

New Hope Lutheran Church (ELCA)

Sand Creek + Pine Creek, WI

2025 Annual Report



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NEW HOPE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

*A welcoming community of faith inspired
by God's grace to love, grow & serve.*

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

Sunday, January 25, 2026

Immediately after 10a worship at our Pine Creek Site

CALL TO ORDER: Council President, Linda Bilodeau

MINISTRY OVERVIEW

APPROVE

- A. 2025 Annual Meeting Minutes
- B. Treasurer's Report/Financial Statement 2025 page 13-15
- C. 2026 Proposed Budget Summary page 16
- D. Elect Council 2026 Officers page 17
- E. Elect delegates page 17
- Luther Park (2) Synod Assembly (2)

CLOSING COMMENTS

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THE LORD'S PRAYER



New Hope Lutheran Church Annual Meeting Minutes *(draft)*

Sunday, January 19, 2025/Sand Creek Site

CALL TO ORDER: 10:58a by Council President, Mark Gilberts

“Let us not forget our New Hope Lutheran Church Mission Statement: *A welcoming community of faith inspired by God to love, grow and serve.*”

APPROVE ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES 1/21/2024

M/S/C (*Kenny Nelson/Herb Tallman*)

STATISTICS DID NOT PRINT IN ANNUAL REPORT

Congregational Membership 12/31/2023: Baptized 494 Confirmed 301 12/31/2024: Baptized 506 Confirmed 307

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Date to be determined for Annual Review Committee to meet.

TREASURER’S REPORT (*Joe Bilodeau*)

*Correction: Pine Creek Building Fund balance is \$2,368.03 vs \$3,916.81 printed annual report.

*\$22,100 average gross profit; increases seen with more expected. April—October received less than \$12,000/mo

*Funds from Memorials Savings borrowed to meet budget and repaid from Thrivent Parsonage Invest Fund interest.

*2,600 gallons LP Prepay of 5 cents/gallon: 3900 gallons at \$1.44 after initial is used up.

*Insurance increased \$3,000/Yr and \$1,000 to \$5,000 deductible. Roof is only covered for structural damage.

M/S/C (*John Loy/Jerry Loftus*) to approve 2024 financials.

NEW BUSINESS

*Jim Irwin extends thanks to our council and staff for their dedicated hard work.

*Sand Creek Property \$10,000 vs. \$5,000 on line 37 budget summary on annual report page 17

M/S/C (*Jim Irwin/Kenny Nelson*) to revise SC Property from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

*Bottom line grand total = \$229,445.

*Kenny Nelson noted “Benevolence” provides a challenge with no budgeted amount printed as it was in the past.

Proposed (*Jim Irwin/Kenny Nelson*) budget “Benevolence” increase from past \$15,000 to \$20,000. Teresa

Killoren noted amount to be split between Pine Creek and Sand Creek. M/S/C (*Jim Irwin/Carol Hanson*) to

budget “Benevolence” \$1,500/Pine Creek (line 27) and \$13,500/Sand Creek (line 38).

Amended motion of “Benevolence” budget of \$15,000 M/S/C (*Jim Irwin/Mary Ann Omtvedt*)

2025 Proposed Budget

M/S/C adopt as presented with amendments noting 2.5% cost of living increase for staff included (*Jim Irwin/Joyce Gilberts*)

2025 Church Council

M/S/C (*Joyce Gilberts/Herb Tallman*) accept council. Kristi Welle (*Family Ed*) and Lon Christopherson (*PC Prop*) are serving their 2nd terms. Brief Council Meeting immediately after annual meeting will elect officers.

2025 DELEGATES

Anyone interested in serving as a delegate may contact the church office.

LUTHER PARK: Annual Meeting, February 1, 2025 9:30a Coffee & 10a Meeting/Facebook live-streamed

1. Pr. Michael Sparby 2. _____ 3. _____

SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Saturday, April 26, 2025 at Bethany Lutheran in Rice Lake

1. Pr. Michael Sparby 2. Carol Hanson 3. Carol Anderson

Thank You to all council members for your service! Feedback is welcome for this slide presentation/livestream format of the annual meeting.

ADJOURN: 11:47am M/S/C (*Kathie Irwin/Jerry Loftus*)

Closing prayer and The Lord’s Prayer led by Mark Gilberts

Council Secretary, Marie Swanson

Post Annual Meeting Council Meeting Minutes/Elections

CALL TO ORDER: 11:20 am by President, Mark Gilberts entertaining a motion to approve 2025 slate of officers.

President: Linda Bilodeau **Vice President:** Joyce Gilberts **Treasurer:** Joe Bilodeau **Secretary:** Marie Swanson

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING: Monday, February 17, 25 / Pine Creek site

Council Secretary, Marie Swanson

2025 PARISH STATISTICS

BAPTISM

Natalie Marie Flatland	6-1-25	Sand Creek
Josie Beth Smith	6-29-25	Sand Creek
Jessa Benson	8-23-25	Sand Creek
Waylon Benson	8-23-25	Sand Creek
Johanna Benson	8-23-25	Sand Creek
Vivian Benson	8-23-25	Sand Creek
Warren Andrew Hassemer	11-2-25	Sand Creek
Winslie Mae Jenneman	11-2-25	Sand Creek
Sophia Rose Anderson	11-9-25	Sand Creek
Michael Riley Messinger	12-28-25	Sand Creek

FIRST COMMUNION

CONFIRMATION

May 18, 2025

Maxwell Bartels	Pine Creek
Sophie Buck	Pine Creek
Natalie Ellefson	Pine Creek + Sand Creek
Dominic Flatland	Pine Creek + Sand Creek
Oliver Link	Pine Creek + Sand Creek
Maxwell Martinson	Sand Creek
Benjamin Neilsen	Sand Creek

WEDDING

FUNERAL / GRAVESIDE / BURIAL / DEATH

*Nonmember

*Douglas Lyle Wirth	Died 12-14-2024	
	Funeral 1-11-25	Pine Creek
Lillian Deyonne Wendlandt	Died 1-12-25	
	Funeral 1-20-25	Sand Creek
	Burial 5-5-25	Our Savior's
Juel Carlton Smith	Died 1-20-2025	
	Funeral 1-25-25	Sand Creek
*Janice L Lyon	Died 1-25-25	Our Savior's
	Funeral 2-8-25	Sand Creek
*Sonja Marie Anderson Risser	Died 3-3-25	
	Funeral 3-15-25	Colfax
	Burial 5-31-25	Colfax Evergreen
*Janice Helene Anderson Horn	Died 3-9-24	
	Burial 7-3-25	Our Savior's
*Roger Garland Horn	Died 6-6-2017	
	Burial 7-3-25	Our Savior's
David Thomas Riegel	Died 7-9-25	
	Celebration of Life 8-2-25	At Home
*Betty Toyoko Hirn	Died 7-28-24	Burial 8-31-25
		Evergreen Cemetery/Dallas
Daniel Frederick Gullickson	Died 8-14-25	
	Funeral 9-6-25	Sand Creek
Scott L Tweed	Died 11-10-25	
	Burial 11-14-25	Our Savior's
Dorrene Knutson	Died 12-23-25	
	Burial 1-17-26	Pine Creek

AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

Charles Spiering	1-28-25	Sand Creek
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TRANSFERS RECEIVED

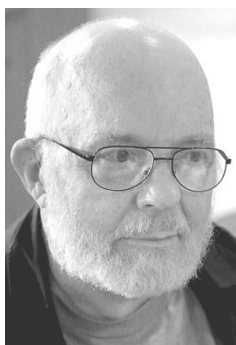
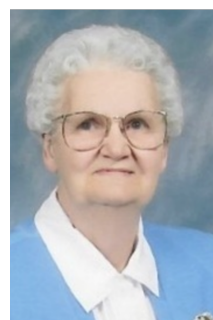
TRANSFERS ISSUED

RELEASED

Michelle Glaser	10-29-25	Pine Creek
Carson James Glaser	10-29-25	Pine Creek
Tara Michelle Glaser	10-29-25	Pine Creek

CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

12/31/2024	Baptized 506	Confirmed 307
12/31/2025	Baptized 514	Confirmed 306



Pastor Michael D. Sparby

I thank my God for every remembrance of you, ⁴always in every one of my prayers for all of you, praying with joy ⁵for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I hold you in my heart,... Philippians 1:3-7a

The years go fast, and faster. It is difficult to believe it has been eight years since I was first approached by this synod to consider a call to my home congregation. After prayerful consideration, over several months, I responded that I would meet with New Hope's Call Committee if they were interested in pursuing the partnership. I met with the committee in the spring of 2018, received the call soon after, and began my work in late July of 2018.

I have appreciated the opportunity to come home and serve the congregation that has been so important in my life, and many others, through the years. I was baptized, confirmed, and ordained in this congregation and carry a deep sense of gratitude.

Near the end of 2025 I requested a change in workload, accepting the fact that I'm getting old(er). The Transition Task Force and the Church Council acted on this, and my $\frac{3}{4}$ time call was reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ time call. I appreciate the flexibility which grants me the opportunity to stay active at New Hope. Thank you for your partnership in the gospel.

Council President, Linda Bilodeau

Blessings to all as we enter a new year at New Hope. I want to express my sincere thanks for all the support, encouragement, and guidance from Pastor Michael and the entire Church Council as I served as President this past year.

In 2025 our New Hope members continued to generously share their time and talents to bless those in need both locally and internationally. Our quilters again completed over 1000 beautiful quilts to spread warmth to those near and far. Numerous school kits, health kits, baby care kits, holiday food baskets, homeless Christmas stockings, and generous Noisy Offerings were donated to worthy causes during the year. We continue to be a generous group of believers. I am so proud of our congregation.

I want to thank Joe Bilodeau, our Council Treasurer, and Becky Loftus, our Office Administrator for their continued work with Clergy Financial to manage the financial needs of our congregation. I greatly appreciate their added efforts this past summer when they navigated a Cyber Breach on several of our church accounts. We're fortunate to recover most of the loss.

Our $\frac{3}{4}$ time arrangement with Pastor Michael worked well these past 7 years. I want to give a special thank you to all guest clergy and church lay members who willingly stepped up to fill in on Sundays and confirmation nights when Pastor was away. It has been great to see our members lead services, read scripture, and provide the Sunday messages. I also want to thank all of our women's and men's groups, Sunday school teachers, altar guild members, and those serving coffee and lunches before and after services. A sincere thank you to Joyce Gilberts for assisting Pastor with in-home and nursing home visits too. Our congregation is truly blessed.

At the end of the year, a Vision Task Force was created to work with Pastor Michael's transition him to $\frac{1}{2}$ time. This group will continue meeting with Pastor throughout the year to assess and ensure that our congregational needs are met. As we start 2026, we ask all New Hope members to prayerfully consider serving in various needed roles as Pastor Michael transitions to $\frac{1}{2}$ time.

Lastly, our congregation will need to make improvements as our facilities continue to age. This past year, our Sand Creek site updated its Wi-Fi and hearing impaired equipment. With ongoing inflation rates, supply costs, insurance, property taxes, it is critical that members continue giving as they're able so our upcoming needs and projected budget can be met. Our congregation has been truly blessed by your generosity. It is greatly appreciated.

In closing, I pray God continues to bless our congregation, community, and our world. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

Outreach Committee

Linda Bilodeau, Pat Bechard, John Loy, Joyce Gilberts

During the cold winter months of 2025, the Outreach Committee hosted a *Community Game Day/Night* at both our church sites. Fun was had with many games such as Indoor Scavenger Hunt, Bingo, Trivia, Left Center Right, and not only fun, but knowledge gained with Bible Jeopardy! Of course, treats were served! Watch your calendar as more fun is coming soon!

New membership reception was held in January at Mark Gilbert's home. It was a fun evening getting to know each other with more delicious munchies!

Several congregation members enjoyed a Defibrillator "refresher" course by Lance Loftus (Menomonie Fire Dept. FireMedic). The lifesaving machine applies electric current to the heart to restore a normal heartbeat. It was good to see our unit in action as it directs operation step by step. Thank you Lance for sharing your first aid knowledge! A LifeVac was also demonstrated for use in choking; an easy to use, non-invasive unit. This is located by the first aid kit at Sand Creek. CPR certification class was rescheduled from fall 2025 to January 11, 2026 by instructor, John Farrell, due to an emergency. Lunch was served for attendees.

Continue handing out *Random Act of Kindness* cards, reminding us to continue acts of sharing our faith and church with kindness, love and caring in our community and beyond.

Once or twice monthly visits with holy communion are made to those in a facility or upon request.

Noisy Offerings received are greatly appreciated for our monthly missions. Details are found in the financial reports.

By God's grace, and the Blood of Jesus, let us continue to be the light bearers of Jesus's love, grace and mercy in all that we do. God's blessings to all.



Property/Management Committee

SC: Mark Gilberts/Jerry Loftus

PC: Joe Bilodeau/Lon Christopherson

Both sites had a rather quiet year of unexpected property management issues; thank you, Lord!

Sand Creek Site:

HVAC contract with Gene's Heating & Cooling in Bloomer keep the aging systems operating well. We need to monitor the 8 aging AC units and 29 yr. old boiler furnace. Synergy documented a reduced propane usage in 2025 partially attributed to improved furnace ventilation in 2024.

Reorganized shed easily stores the 50+ New Hope Quilters boxes prior shipment to Lutheran World Relief (LWR) and Global Health facilities in the Twin Cities, MN.

The aging John Deere lawn mower experienced a broken mowing deck this fall. Tractor Central/Menomonie estimated repair to be cost prohibitive for the overall condition of the existing mower. Property/Management Committee recommended to contract local lawn care service in the future vs. purchasing a new estimated \$6,500 lawn tractor. Council approved the recommendation awarded to All Right Lawn Care, LLC/Jerry Loftus going forward. We sincerely thank Mike Olson for his past 4 years of service!

A hired professional cleaned the large interior windows between the narthex and sanctuary, and the offices.

Thank you Lacey Buhr & family for your excellent custodial service!

We welcome any feedback regarding property concerns that may be directed with any council member.

Family Education Committee

Jesse Buhr, Samantha Goodremote, Kristi Welle, Stephani North

2024/25—Mother's Day, Sunday school curriculum, Stories of the Bible, each week designated a story with a correlating craft/activity. Approximately 10 kids attended evening Vacation Bible School (VBS), "*Bible Beach Club*" held Sunday June 8—Thursday, June 12th at Sand Creek Memorial Park. Day 1: Jesus' miraculous catch of fish wasn't just a cool trick; it was a sign of His divine power and call for us to follow Him, proving He is our savior. We cast out our nets and they were full of fish! Day 2: What Wind? Jesus calms the storm, revealing his power over nature and our fears. If we obey Him, he will show us the way. Day 3: Will He float? Jesus walks on water, demonstrating His ability to help us overcome the seemingly impossible. Inclement weather moved our ending beach party inside where we enjoyed a piñata, painted flower pots and had root beer floats.

2025-26 academic year began in September with new curriculum, Stories of the Bible in picture format. We had a few lessons before Christmas pageant prep. "CHRISTMAS" Pageant was outstanding for kids and congregation alike; symbolizing each letter with song shared with the congregation!



Women of the ELCA / Pine Creek Site

We are blessed with many challenges to meet in our church, community, schools, food pantries, and other needs. We meet those with assistance from our men, children, and women from Foursquare Baptist Church and Ridgeland Lutheran.

Colfax, Ridgeland/Dallas, Prairie Farm Schools: Mittens/gloves, hats, scarves, underwear, sweat pants, socks, school supplies.

Barron School: Greeting card tops

Son's of Norway: Cancelled stamps support the mentally challenged

Prairie Farm Food Pantry: 3 donations of food and 4 quilts (2 shoulder wraps, 2 baby quilts)

Homeless Youth Confirmation Project: First-aid kits, hand warmers, and monetary donation.

Lutheran World Relief: 104 School Kits, 37 Personal Care Kits

Disaster Relief (Lofthus Trucking/New Auburn): Towels, blankets, quilts, sweaters, coats, diapers, personal items, etc.

Neighbors of Dunn County: Puzzles donated by Joan Peterson

Global Missions: 2 large boxes of white, rolled bandages

Monroe Manor, Barron Care/Rehab, Colfax Senior Living: Bingo prizes and Christmas gifts with wrapping paper/bags, etc.

Barron County Jail: Puzzles donated by Joan Peterson, reading glasses, pencils, writing pads.

"Grandma Great's Happy Sewers": Our Pine Creek ladies with Ridgeland Lutheran and Barron Foursquare Baptist Church sew for charity and enjoy fellowship! Made this year: 128 quilts, 121 lap robes, 86 shoulder wraps, 107 walker bags, 137 catheter bag covers, 104 gait belt bags, 7 pillows. Donated to: Benjamin House, Bridge to Hope, Dove Healthcare/Bloomer, Meadowbrook/Bloomer & Chetek, Neighbors/Menomonie, American Lutheran Home/Menomonie, Barron Cancer Center, Cumberland Nursing Home, Lakeside/Rice Lake, Colfax Senior Living, Monroe Manor/Barron, Barron Care/Rehab, Grace Place/Barron & New Richmond, Prairie Farm Food Pantry, as well as individual benefits.

EVENTS

Ridgeland Farmer's Market: Hot Beef Supper served with meat donated/prepared by Shipley Family. LaRose provided live music paid from Sunday lunch donations.

Confirmation/Graduation: Purchased/served cakes honoring those reaching these milestones. Quilts were presented to grads.

Fellowship: Lunches served by Ladies Aid after worship services.

Christmas: Lisa Mickelson donated Sunday school pageant treat bags.

Cards: At monthly meetings, we sign approx. 20 greeting cards for shut-ins and others; many times with congregational photos.

Valentines: Signed, divided, delivered to area nursing homes and Chippewa Veterans Home.

Mary Peterson

DEDICATED ACCOUNTS REPORTS 12/31/2025

SC SafeDeposit Box (\$12/yr)
Pr. Michael Sparby, Becky Loftus/Parish Admin.

Noisy Offerings

JAN	Benjamin House	\$ 449.49
FEB	Project Comfort/Quilts+Kits	454.94
MAR 2	Prairie Farm "Youth in Christ" (In/Out)	
MAR	Arbor Place (Menomonie)	513.42
APR	Luther Park Camperships	800.74
MAY	Missionary Support	1,082.30
JUNE	Lutheran Disaster Response	665.81
JULY	Luther Park General Fund	352.56
AUG	Local Food Shelves	665.09
SEPT	Nursing Home Activity Depts.	509.87
OCT	Homeless Youth Christmas	848.04
NOV	World Hunger *Matched	2,027.97
DEC	Christmas Critters *Matched	1,816.35

Parsonage Proceeds Fund/Thrivent

Est. March 2020 from parsonage sale 10/14/2019

Board: Church Council

Becky Loftus/Parish Admin., Joe Bilodeau/Treas.

Beginning Value	\$ 200,804.09
Additions/Withdrawals	0.00
Misc. & Corporate Actions	0.00
Income	7,140.91
Taxes/Fees/Expenses	(2,135.94)
Other Activity	24.18
Change in Value	17,465.80
End Value 12/31/25	\$ 223,299.04

2025 Memorials / Honorariums

Memorials: Duane/Shirley Shipley, Lillian Wendlandt, Juel Smith, Janis Lyons, Louis Reetz, Jermond/Margie Ellefson, Debbie Goodremote, Daniel Gullickson, Margie Anderson

Honorariums: Mike Goodremote

SC Site Memorial Fund

Becky Loftus/Parish Admin., Joe Bilodeau/Treas.

Disbursed from:

Undesignated

65.11	Campership balance
4,543.30	Hearing Aid Upgrades
3,107.33	Mosaic/wired WIFI
7,645.00	Propane Prepay
1,828.00	MacMan/Treas. Laptop

Campership Fund	1,059.88
Crisis Fund	125.00

PC Sunday School Mary Peterson

1/1/25 Beginning Balance	\$ 461.69
INCOME	+ 25.00
EXPENSE	
Postage Stamps	\$ 73.00
Mother's Day Flowers	22.50
Father's Day Gifts	20.61
	116.11
	- 116.11
12/31/25 End Balance	\$ 370.58

PC Site Esther Wright Fund

Vern Ellefson/Treas., Linda Bilodeau, Dawn

Kunkel, Lon Christopherson, Anna Lien

High Yield	\$ 180,817.28
Money Market	+ 869.95
1/1/25 Balance per statement	\$ 181,687.23

Activity

High Yield Acct

Dividends Reinvested	15,231.81
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Money Market Acct

Dividends Reinvested	35.59
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No Withdrawals in 2025

High Yield	\$ 196,049.09
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Money Market	905.54
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12/31/25 End Balance	\$ 196,954.63
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PC Building Fund

Alan Peterson/Treas., Joe Bilodeau/Financial Sec.

Balance 12/31/2025	\$ 2,368.03
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No expenses for 2025 but improvements were made with donated supplies with parishioners' time and talents. Playground equip was assembled, closet shelves installed, shrubs trimmed, etc.

Thank you Lon Christopherson & Nancy Drinkman for keeping the building clean, Jeff Christopherson for snow removal and Alan Lien for lawn care. Besides cleaning, thank you Lon for always being available when needed. It is much appreciated!

Men's Group

When Martin Tandberg established this group, we were very active. Our activities included a number of building projects, moving people, and repair projects. Moving along, we've become a support group. Now, most of our projects are helping with monetary donations to projects and people. These include scholarships, food pantries, and church connected events. We sponsor one fund raising event which is our annual pancake breakfast held at the Sand Creek Town Hall.

We can always use more members; all ages

welcome!Wishing you all a happy 2026 New Year.

Beginning Balance 1/1/25	\$ 11,761.48
End Balance 12/31/25	\$ 11,892.35

Clyde Allison



PC Site W/ELCA		Annette Mason
1/1/25 Beginning Balance		\$ 2,382.57
Income		
Lunch	1,497.73	
Cards	24.00	
Rag rug	20.00	
Donation/hot beef supper	105.00	
Hot Beef Supper	2,240.10	
Serving Funeral	75.00	
Thankoffering	35.00	
IMO Lillian Wendlandt	25.00	
Donation	25.00	
Total Income	\$4,046.83	+ 4,046.83
		\$ 6,429.40
Expense		
Milk, small plates	18.95	
Paper Towel	10.81	
Coffee	43.82	
Containers	49.95	
Drawstring bags (LWR)	211.00	
Confirmation cake	68.00	
Graduation cake	50.00	
Stethoscope	18.28	
LaRose (music for park)	300.00	
Transport LWR Kits	25.00	
Defibrillator Fund	1,000.00	
Thankoffering	35.00	
Yearly Synod W/ELCA	300.00	
Cenex Gift Cards	100.00	
Luther Park	200.00	
Christmas Critters/Dec.	200.00	
Dollar General Gift Cards	135.00	
(80+ / Homeless Youth)		
WWIB Hunger *Match	200.00	
E Mickelson donation	200.00	
Total Expense	\$3,165.81	-3,165.81
12/31/25 End Balance		\$ 3,263.59

SC Site WELCA		Janet Allison
Account Balances		
Altar Guild	\$	154.61
Cards		148.95
Comforters		3,981.03
General Fund		415.35
Triennial Scholarships		400.00
School Kits 2026		50.00
Memorials received: Lillian Wendlandt, Juel Smith, Jan Yons, Louis Reetz, Margie Anderson, Dan Gullickson		
Disbursements		
Lutheran Disaster Relief/CA Fires		
Disaster Response		
Curtie Cares (Transportation)		
Missionary		
Project Comfort (Shipping)		
Thankoffering		
Coins for Hunger		
Katie's Fund		
Bread for the World		
Noisy Offerings		
Stepping Stones		
Bloomer/New Auburn Food Pantry		
Chetek Food Shelf		
Colfax Caring Ministries		
Menomonie Free Clinic		
Luther Park Summer Programming		
Feed My People		
Christmas Critters		
Christmas Family/Colfax		
Balance 12/30/25	\$	5,149.94



AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS REPORTS 12/31/2025

New Hope Lutheran Foundation

Pine Creek Site: Inactive

Sand Creek Site

Carol Gerner, Mary Ann Omtvedt, Roger Paulson,
Mark Gilberts, Pr. Sparby

ASSETS

Security Bank Checking	\$	2,831.08
Security Bank Savings		2,073.84
Security Bank CD's		31,300.74
Thrivent Funds*		337,521.42
Mission Investment Fund*		26,658.181
Total Assets	\$	400,385.26
Preserved Principal		- 323,373.90
Interest Inc. available to disperse	\$	77,011.36

NOTE: Numbers before year-end reports received from investments
Roger Paulson, Treas.

*Board met five times, along with correspondence via text and email.

*Carol Gerner accepted to serve for a 2nd term.

*\$13,750.00 interest income was donated to assist others.

Mary Ann Omtvedt, Sec.

OFFICERS

President	Mark Gilberts
Vice President	Carol Gerner
Treasurer	Roger Paulson
Secretary	Mary Ann Omtvedt

TERMS (5-year terms; may serve 2 consecutively)

1. Carol Gerner	2nd (2026-30)
2. Mary Ann Omtvedt	2nd (2023-27)
3. Mark Gilberts	1st (2023-28)
4. Roger Paulson	1st (2024-29)
5. Jodie Madison	1st (2025-30)

* Pr. Michael Sparby *ex officio*

Pine Creek Cemetery Association

Board: *Brian Ellefson, Alan Lien, Alan Peterson, Joe Bilodeau*

CHECKING

12/31/2025 Balance **\$ 9,958.50**

Zion Cemetery Association

Board: *Alden Berg, Bob Hanson, Roger Paulson, Dan Dietsche, Sue Favero, Matt Branville, Michael Sparby*

CHECKING

1/1/26 Balance **\$7,885.03**

Income (+) Interest/Lots/Misc/Memorials **\$3,574.14**

**Includes CD transfer from Mission Investment Fund, (2208.32), plot/Zion, and Gifts/Memorials*

The Cemetery Board is thankful for memorials/gifts.

Expense (-)

Mowing **\$ 3,900.00**

American Legion **\$ 100.00** *(Outstanding 12/31/25)*

Memorial Day Geraniums **\$ 338.78**

Safety Deposit Box Rental **\$ 12.00**

Total Expense **\$ 4,350.78**

12/31/25 Checking Balance **\$ 7,108.39**

OTHER

Security Bank CD Investments **\$12,677.31**

ELCA Mission Investment CD Bal **\$54,009.67**

Total Accounts Balance 12/31/25 **\$73,795.37**

**\$20,115 designated as Preserved Principal Perpetual Care*

Our Savior's Cemetery Association

Board: *Lee Killoren/Treas., Marc Anderson/Sexton*

1/1/25 Beginning Balance **\$ 3,329.95**

Receipts (+)

Perpetual Care **650.00**

Disbursements (-)

Lawn Care **600.00**

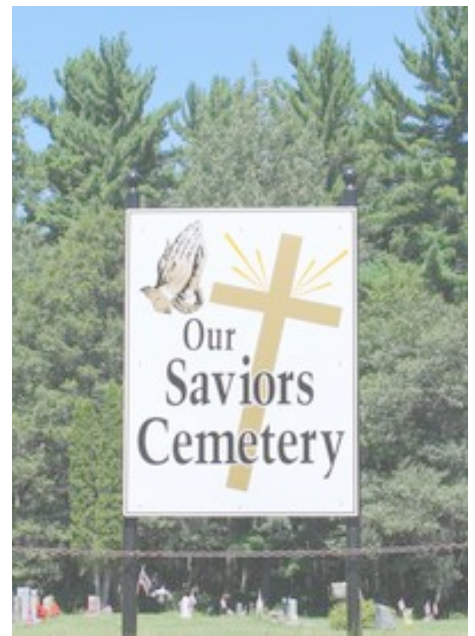
12/31/25 End Balance **\$ 3,379.95**

On Deposit

CD's **\$51,975.16**

2025 Gained Interest **1,339.74**

Total Accounts Balance 12/31/25 **\$56,694.85**





New Hope Lutheran Church

Statement of Financial Position

As of December 31, 2025

		TOTAL
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Bank Accounts		
10100 Congregation		
	10101 Checking 1776 - Parish	0.00
	10101.1 Missions Support - Synod	0.00
	10101.2 Noisy Offering	0.00
	10101.3 Flowers	0.00
	10101.4 Other Benevolence	0.00
	10101.5 Luther Park	0.00
	10101.8 Sunday School	0.00
	Total 10101 Checking 1776 - Parish	0.00
	Total 10100 Congregation	0.00
1	10102 Checking 1266 - Parish (New)	12,803.85
2	10102.1 Missions Support - Synod	1,202.32
3	10102.2 Noisy Offering	635.22
4	10102.3 Flowers	-2,366.83
5	10102.4 Other Benevolence	-4.90
6	10102.8 Sunday School	-46.78
7	Total 10102 Checking 1266 - Parish (New)	12,222.88
10200 Pine Creek		
	10201 Checking 0761 - Sunday School	0.00
	10202 Checking 0826 - Building Fund	0.00
	10203 Checking 5020 - PC WELCA	0.00
	10204 Checking 0813 - Cemetery Association (Affiliated)	0.00
	10205 Savings 0488 - Cemetery Association (Affiliated)	0.00
	Total 10200 Pine Creek	0.00
10250 Pine Creek Site		
8	10250.1 Checking 1332 PC Sunday School	370.58
9	10250.2 Checking 1354 PC Building Fund	2,368.03
10	10250.3 Checking 1321 PC WELLCA	4,263.59
11	Total 10250 Pine Creek Site	7,002.20
10300 Sand Creek		
	10302 Checking 1697 - Men's Group	0.00
	10303 Checking 9235 - SC WELCA	0.00
	10304 Checking 5718 - Family Ed	0.00
	10305 Savings 3743 - Memorial Fund	0.00
	10305.1 AV Fund	0.00
	10305.12 Crisis Fund	0.00
	10305.13 Family Ed	0.00
	10305.14 Undesignated Memorial Funds	0.00
	10305.2 Culligan Softener	0.00
	10305.3 Landscape	0.00
	10305.4 Air Conditioner	0.00

	TOTAL
10305.5 Parking Lot	0.00
10305.6 Camperships	0.00
Total 10305 Savings 3743 - Memorial Fund	0.00
Total 10300 Sand Creek	0.00
12 10310 Savings - 2629 Memorial Fund (new)	3,112.03
13 10310.12 Crisis Fund	2,213.40
14 10310.13 Family Ed	1,115.33
15 10310.14 Undesignated Memorial Funds	28,845.05
16 10310.3 Landscape	91.25
17 10310.4 Air Conditioner	2,000.00
18 10310.5 Parking Lot	491.00
19 10310.6 Camperships	-10.00
20 Total 10310 Savings - 2629 Memorial Fund (new)	37,858.06
10350 Sand Creek Site	
21 10350.1 Checking 1277 SC Men's Group	11,892.35
22 10350.2 Checking 1288 SC WELLCA	6,372.19
23 10355 Saving 2629 Memorial Fund SC	-1,828.00
Total 10350 Sand Creek Site	16,436.54
24 10500 Thrivent Investment Acct - Esther Wright Fund	196,954.63
25 10505 Thrivent Investment Acct - Parsonage	223,299.04
26 Total Bank Accounts	\$493,773.35
27 Total Current Assets	\$493,773.35
28 TOTAL ASSETS	\$493,773.35
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Credit Cards	
29 71000 Security Bank -CC	2,276.65
30 Total Credit Cards	\$2,276.65
Other Current Liabilities	
72000 Payroll Liabilities	0.00
72100 Portico - FSA	0.00
72200 Portico - Retirement	0.00
72300 Portico - Vision	-12.00
72400 Portico - Supp Life	0.00
72500 Loan to General Fund from Memorial Fund	0.00
31 Total Other Current Liabilities	\$ -12.00
32 Total Current Liabilities	\$2,264.65
33 Total Liabilities	\$2,264.65
Equity	
90000 Opening Balance Equity	0.00
34 92000 Unrestricted Net Assets	15,721.13
35 93000 Restricted Net Assets	480,969.50
36 94000 Unrealized Gains/Losses	2,791.04
37 Net Revenue	-7,972.97
38 Total Equity	\$491,508.70
39 TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$493,773.35

New Hope Lutheran Church

Statement of Activity by Class

January - December 2025

	CONGREGATION	PINE CREEK	SAND CREEK	TOTAL
Revenue				
41000 Unrestricted Income				\$0.00
1 41100 Tithes/Offerings		27,634.97	163,402.01	\$191,036.98
2 41110 Thrivent Choice	277.00	500.00	4,031.00	\$4,808.00
3 41190 Interest		0.00		\$0.00
4 41195 Other Income	25.00			\$25.00
5 41199 Dividends/Interest	14,655.41			\$14,655.41
6 Total 41000 Unrestricted Income	14,957.41	28,134.97	167,433.01	\$210,525.39
42000 Restricted Income				\$0.00
7 42102 PC Sunday School		25.00		\$25.00
8 42103 PC WELCA		4,026.83		\$4,026.83
9 42104 Luther Park			120.00	\$120.00
10 42203 Benevolence Offerings				\$0.00
11 42203.1 Mission Support- Synod		150.00	11,065.00	\$11,215.00
12 42203.2 Noisy Offering		1,485.03	10,063.95	\$11,548.98
13 42203.3 Other Benevolence			2,245.00	\$2,245.00
14 Total 42203 Benevolence Offerings		1,635.03	23,373.95	\$25,008.98
15 42206 Flowers	155.00		885.00	\$1,040.00
16 42301 SC Men's Group	50.00		2,345.00	\$2,395.00
17 42303 SC WELCA			9,065.96	\$9,065.96
18 42305 Memorial Fund				\$0.00
19 42305.14 Undesignated Memorial Funds			3,307.97	\$3,307.97
20 42305.6 Camperships			40.00	\$40.00
21 42305.8 Family Education			160.00	\$160.00
22 42305.9 Crisis Fund			105.00	\$105.00
23 Total 42305 Memorial Fund			3,612.97	\$3,612.97
24 Total 42000 Restricted Income	205.00	5,686.86	39,402.88	\$45,294.74
25 Total Revenue	\$15,162.41	\$33,821.83	\$206,835.89	\$255,820.13
GROSS PROFIT	\$15,162.41	\$33,821.83	\$206,835.89	\$255,820.13
Expenditures				
50100 Administration				\$0.00
26 50101 Office Supplies & Equipment	9,709.21			\$9,709.21
27 50102 Insurance Expense	15,383.44			\$15,383.44
28 50103 Treasurer/Bookkeeper	8,300.50			\$8,300.50
29 50104 Bank Service Charges	1,226.96			\$1,226.96
30 50104-2 Investment Account Fees	2,135.94			\$2,135.94
31 Total 50104 Bank Service Charges	3,362.90			\$3,362.90

	50105 Payroll				\$0.00
	50105.1 Salaries & Wages				\$0.00
	50105.11 Pastor	0.00			\$0.00
32	50105.111 Salary & Housing	59,279.75			\$59,279.75
33	50105.112 Soc Sec Allowance	4,535.82			\$4,535.82
34	50105.113 Pension & Benefits	19,944.54			\$19,944.54
35	50105.114 Mileage	1,793.40			\$1,793.40
36	Total 50105.11 Pastor	85,553.51			\$85,553.51
37	50105.12 Office Administrator	24,361.84			\$24,361.84
38	50105.13 Organist/Other Musicians	5,800.00			\$5,800.00
39	50105.14 Custodian		3,382.56	9,430.02	\$12,812.58
40	Total 50105.1 Salaries & Wages	115,715.35	3,382.56	9,430.02	\$128,527.93
41	50105.2 Payroll Taxes	2,253.83	258.77	721.40	\$3,234.00
42	Total 50105 Payroll	117,969.18	3,641.33	10,151.42	\$131,761.93
43	50106 Telephone, Internet, Ministry, Cell	600.00	1,409.84	2,327.47	\$4,337.31
44	50108 Council, Convention, Misc	150.00			\$150.00
45	Total 50100 Administration	155,475.23	5,051.17	12,478.89	\$173,005.29
	50200 Worship				\$0.00
46	50201 Worship Supplies	5,390.79		167.69	\$5,558.48
47	50202 Pulpit Supply	1,927.20			\$1,927.20
48	Total 50200 Worship	7,317.99		167.69	\$7,485.68
49	50300 Family Ed	181.78			\$181.78
50	50301 SS, VBS, Youth	966.42			\$966.42
51	Total 50300 Family Ed	1,148.20			\$1,148.20
52	50400 Outreach, Stewardship, & Evangelism	585.00		421.37	\$1,006.37
53	50500 Property	18.67			\$18.67
54	50501 Snow Removal		550.00		\$550.00
55	50502 Janitorial Supplies			1,296.12	\$1,296.12
56	50503 Lawn Mowing		100.00	2,290.12	\$2,390.12
57	50504 Electricity		2,214.99	3,387.96	\$5,602.95
58	50505 Water			1,144.58	\$1,144.58
59	50506 Garbage/Sewer			685.00	\$685.00
60	50507 LP Propane	7,654.65	1,416.94	3,401.78	\$12,473.37
61	50509 Repairs and Maintenance		245.64	7,053.37	\$7,299.01
62	50510 Building and Property Security		602.82	602.58	\$1,205.40
63	Total 50500 Property	7,673.32	5,130.39	19,861.51	\$32,665.22
	62000 Restricted Expenses				\$0.00
64	62102 Sunday School		116.11		\$116.11
65	62103 PC WELCA		2,165.81		\$2,165.81
66	62104 Luther Park			120.00	\$120.00

	CONGREGATION	PINE CREEK	SAND CREEK	TOTAL
67 62203 Benevolence				\$0.00
68 62203.1 Mission Support - Synod	57.68	175.00	11,085.00	\$11,317.68
69 62203.2 Noisy Offering	9,112.90		250.00	\$9,362.90
70 62203.3 Other Benevolence			2,040.00	\$2,040.00
70 Total 62203 Benevolence	9,170.58	175.00	13,375.00	\$22,720.58
71 62206 Flowers	899.80			\$899.80
72 62301 SC Men's Group			2,172.13	\$2,172.13
73 62303 SC WELCA			9,014.34	\$9,014.34
74 62305 Memorial Fund				\$0.00
75 62305.14 Undesignated Memorial Funds	3,107.33		4,543.30	\$7,650.63
76 62305.6 Camperships	1,125.00			\$1,125.00
77 Total 62305 Memorial Fund	4,232.33		4,543.30	\$8,775.63
78 Total 62000 Restricted Expenses	14,302.71	2,456.92	29,224.77	\$45,984.40
79 Total Expenditures	\$186,502.45	\$12,638.48	\$62,154.23	\$261,295.16
80 NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$ -171,340.04	\$21,183.35	\$144,681.66	\$ -5,475.03
Other Expenditures				
81 66600 Bank Fraud	2,497.94			\$2,497.94
82 Total Other Expenditures	\$2,497.94	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,497.94
83 NET OTHER REVENUE	\$ -2,497.94	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$ -2,497.94
84 NET REVENUE	\$ -173,837.98	\$21,183.35	\$144,681.66	\$ -7,972.97

Thank you so much for strengthening our ministry through your generosity!

Historical Giving Summary

Giving Historical Summary	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
General Offerings/Thrivent Choice	\$180,090	\$171,875	\$200,354	\$196,122	\$210,525
TOTAL w/ Benevolence Giving	\$241,501	\$204,124	\$227,472	\$224,408.	\$255,820

Historical and 2026 Budget Summary		Actual 2022	Actual 2023	Actual 2024	Actual 2025	Proposed 2026
1	Convention/Heart of the North Expenses	100	100	748	150	300
2	Insurance	8,770	8,143	11,915	15,383	14,000
3	Office (Equip, post, inv/bank fees, repairs, supplies, software)	11,679	10,250	10,306	13,072	13,361
4	Parish Treasurer (Clergy Financial)	4,500	9,958	7,296	8,300	8,400
5	Pastor's Mileage @ .655/mile	1,380	0	2,350	1,793	1,500
6	Pastor's Pension & Benefits	16,716	15,168	20,120	19,945	13,500
7	Pastor's Salary/Housing	54,487	56,700	57,834	59,298	39,520
8	Pastor's Social Security Allowance	4,172	4,340	4,427	4,536	3,024
9	Memorial--Staffing Fund	0	0	0	0	20,000
10	Pastor's Meeting, books & Conferences	0	0	0	0	0
11	Pulpit Supply	3,800	2,650	2,750	1,927	2,000
12	Offie Administrator Salary	20,280	22,297	23,280	24,362	24,506
13	Other Payroll Expenses	3,268	2,399	2,429	2,254	2,800
14	Organist/Pianist	5,850	5,335	6,000	5,800	6,000
15	Worship	8,603	4,129	4,295	5,558	4,000
16	Family Education	1,211	1,552	1,476	1,264	1,400
	Outreach, Stewardship and Evangelism				1,006	1,000
17	Telephone, Internet, Cell	1,700	600	2,396	4,337	4,337
	PC & SC MUTUAL PARISH TOTAL	146,516	143,621	157,622	168,985	159,648
18	PC Snow Removal	0	550	550	550	550
19	PC Custodian	2,943	3,136	3,300	2,819	3,480
20	PC Lawn Mowing	0	200	100	100	100
21	PC Financial Secretary/SS	0	0	252	0	252
22	PC Electricity	2,109	2,285	2,010	1,883	2,300
23	PC Janitorial and Supplies	0	0	40	0	100
24	PC LP Propane	4,734	2,744	0	3,108	4,500
25	PC Telephone	1,400	1,856	1,292	1,175	1,400
26	PC Repairs & Maintenance	681	4,847	620	2,967	600
27	PC Mission Support/Benevolence	1,712	4,200	2,121	1,389	800
	PINE CREEK SITE TOTAL	13,579	19,818	10,285	13,991	14,082
28	SC Snow Removal	200	200	200	0	1,000
29	SC Janitorial and Supplies	223	350	502	1,296	800
30	SC Custodian	9,999	10,073	9,230	7,863	9,690
31	SC Lawn Mowing	1,860	1,500	1,624	2,042	3,000
32	SC Financial Secretary/SS	582	600	706	0	600
33	SC Electricity	3,823	3,621	3,935	2,827	3,700
34	SC Water, Garbage & Sanitation	812	1,311	518	1,499	1,500
35	SC LP Propane	7,101	6,403	195	8,157	10,800
36	SC Telephone	1,223	1,720	438	1,901	2,570
37	SC Repairs ad Maintenance	11,197	10,667	10,432	7,105	10,000
38	SC Mission/Benevolence	16,346	24,959	26,165	22,721	13,500
	SAND CREEK SITE TOTAL	53,366	61,404	53,945	55,411	57,160
	NEW HOPE CONGREGATION TOTAL	213,461	224,843	221,852	238,387	230,890

CHURCH COUNCIL 2026 BALLOT

Thank you to those completing their terms:

Stephani North, Joe Bilodeau, John Loy, Marie Swanson, and Dawn Kunkel

Officers

C11.02. Congregation Council shall elect its officers and they shall be the officers of this congregation. Officers shall be elected by written ballot and shall serve for 1 year or until their successors are elected. Their terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which they are elected.

C11.03. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time. No elected officer shall be eligible to serve more than 2 consecutive terms in the same office.

2025 COUNCIL OFFICERS

President	Linda Bilodeau
Vice President	Joyce Gilberts
Secretary	Marie Swanson
Treasurer	Joe Bilodeau

Committees: 3-yr terms; may serve 2 terms consecutively

****Beginning 2nd Term***

****Vacancies for Election/Nominations***

FAMILY EDUCATION

Samantha Goodremote	1st term	2024-26
Kristi Welle	1st term	2025-27
Jesse Buhr	2nd term	2026-28
*	1st term	2026-28

PROP & MANAGEMENT

Mark Gilberts	(SC)	2nd term	2024-26
Lon Christopherson	(PC)	2nd term	2025-27
Jerry Loftus	(SC)	2nd term	2026-28
*Vern Ellefson	(PC)	1st term	2026-28

OUTREACH

Pat Bechard	2nd term	2024-26
Joyce Gilberts	2nd term	2024-26
*Bonnie Halberg	1st term	2026-28
Linda Bilodeau	2nd term	2026-28

WORSHIP & MUSIC

Lou Ann Gilberts	2nd term	2024-26
Roger Paulson	1st term	2024-26
*Becky Schnacky	1st term	2026-28
*Mary Peterson	1st term	2026-28

DELEGATES 2026

Luther Park Bible Camp Annual Meeting

Saturday, February 7, 26

9:30a Refreshments 10a Meeting Lunch

Anyone may attend but only 3 from each congregation may serve as delegates (clergy or lay); each shall have 1 vote.

2 congregational delegates to be elected (RSVP by 1/30/26)

***Pastor**

*

*

ANNUAL SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Date to be announced

2 congregational delegates to be elected

***Pastor**

*

*



NEW HOPE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

*A welcoming community of faith inspired
by God's grace to love, grow & serve.*

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

Ends Her Season Serving the ELCA

Ending at the Beginning Farewell 9/19/25

I started my ministry as presiding bishop with these four emphases: We are church. We are Lutheran. We are church together. We are church for the sake of the world. I will end as I began.

We are church. There is no other institution on earth whose reason for being is the proclamation of the gospel. “It is also taught that at all times there must be and remain one holy, Christian church. It is the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel” (Augsburg Confession, Article VII). That’s it. The works we do in service to the world are important, but they are not the essence of the church. The ELCA does not exist in order to work for justice. Rather, because we are nourished by word and sacraments, the ELCA is free and empowered to do so.

The church is also marvelously intricate and interconnected. “We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another” (Romans 12:5). There is no such thing as a solitary Christian. God’s love for us through Christ and poured into our hearts by the Spirit is for each of us. But each of us is just one member of the body of Christ. We understand the church in the same way. “This church shall seek to function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, all of which shall be interdependent. Each part, while fully the church, recognizes that it is not the whole church and therefore lives in an interdependent relationship with the others”. (ELCA “Constitutions, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions” 8.11.)



Be assured that the season for the ELCA is not over. God hasn't finished with this church yet.

We are Lutheran. The average Lutheran in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is a woman in Tanzania. There are more Lutherans in Ethiopia, Indonesia and Madagascar than in the ELCA. The LWF has 150 member churches in 99 countries. What binds us together? Certainly not one culture or cuisine. Rather, it is the clear witness of the gospel that sets us free. “It is taught that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God through our merit, work, or satisfactions, but that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God out of grace for Christ’s sake through faith ...” (Augsburg Confession, Article IV).

This is revolutionary. The standards of the world by which we are measured, or we measure others, are a figment. We don’t claim perfection for the church. We’re not there. But as Martin Luther said, “This life therefore is not righteousness but growth in righteousness, not health but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it, the process is not yet finished, but it is going on, this is not the end, but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory, but all is being purified” (“Defense and Explanation of All the Articles”). We know there is law and gospel, that we are saint and sinner, that we are bound and free, and we entrust that all to God.

We are church together. Paul wrote that we do not live to ourselves. We live in a time when fear is used to separate us. This is the tool of every authoritarian regime. The church is different. The Spirit calls, gathers and keeps the whole church on earth. We belong to God, we belong to each other, and we belong to the world.

We are church for the sake of the world. We are not only freed from sin, we are freed for service to the neighbor. Here is where the essence of the church—the proclamation of the gospel—gives power and shape to the work we do in Jesus’ name. We are church for the sake of the world not out of obligation or for reward but out of love.

So there it is, dear church, my farewell address. We each have this ministry for a season. My season as presiding bishop has ended. Bishop-elect Yehiel Curry’s season is about to begin. Pray for him, his family and the churchwide staff. But be assured that the season for the ELCA is not over. God hasn’t finished with this church yet.



Welcome, Yehiel Curry

New Presiding Bishop of the ELCA

Rev. Yehiel Curry was elected presiding bishop of the ELCA at the July 20th Church-wide Assembly in Phoenix, AZ. His role began Oct. 1st. He was installed Oct. 4th at Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis.

Recently, he served as bishop of the ELCA Metropolitan Chicago Synod, leading a synod staff and 160 congregations; providing pastoral care, preaching, teaching, administering sacraments, and overseeing ordinations/installations. He was elected synod bishop in 2019 and reelected spring 2025. Curry chaired the ELCA Conference of Bishops, fostering ecumenical relationships and theological engagement across the Lutheran communion.

Previously, Curry served as mission developer (2007–12) and pastor (2013–19) of Shekinah Chapel Lutheran Church in Riverdale, IL. He earned a Bachelor of Arts from Lewis University in Romeoville, IL, and a Master of Divinity from Chicago Lutheran School of Theology. He and his wife, LaShonda, are proud parents of three daughters.

“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”

Colossians 2: 6-7

As Lutherans, we are set free to love our neighbors and seek justice. I am abounding in thankfulness for you, church. You are an integral part of this mission we envision a world experiencing the difference God’s grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation. Ministries of congregations including yours, our synods and ELCA church-wide organization all work together today and every day so more people may know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love. From providing food to people experiencing hunger; to helping train the next generation of leaders that will lead this church, your support is at work here at home and around the world.

Your generosity to each of the three expressions of the church—your congregation, your synod and the church-wide organization—has made it possible for us to do this work together. Your financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices are so valued.

As we look ahead in the coming year, I encourage you to continue to walk in Christ, remembering you are rooted and established in faith, and free to love and serve your neighbors. Thank you, church, for the ways you connect with and support our siblings across the ELCA and in our communities.

*In Christ,
Rev. Yehiel Curry
Presiding Bishop/ELCA*

Martin Holm

Bishop of Northwest Synod of WI

To the amazing disciples of the Northwest,

As I reflect on this past year, one of the most significant moments came at the fall Conference of Bishops, which was held immediately following the installation of our ELCA Presiding Bishop, Yehiel Curry. In his first address to the conference, he talked about a one word focus for his first year, *connection*. As soon as he said it, I was already engaged, especially since that has been one of my goals in my first year!

As I tour this great synod of ours, I’ve already been to over 50 churches representing over 60 congregations. It helps a lot when I can experience a worship opportunity where multiple churches come together, as was the case in Menomonie and Eau Claire! Needless to say, I enjoy learning about the history and more importantly, the people that each congregation has to offer. So distinctive, yet at the same time, we are all still a part of the same team, connected by our common faith and common mission to love our neighbors.

Speaking of our neighbors, I’ve made it a priority to lift up the important ministry of “Neighbor to Neighbor”, staffed by Deacon Lidix Montoya and supported by a newly appointed board at last year’s synod assembly. It was at that same assembly where we adopted a resolution to raise \$175,000 over three years to support this ministry that is already making great strides in supporting the Latino community throughout our synod. I would invite you personally to contribute toward this goal and/or increase what your church contributes to this ministry on an ongoing basis. “Neighbor to Neighbor” is a ministry that is so critical right now as so many of our Latino friends live in constant fear of deportation, which can inhibit their ability to even worship in public! We have a tremendous opportunity to show them they are loved and valued, so let’s come together for this important purpose.

Another highlight of 2025 was attending my first ever Church-wide Assembly in Phoenix, AZ. In addition to electing the first black Church-wide Secretary, CeeCee Mills and Presiding Bishop, Yehiel Curry, we also passed yet another social statement, *Faith and Civic Life*. The rostered leaders of the synod will be spending some time digesting it at our upcoming Winter Theological Event in hopes to equip them to lead a study in your church. I would strongly encourage you to participate in this study as it addresses many of our current realities, including the issue of Christian Nationalism. This is a strong movement that is sweeping the country, but remains largely in conflict with our Lutheran beliefs. *Faith and Civic Life* conversations can help us all remain rooted in our faith and help us understand how to be engaged in life beyond worship.

To close, I’d like to thank you for your relationship to the synod. We truly can do more together, staying *connected*. We cannot reach out to the many different groups throughout the synod without your generosity. May we continue to innovate in 2026 as we work collaboratively together and share the love of God throughout our communities!

Privileged to serve,
Bishop Martin





*A welcoming community of faith inspired
by God's grace to love, grow & serve.*