

Text study in Vermillion: weekly on Tuesdays except on the first Tuesday of the month, when we have our monthly conference gatherings. On January 6, Pastor Elan and Brent will be hosting Epiphany at the Parsonage for the SE Conference pastors.

Brent and Pastor Elan have hosted several meals for families interested in joining the church, with conversations including baptism and marriage.

Weekly Wednesday services at CCRC with Holy Communion once a month. Hospital and Hospice visits continue.

Freezer Meals are available and offered to anyone in need. If you would like to help, make meals or deliver them, please let Pastor Elan know. If you know someone who might be helped by this ministry, please let Pastor know.

Temptation Toffee was offered for sale this year, with all funds going to the church budget. Over \$500.00 was raised. Thank you for being so helpful with this.

Men's Bible Breakfast meets on Saturday mornings at eight, and the men are currently studying the book of Romans. Adult Bible Study will meet on the 1st and 3rd Sundays at 1:30 at the Parsonage. All are welcome.

Grief Recovery Classes are held weekly on Thursday afternoons at 3:00 PM at the Parsonage. If you need comfort and support as you mourn the loss of a loved one, please consider joining us. We have meals, fellowship, Bible study, and group support. Also on Thursdays: 2nd Thursday, Rural Café Zoom, 3rd Thursday, Dean's call, Support Ministry.

Pastor Elan and Brent will be hosting a New Year's Eve Party for the AA group and their families. If you would like to contribute desserts or appetizers for this, please let Pastor Elan know.

President's Report: Neither of the furnaces in the sanctuary worked for services on December 14. Both of them have been serviced and are now in working order. Daniel is working on having rotating slides with announcements on the screens.

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

Secretary's Minutes: Secretary's minutes were reviewed. Motion by Kory, second by Joyce to approve minutes; motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer's reports were reviewed. Members of the congregation are using the benevolence envelopes being decorated by students. A motion was made by Cheryl to approve the treasurer's report, seconded by Kevin; motion carried.

Financial Secretary's report was reviewed.

Committee Reports:

Education – Sunday School will resume on January 11, 2026; there will be no Sunday School on January 18, 2026.

Mission and Outreach – no report

Property – The sanctuary ceiling has been primed and painted in two areas. The ceiling will continue to be monitored for any signs of ongoing leaks following the roof repair. Furnace filter supplies have been replenished.

Worship and Music - Christmas Eve services will be at 5:00 and 9:00 pm; December 24th; no services on Christmas Day. Annual Meeting will be held on January 25, 2026, after services. There will be baptism on January 11, 2026.

Stewardship – funds from the Harvest festival were disbursed with 15% to the Centerville School group that helps students with needs, and balance (\$2,693.00) to church operating funds.

Fellowship – no report

Old Business: The 2026 Annual Meeting will be held on January 25, 2026, following morning services.

Annual Reports are due in the church office as soon as possible so they can be assembled for the annual meeting.

R & R Mobility was contacted for an estimate on the cost to install actuator on south ramp door (estimate for one door opener (two buttons) not including outside mounting post; +/- \$3500).

Motion made by Cheryl, seconded by Char, to go into executive session at 7:30 pm motion carried; Daniel declared the council out of executive session at 7:42 pm.

New Business: The council confirmed recent (11/30/25) vote to approve a motion to hire Rachael Carstensen to fill Scandia's custodian vacancy. Rachael started in the busy Christmas season and is doing a good job. Please inform council members if anything is missed.

The treasurer provided council members with a copy of the preliminary 2026 budget for their review and discussion. The final version of the 2026 budget will be considered at the January council meeting in preparation for the congregational vote at the annual meeting.

Council was informed that the website host, which is part of the system used for online giving, requires updated compliance information to ensure security.

The council reviewed a draft version of the ballot for congregational vote on council, committee, and team members at the Annual Meeting. The nominating committee will submit candidate names for the ballot before the Annual Meeting.

A copy of the Scandia Rental Agreement was provided to each council member for review before the January council meeting.

The next council meeting will be held on January 21, 2026, at 7:30 pm.

Motion to adjourn meeting by Philip, seconded by Joyce; motion carried.

Meeting closed with the Lord's prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Ruth Stevens, Secretary

Thank you so much for all your love, support and well wishes you showed me before & after surgery. Your kindness lifted my spirits during a difficult time, and I'm deeply grateful for everything you did—whether it was checking in, helping out, or simply keeping me in your prayers. Thank you to Pastor & the Office Angels that kept everything at church running smoothly. I can't thank you enough!

Thank you to Scandia & Council for the Christmas gift card, I so appreciate it. God's blessings to all of you from the bottom of my heart,
 Sherrie Knudson



I so appreciate Pastor's visits and the Christmas gift with the cute gnome & all the treats. Thank you for thinking of me.
 Sincerely, Joan Knutson



Thank you for remembering us with the lovely Christmas gift bag. It was very thoughtful. Best Wishes to all and God's blessings.
 Harlan & Carol Knutson

Thank you to the Scandia Church and Church Council for the Christmas gift! It's very thoughtful of all of you.
 Colleen Buckneberg

Thank you for all the Yummy Potlucks you gave us this past year! We all enjoyed them! CCRC



Altar Guild:

Char Adamson & Kathleen Blake

Communion Assistants:

Steve & Vonni Knutson

USHERS for January

4 The Gerken Family
 11
 18
 25

READERS for January

4 Jim Nelson
 11 Steve Leslie
 18 Paul Christofferson
 25 Lois Jean Smith



ACOLYTE SCHEDULE for January

4 Jace & Carter Muller
 11 Brooke Blake & Aubrey Hafner-Gerken
 18 Drew Moore & Bryer Martz
 25 Miles Stevens & Wesley Moore



This is a requirement for your confirmation. If you cannot acolyte when you are scheduled, you must find your own replacement and let the church office (563.2458) know by Thursday so it can be posted right in the bulletin.

If your birthday or anniversary is not listed or is wrong please call the office @ 605-563-2458 or call /text Sherrie (605-530-7910).
Thank you for your patience!

**HAPPY
 NEW YEAR**

Pastor
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Office Administrator:
Sherrie Knudson
605-530-7910
knudsonstamp@hotmail.com

Pancakes 8:45am

Sunday School 9:15am

Worship 10:30am

Everyone Welcome!

January BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES



January 1

Lee Rist
Brock Pingrey

January 3

David Olson
Oliver Blake

January 4

Warren Drew
Laurie Muller

January 5

Dorothy Overgaard
Courtney Knudson

January 8

Hunter Swift

January 9

Scott Moore

January 11

Nathan Hisel
Amanda Martz
Miles Stevens

January 12

Elise Van Hull

January 13

Allen Hisel

January 22

Nila Olson
Jared Hybertson

Christe Hybertson

January 23

Janna Mark

January 25

Chuck Oster
Barb Nelson
Josiah Knutson

January 26

Tim Ostrem

January 28

Floyd Anderson
Travis Wiese

January 31

Jamie Poppenga



January 18

David & Cheryl Stevens

January 19

Brandon & Carleigh Reif

January 22

Brent & Elan Ashby

January 23

Floyd & Kathy Anderson

January 27

Matt & Nichole Bendert

