



THE MESSENGER

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION FROM
VERMONT LUTHERAN CHURCH

May 2025



Vermont Lutheran Church's Mission Statement:
Christians Actively Reaching Out Experiencing Christ and Spreading His Word

Pastor's Message

Ask the Pastor Anything....

This month, rather than me answering your questions, I'd like you to answer one of mine. Here is my question:

Where is Christ calling you to rise?

I ask this question because Easter may be over, but Eastertide not. Eastertide is comprised of the fifty days between Easter and Pentecost. Eastertide invites us to live as resurrection people.

It is a time when the risen Christ encounters his disciples, breaks bread with them, speaks peace and hope to their fears, and sets them to work. And their work was simply to live as resurrection people. So where is Christ calling you to rise?

Is he calling you to rise above your worry and anxiety, your grief and loss, your fear and despair? Is he calling you to feed the hungry, visit the sick, struggle for justice, offer your prayers, and proclaim the good news? Because like Easter, Eastertide is not merely an event. It's a way of life -- new life.

Just as Spring is a time to savor the season, Eastertide is as well. The Holy Spirit of Pentecost will soon be here to seal the deal. In the meantime, ask yourself, Where is Christ calling you to rise?

With you in His Spirit,

Pastor Rebecca

Announcements

Gale	Kennedy	May 01
Ruth	Ohlrogge	May 02
William	Kennedy	May 03
Daniel	Orth	May 03
Casey	Schultz	May 03
Connor	Danz	May 04
Joan	Skalet	May 04
Charlene	Meier	May 06
Derek	Adler	May 07
Jenny	Pappas	May 07
Carey	Norslien	May 08
Peder	Ohlrogge	May 08
James	Stapelmann	May 08
Lavonne	Clason	May 09
Bruce	Case	May 10
Shaye	Doyle	May 12
Ellie	Boebel	May 13
Luke	Haugen	May 15
Pat	Powers	May 15
Mark	Haukoos	May 16
Russell	Severson	May 16
William Jr	Kennedy	May 17
Joel	Oines	May 18
Jeffrey	Radder	May 18
Michael	Syrjamaki	May 18
Taylor	Ziemet	May 18
Aaron	Oines	May 19
Karsten	Kvam	May 20
Jonathan	Schultz	May 22
Brianna	Herrling	May 24
Christy	Maik	May 25
Gaila	Olsen	May 26
Grace	Powers	May 26
Brenna	Dauck	May 27
Jensen	Doyle	May 29
Justine	Myers	May 31

Welcome Janet!

We are pleased to introduce Janet Dahl as our new Office Coordinator. Janet's first day at Vermont is April 29th. So, when you contact the church via phone or email (vermontoffice@vermontlutheran.org), your message will be answered by Janet or she will get your message to the right person to contact you back.

Janet was a member here several years ago and was the Black Earth elementary school music teacher for many years. After her retirement, she held several positions at other churches where she became a member. When she noticed that our position was open, she applied and we're happy to have her "come home."

CARES Team

Be a part of the team! The CARES Team is seeking volunteers specifically to assist with spring clean-up for local community members. If you're interested in helping, please reach out to Ellie Boebel ellieboebel@tds.net or sign up on the sheet located in the fellowship hall.

Prayer Chain Request

Hannah Clingman, our Faith Community LPN is Vermont's NEW Prayer Chain Contact! You can reach Hannah at this new email or her usual phone number. health@vermontlutheran.org or 608-400-7038

If you know someone who would like prayers, call or email Hannah and the prayer chain will be activated. Please let the office know if you want to be added as a member of the Prayer Chain group.

Baby Shower

Join us on June 1st during hospitality to celebrate the upcoming arrival of a precious little one as we honor Hannah and the newest addition to their family! We can't wait to share in the excitement and joy of this special time. Stay tuned for details!

Happy
Birthday

Health Ministry Message

We live in a rapidly changing world that can be complex to navigate. About half of Americans can remember a time when we were not constantly connected and it was easier to tune out the noise of the world, while the younger half of the population can't imagine life without the internet.

Modern life can have a significant impact on mental health — for better or for worse. “Breaking News” in media occurs several times per day. The disturbing imagery we are exposed to can be deeply unsettling. At the same time, our current technology also allows us to mobilize and provide collective support more efficiently in times of natural disasters or injustice.

And ironically, while our devices make us more connected than ever, loneliness is an increasingly serious public health concern. We are now able to have conversations with friends and family on the other side of the world in real time. However, constant connection also means that we will know if we weren't invited to a friend's party down the street. Recent survey data show that more than half of U.S. adults (58%) are lonely.

Finding a sense of calm and focusing on well-being when you are having mental health concerns can be daunting in our fast-paced society. It can be especially challenging to know where to start.

May is Mental Health Month and I want to encourage you to take action towards protecting your mental health.

Mental Health America, SAMHSA, NAMI have created a toolkit to help us figure out where to start. The toolkit provides free, practical resources for addressing mental health. Go to mhanational.org/may, samhsa.gov, or nami.org to learn more.

If you think you may be experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition and are unsure of where to start, take a free, private mental health test at mhascreening.org to determine the next steps.

It is important to remember that working on your mental health takes time. Change will not happen overnight. Instead, by focusing on small changes, you can move through the stressors of modern life and develop long-term strategies to support yourself — and others — on an ongoing basis. The In-Reach team inclusive of myself are here to support you. **YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**



Hannah Clingman
Faith Community LPN
health@vermontlutheran.org
(608) 400-7038



Happenings

Group Planning Discussions

The good news is that our congregation is growing and our committees and teams are actively establishing projects and initiatives that will make us an even more vibrant and engaged congregation. But as this has been taking place it became evident that we need to do a better job of setting our course and communicating about what is all happening.

To that end, the Council requested that a series of planning discussions take place where representatives from the Council, committees and teams would create a strategy for how we proceed over the next few years. Polly Kawalek and Ron Boehnen will facilitate the discussions.

Three sessions in May are scheduled after which we'll provide a summary and ask for the full congregation's input to finalize the plan.

Peter Antonie, president.



I saw the sign...

Vermont Lutheran Church has a billboard!! It went up near the 4-way stop in Pine Bluff.

The Legacy Committee is sponsoring the sign and has been working on it in conjunction with the Visibility Committee and Church Council since last fall.

A special thank you to the Lonsdale family for serving as our models and their patience during the amateur photo-taking session.



For information about the **Synod** subscribe to their newsletter here.

<https://scsw-elca.org/engage/>

Happenings

Adopt -a-Highway Pickup

Your Care for Creation team is looking for volunteers to help with picking up Vermont Church's section of highway 78 on Monday, May 12th at 6 PM (rain date Monday May 19th).

Meet in the west side parking lot. Sign up on the sheet in the fellowship hall or contact Peter Antonie.



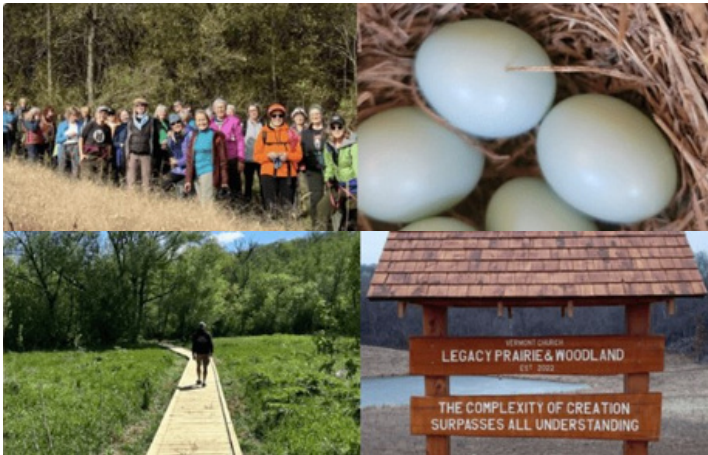
Church in the Wild

The synod's Caring for Creation team is holding a Wild Church worship service here at Vermont on Saturday, May 10th from 10 am - noon.

This worship service is really a time for you to worship God's creation by being outside in our Prairie & Woodland.

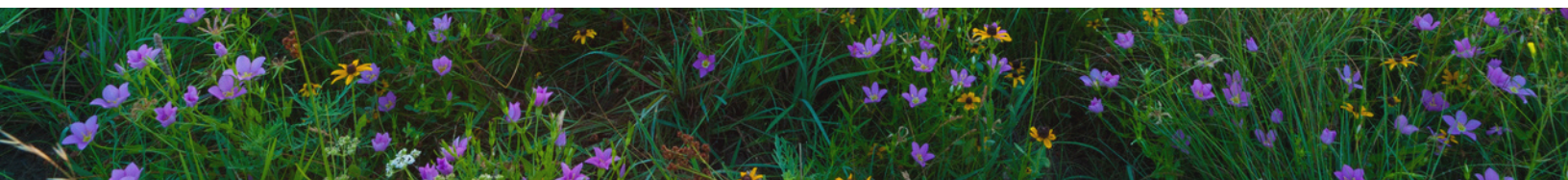
There are two posters in the Fellowship Hall explaining the event. Participants are asked to register in advance. To do so, use this link: [South-Central Synod of Wisconsin | Church in the Wild](#)

For more information, contact Peter Antonie.



Music Appreciation Service

Join us on May 18th for a worship service even more filled with music as the choir delights us with special performances, complemented by the incredible talents of our church musicians. Invite a friend and come experience the rich musical heritage of Vermont!



Update

Second Annual Jigsaw Puzzle Contest Ends in Stiff Competition

The Contest which ran from February 14 to April 27 ended with clear Winners in all three age categories!

They are: Ages 1-14: Adam Clancy and his assistant Rebecca Clancy 6 puzzles

Ages 15-60: Kim Haugen and her assistant Pat Heim. 10 puzzles

Ages 61-100: Dean Berkas 14 puzzles

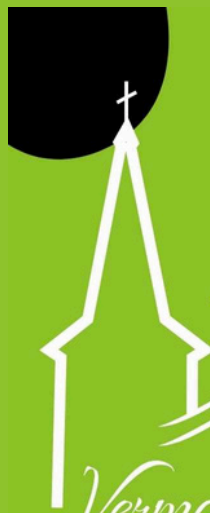
Grand Winner: Dean Berkas!

On Sunday May 4, they received their recognition, certificates and prizes, which were not surprisingly a new Puzzle plus a gift certificate for the grand prize!

Thanks to all the participants and to those who considered it but couldn't quite work it in this time. Puzzles are available to check out at any time of year and new ones are being added on a regular basis. Suggestions are always appreciated!



Upcoming Events



Vermont Lutheran
CHURCH



Car Wash

"BY SUDS ALONE"



Sunday, May 18th at 10:30 am

The confirmands will be hosting a car wash!!! Don't miss getting your car cleaned while helping the kids raise funds for their mission: WorldWide Microfinance—helping women in impoverished countries to succeed in business.

**9886 Vermont Church Road Black Earth
(just off Hwy 78)**



Upcoming Events

HUNTER SAFETY/ADAPTIVE SELF DEFENSE FOR WOMEN EVENT



Hunter Safety.

May 8 and 9, 2025: 6:30 - 8:30 pm - Instruction
May 10, 2025: 8:30 am - 1:30 pm - Field Training
Vermont Lutheran Church
9886 Vermont Church Rd.
Black Earth WI 53515
608-630-1066



*Women's Self Defense-May 10th at 2:00 pm

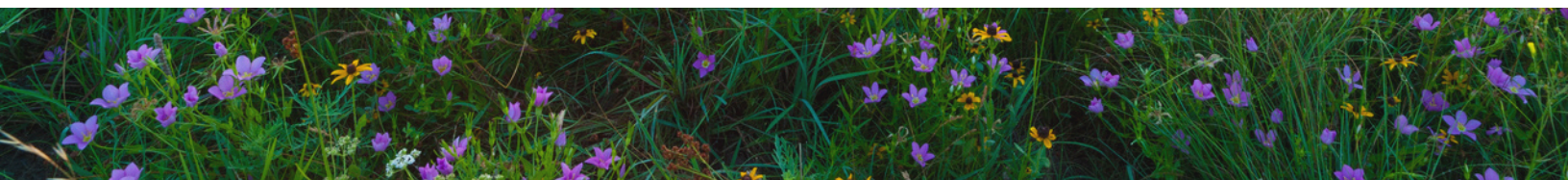
See Bill Meddings 608-630-1066 or wtm2@chorus.net

The annual Hunter Safety Training Course will take place again this year in the Gathering Place. There are slots for 20 student participants, and no age restriction for enrollment. Newly added this year will be a safe handling and practice course for those wishing to attend just that portion.

Memorial Day Honor Salute

As part of its five-stop Memorial Day schedule, the honor guard of Black Earth Legion Post 313 is scheduled to be at the Vermont Lutheran Church Veteran's Memorial at 10:30am on Memorial Day, Monday, May 26.

Last year's attendance by Vermonters was outstanding...let's do it again!



Committee Updates

Organ Committee

The organ committee thanks the congregation for the vote to proceed with the organ project! All votes cast at the Annual Meeting were "yes!"

The pipes are being restored by a shop in Methuen, MA. This work will take most of the summer.

As a reminder, the congregation approved a total of \$275,000 for the project. With monies in hand and pledges, we have \$195,000 toward our goal! We are grateful to all who have contributed/pledged. We are planning a display at the Summer Picnic to alert the community to our future organ! We are also planning a Moon dinner as our official fundraiser kick off in July.

The committee will provide monthly updates in the Messenger.

Thanks,
The Vermont Organ Committee



Just some of the 588 pipes in the restoration shop

Vermont Veteran's Memorial

Vermont is a growing congregation and perhaps we have new members who were/are veterans but don't have their names listed on the Veteran's Memorial. Or, we may have omitted some names from our last update last year.

In any case, we want to list all Vermont veterans whether they served during WWII, Korea, Viet Nam or the section known as Gulf War and Beyond.



If you know someone who should be added to our beautiful veterans memorial please contact Jon Urness by Memorial Day and we'll add the name in our next update.

It's a simple process, we contract with Spellman Monument to engrave the names on site.



Meeting #1 - Creek evaluation **Legacy Committee**

Called to Order - Friday 4/4 9:00 a.m. starting at the creek

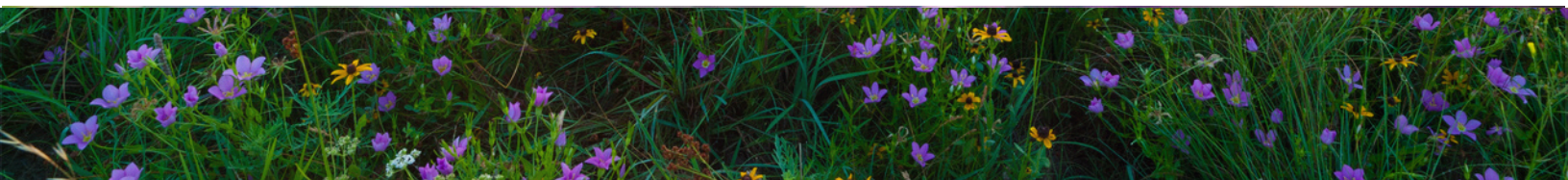
This was not an "official" organizational meeting, but since we did make some decisions at the end of it, I am including it in the minutes. I was not a part of all the conversations, but I believe I captured the essence of the meeting.

Friday morning 4/4/25 at 9:00 a.m. the Legacy committee met with representatives from Dane County, Wisconsin DNR, Trout Unlimited, and EC3 to discuss/assess the current status and condition of the section Vermont creek that runs through VLC property and to see what is possible to protect and enhance what we have.

Discussions included:

- Current activities to rid the area of invasives, which involved forestry mowing and upcoming rounds of foliar spraying.
- Existing seed bank. The forestry mowing done around the area has removed a lot of cover so that much more light will reach the soil. Mowing has also slightly disturbed the soil. As a result, we should see dormant seeds start growing in the next year or two. Some of these will be beneficial, and some not.

continued..





Committee Updates

2025 Vermont Legacy Committee Minutes continued..

- Creek bank and streambed conditions. Everyone agreed that our section of creek is really a gem, and is a great example of a meandering creek. The creek banks have varying degrees of slope, erosion and connectivity to the floodplain. There are several places where various fallen trees and branch debris are in the creek. Most of it is temporary as floods will displace it, but some is more permanent. There are pros and cons to this, but it is mostly seen as a positive that increases fish habitat. Several techniques could be used to protect and preserve the creek.

At the end of the meeting, the Legacy committee approved having Dane county engineers evaluate and create a plan to protect and improve the creek. It's estimated that the plan would be developed over the remainder of 2025 so that recommended actions, permits, and contractors could potentially be lined for 2026 and beyond.

Meeting #1 adjourned at roughly 11:30

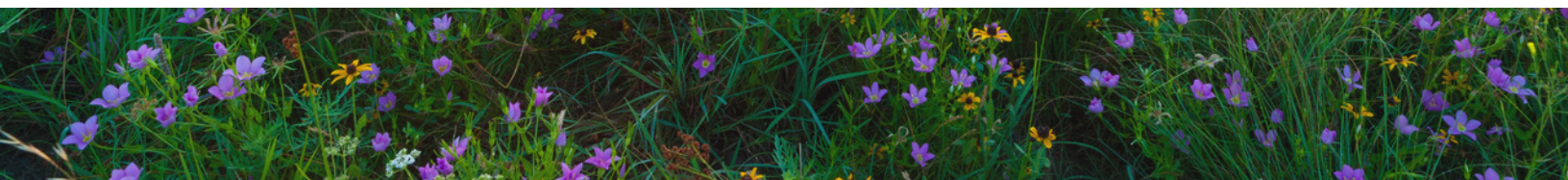
Meeting #2 – Organizational meeting

Called to Order - Friday 4/4 11:45 a.m. in the Gathering Place

First order of business was to welcome Peter to the committee as the council representative. In addition, Peter agreed to fill the vacant Legacy chairperson position with unanimous approval from the rest of the committee.

The second topic was the main focus for calling the spring meeting. Since the purchase of the land a few years ago, there has been some confusion on what types of activities and projects the Legacy fund is authorized to spend money on.

continued..





Committee Updates

2025 Vermont Legacy Committee Minutes continued..

The current resolution's purpose statement is:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the purpose of the Legacy Fund is to:

- 1. Receive bequests, grants and/or gifts to expand the cemetery and develop and maintain the adjacent land in a manner that maximizes its natural beauty and preserves its ecological importance; and,**
- 2. Provide funds to pay property taxes on the portion of the adjacent land subject to taxes; and,**
3. Provide funds for future maintenance of the cemetery and building and grounds needs of the Church.

The original goal of the Legacy fund (prior to the purpose statements above) was to acquire land to expand the cemetery and adjacent land to preserve the natural beauty of the church, as well as to serve as an "insurance policy/emergency fund" in the event the church operations would dissolve, but the buildings and cemetery needed to be maintained.

Since the purchase of the land for the cemetery and adjacent prairie and woodlands, the focus/ purpose of the fund was changed allowing for development and maintenance, and tax payments for the adjacent land and as #3 states: future maintenance of the cemetery and building and grounds need of the church.

Statement #3 in the Legacy purposes is the clause that has been interpreted differently. Some have interpreted it as the original goal of only for "insurance policy/emergency fund", and some have interpreted it being available for general church building and ground needs, such a new furnace, etc.

After much discussion, the committee agreed that the Legacy fund should not be available for general church building and ground needs, and even though the church is in much better financial status than when the fund originated, it should still be considered an "insurance policy/emergency fund" using the equity in the land as a funding source.

continued..





Committee Updates

2025 Vermont Legacy Committee Minutes continued..

The discussion concluded with the following motion:

Motion: Revise the current Legacy Fund Purpose statements in the following ways:

- Statement #1: Add wording to allow spending funds for the promotion of the prairie and woodlands
- Add a Statement #2: Add wording to allow spending to buy and or sell land in the best interest of the congregation
- Move current statement #2 to #3
-

(MOVED: Greg Herrling/Leonard Schaub) -Unanimously approved

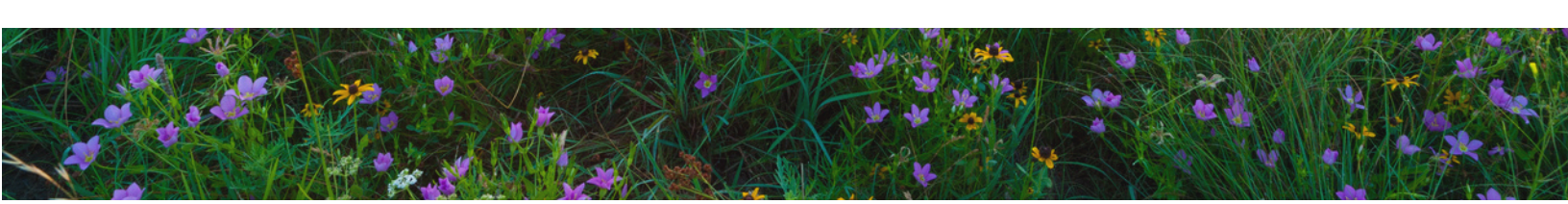
Peter will work on wording revisions and pass along to the committee for discussion and approval. Once approved it will be forwarded to the church council for discussion and hopeful approval.

The next order of business was discussion of the many downed and potentially dangerous poplar trees in stand #2 since the storm last year. Leonard will be working with a logging contractor to see if any of those trees have value and could be removed and low or no cost and to minimize disruption to the woodland and trail networks.

Final discussion for the meeting was around the Cushman property being sold in some fashion in the next few months and if there are opportunities to purchase that property. The property is in financial distress and will be sold soon (by bank? auction? realtor?). The purchase would definitely enhance/ maximize natural beauty and preservation of the prairie and woodland given the current condition of the Cushman property. No motions or further actions were formalized as part of the meeting.

Meeting #2 adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Karsten Haugen, committee secretary



Our Legacy...

Become a member of the Legacy Fund. Members of the Legacy Fund are united by a desire to preserve our beautiful Church, Cemetery, and adjoining land. Vermont Lutheran Church owns and maintains a cemetery, historic church building, Gathering Place, and 115 acres of adjacent land with a hilltop viewscape. Christian stewardship involves faithfully managing all the gifts God has given us, including accumulated, inherited, and appreciated resources. Therefore, we created the Legacy Fund to encourage, receive, and administer these gifts.

Our goal is to generate and maintain a Legacy Fund of \$1 Million dollars or more. Through receipt of bequests, grants and/or gifts, contributions to the Legacy Fund and investment growth will serve three very important purposes now and into the future

- Receive bequests, grants and/or gifts to expand the cemetery and develop and maintain the adjacent land in a manner that maximizes its natural beauty and preserves its ecological importance; and,
- Provide funds to pay property taxes on the portion of the adjacent land subject to taxes; and,
- Provide funds for future maintenance of the cemetery and building and grounds needs of the Church.

Any legacy member whose contribution totals \$1,000 or more will be recognized with a brass plate on a prominently displayed plaque. Annual meeting reports will include all the names of those individuals who contributed any amount that year.

Financials: April 2025

Contributions:	Actual	Budget	Diff.
Monthly	\$15,366	\$16,350	(\$984)
YTD	\$86,823	\$65,400	\$21,423
Operating Expenses	Actual	Budget	Diff.
Monthly	\$17,862	\$25,293	(\$7,432)
YTD	\$109,492	\$101,173	\$8,318
Balance	Actual	Budget	Diff.
Monthly	(\$2,496)	(\$8,943)	\$6,448
YTD	(\$22,669)	(\$35,773)	\$13,105

Looking Ahead...

Baby Shower - Sunday, June 1st

Horribly Hilly Aide Station - Saturday, June 14th

Community Church Picnic - Saturday, June 21st

Yoga - Thursdays at 10:30 am Gathering Place

Choir Rehearsal — Every Wednesday at 6:30 PM

Quilters — Every 1st and 3rd Monday at 8:30 AM

Contact us

Office: vermontoffice@vermontlutheran.org

Pastor Rebecca: pastorrebecca@vermontlutheran.org

Hannah: health@vermontluthern.org

Liz: billing@vermontlutheran.org

