

FAVORITE HYMN SPOTLIGHT: How Great Thou Art, ELW 856

Some hymns become favorites because of their beautiful melodies. Others stay with us because they have been woven into the story of our lives. "*How Great Thou Art*" is one of those hymns—a song of awe, gratitude, faith, and hope that has connected generations of Christians around the world.

The hymn began as a Swedish poem written in 1885 by pastor and poet Carl Boberg. After experiencing a powerful storm followed by sunshine, a rainbow, and the sound of birds singing, Boberg was inspired to write about the wonder and greatness of God. The poem was later translated into several languages. In the 1920s, English missionary Stuart K. Hine encountered the hymn and eventually created the English version we know today. It became widely known in the United States through Billy Graham's evangelistic crusades in the 1950s.

Why It Still Speaks to Us

Perhaps that is part of what makes "How Great Thou Art" such a beloved hymn. It begins with something we can all recognize: the wonder of creation. We look at the stars, hear thunder, walk through the woods, or listen to birds singing, and we are reminded that we are part of something much greater than ourselves.

But the hymn doesn't stop with creation. It turns our attention toward God's love revealed in Jesus Christ. The wonder of nature becomes wonder at God's grace. And finally, the hymn points us toward the hope of the day when Christ will come again.

The refrain captures it all: *"Then sings my soul."* It is more than simply singing a hymn. It is the response of a heart that has encountered God's greatness and love.

A Member's Favorite

"It was one of my Grandma Williams' favorite songs, and it became mine as we attended church together with my grandpa during the year I lived with them while doing my student teaching. We sang it at my Grandma Williams' funeral, and while it is a tearjerker for me, it is such a powerful song. The chorus has always been my favorite part."

What makes a hymn special is often more than the words on the page. A familiar melody can carry us back to people we love, places we have worshiped, moments of celebration, and times of sorrow. Hymns become part of our spiritual memory.

Perhaps that is why, years later, we can hear the first few notes of a familiar hymn and immediately remember someone, somewhere, and a moment when we felt God's presence. "How Great Thou Art" invites us to do exactly that—to pause, remember, and let our souls sing in gratitude: How great Thou art!

Click to listen...



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Council



PRESIDENT: Peter Antonie
VICE-PRESIDENT: Debbie Krebs
SECRETARY: Frannie Parrell
TREASURER: Karsten Haugen
MEMBERS: Nancy Berkas, Peter Jones,
Ingerid Kvam, Andrew Lonsdale
YOUTH MEMBER: Luke Herrling

From The President's Desk, October 2026
Peter Antonie

Mark your calendar. There are many ways we mark our calendars – appointments, special holidays, tasks that need attention, and more. The same applies to our church calendar. The start of a new liturgical year with the first day of Advent, Lent, Pentecost and others, like Easter Sunday and Christmas Eve. Here at Vermont, we recognize all those church marks on the calendar along with a special Sunday every year – Rally Day!

For us, Rally Day signifies that we're back to being a busy congregation after a summer when we normally take a little break. Rally Day marks the start of Sunday school for our kids and a day when we rev up for what promises to be a busy fall.

This year we incorporated our Teams Fair into Rally Day, and I want to thank everyone that visited the various tables for asking questions about each of the teams, learning more about what they do, getting your Bingo cards stamped and hopefully winning a prize.

Coming up soon is the Host Festival, on October 17 th . Thank you to the crew that Paul and Jill Dybdahl put together for preparing the dough, rolling, baking and packaging our famous lefse on two weekends in September for sale at the festival.

Next, the meatballs that will be for sale and part of the lunch at the festival will be baked on Friday, October 9th and packaged on the 10th. You are welcome to volunteer to help on those days.

Both of those activities take time. However, it is time well spent; besides accomplishing the task, there is lots of good conversation, some good jokes told, as well as memories and new friends made. It is a tie that binds us.

Then, come to the festival! Bring your friends, neighbors and relatives. There are activities for folks of all ages, a hearty lunch and lots of good-old Vermont hospitality.

Updates

Annual Meeting: I know, the annual meeting is still four months away, on February 7, 2027. However, it is time to think about serving as a member of the Endowment Committee, where there is at least one open seat, or as one of our representatives to the Synod Assembly, in May. If you are thinking about serving or just want to know more about what would be involved, please let one of our nominating committee members know; Jamie Hallick, Deb Krebs, Frannie Parrel, or Ingerid Kvam.

Vitality Task Force: Soon after our congregation voted to become a stand-alone congregation, we developed a mission statement, "Vermont Lutheran Church is a congregation that CARES," and a vision statement, "God's Work, Our Hands." These statements inform us and others of **who** we are and **what** we strive to do. We are Christians, Actively Reaching Out, Experiencing Christ and Spreading His Word by doing God's Work with Our Hands.

Council (cont.)

The Lord commanded his followers to "love God and love your neighbor as yourself." **How** we do that is imperative in our relationship with God, one another and our neighbors. The **How** is what the VTF has been working on for six months. They have spent a lot of time on introspection, discussion and gathering of information from the congregation through the recent cottage conversations to answer the How.

The culmination of their work is a document, which the council approved at our September meeting, called "Collective Commitments;" statements that we agree on as the framework for living out the Lord's commandment. It includes five Core Values of how we behave that leads to love for each other and our neighbors and six Cornerstones to guide us. This document will be distributed to all members very soon as well as being posted in the church and on our website.

When you read the document, you may say, this is all common sense. It is. But it has never been codified in a meaningful way for us, as Vermont members, to be able to say, now I know why we do things the way we do, or this really makes it easy for me to know what is going on.

Call Committee Update: Last month, I reported that Bishop Joy has restructured her office staff and hired a new person to serve in the role of transition and mobility (e.g. to work with call committees and candidates). The call committee met on September 22nd to discuss this new arrangement, the opportunity it presents for moving forward to calling a new pastor, and questions to raise when Paul Dybdahl, Ellie Boebel, and I meet, via Zoom, with the bishop and her new staff person, Don Glazer, on October 5th.

Prairie & Woodland: The Legacy Fund (LF) Committee received a three-year grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), in early 2024, to do forestry mowing and invasive species control in several areas of our woodlands and along Vermont Creek in the wetland. This grant was available because of an earlier NRCS grant to create a forestry management plan, including management of the wetland. As part of that plan, the forestry mowing in the wetland allowed for reintroduction of native trees and shrubs. The LF committee's 2026 plan includes planting a selection of native trees and shrubs in the area between Vermont Creek and Highway 78 this month.

VLC GIVING. We are grateful for the many ways people support the ministry of our church. Giving is one expression of faith and care, and every gift—of time, talent, or financial resources—helps sustain our shared mission. Whether you give in person during worship, through the mail, or online, each offering is received with deep appreciation and thanksgiving for the work of the Gospel among us.

Scan or click for link to giving

Monthly Financial Report
August 31, 2026

	Actual	Budget	Diff
Contributions			
Monthly	$ 8,989	$ 19,167	$ (10,178)
YTD	$166,292	$153,333	$ 12,959
Operating Expenses			
Monthly	$ 18,959	$ 24,117	$ (5,158)
YTD	$130,667	$192,933	$ (62,266)

Council Member Feature



Debbie Krebs

Debbie Krebs has been a member of Vermont Lutheran Church for 18 years and is currently serving the second year of her second term on Council, where she serves as Vice President.

Originally from Clarion, Pennsylvania, Debbie is the only child of Trueman and Jean Mills. She attended the University of Pittsburgh, where she sang in the Heinz Chapel Choir and participated in the choir's first European tour in 1978. She has one son, Nick, who is married to Lucia Soriano, and they live in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Here at home, Debbie "shacks up" with Doug Hayes and their boxers, Violet and Herbie.

After retirement, Debbie quickly realized she needed something to get her out of the house and around people, so she now works part-time at Firefly Events Decor & Flowers. In her free time, she enjoys gardening in the summer, snowshoeing in the winter, reading to expand her horizons, and walking the pups.

Debbie credits Doris Hayes with first bringing her to Vermont Lutheran. When she moved to Black Earth, she attended VLC with Doris, her mother-in-law, and immediately felt she had found her new church family. Since then, Debbie has become involved in many areas of congregational life. She sings in the choir, serves as an Assistant Minister, and has been involved with Inreach, Worship & Music, gardening, the Organ Committee, Vitality Task Force, TAG Team, and events including the summer picnic and Host Fest.

What inspired her to serve on Council? Debbie's answer is simple: "I was recruited by Larry Z. How do you say NO to Larry?" She came to Council with previous leadership experience, having served on the Administrative Board of her Methodist church in Reading, Massachusetts, including six years as chair.

As VLC's Vice President, Debbie fills in when the Council President is unavailable, serves as a staff liaison, assists with annual staff reviews, and takes on other assignments as needed. She says Council service has taught her even more about "the inner workings and quirks of VLC." She sees God at work now in "leading and guiding our journey to welcome a new pastor," and hopes to help move the congregation forward under that new leadership.

Debbie's favorite hymn is *O God, Our Help in Ages Past,* and a favorite Bible verse is Psalm 19:14: *"May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be pleasing to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer."* She also describes participating in—and later co-facilitating—the 36-week Disciple Bible Study as a life-changing faith experience.

And something you might not know about Debbie? She once scored a hole-in-one at the Pennsylvania golf course where she learned to play! Debbie sums up her hope for VLC simply: "My prayer for our future is we move forward together for the good of our congregation."

October Service Teams

Thank you for assisting with worship. If you are unable to serve on your designated Sunday, please find a replacement and inform the office (vermontoffice@vermontlutheran.org). A reminder you can access the church directory online for member contact information. https://vermontlutheran.org/connect/for-our-members/

	OCTOBER 4	OCTOBER 11 God's Work. Our Hands. Sunday	OCTOBER 18	OCTOBER 25
ASSISTING MINISTER	Debbie Krebs	Jill Dybdahl	Klover Schafer	Laura Winchip
GREETERS/ USHERS	Bud Erickson Steve Holzhueter	Nancy Berkas Kristin Oines	Joan & Dave Haugen Kim & Karsten Haugen	Jeff Herrling Family Joe Herrling Family
READER	Joanie Haugen	Larry Ziemer	Karsten Haugen	Peter Antonie
COMMUNION PREP	Eric & Joanie Haugen	N/A	Karsten Haugen	N/A
HOSPITALITY	Eric & Joanie Haugen	N/A	Joan & Dave Haugen Kim & Karsten Haugen	Sara Herrling Antonie Family
MUSICIAN	Micah Oines	Ingerid Kvam	Ingerid Kvam	Bruce Case
ALTAR	Volunteers Needed	Volunteers Needed	Volunteers Needed	Volunteers Needed

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: Volunteers for Altar Duty are needed for the Sundays in **October.** If you are available to help for one Sunday or for the month, please contact the church office. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Ministry Team Profile: The Missions Team

We're excited to continue to shine a spotlight on one of the ministry teams or committees that help bring our church's mission to life. It's a chance to learn more about the people, passion, and purpose behind the work happening all around us. In August*, we continue with a team devoted to telling our story—**the Worship & Music Team.***

Worship each Sunday may last about an hour, but there are many people and many different roles involved in bringing that hour together. The Worship & Music Team includes people who serve through music, worship leadership, planning, and behind-the-scenes support to help create meaningful worship at Vermont Lutheran.

Laura Winchip, our Choir Director, leads the choir and helps coordinate its role in worship. Our accompanists, Ingerid Kvam, Bruce Case, and Micah Oines, support our worship service by providing piano and organ accompaniment for our hymns, liturgy, choir, and special music. The team also looks for opportunities to involve other musicians and members of the congregation in sharing their musical gifts.

Another important part of the team is our group of Assistant Ministers: Peter Antonie, Jill Dybdahl, Debbie Krebs, Joel Oines, Klover Schafer, and Laura Winchip. Assistant Ministers help lead different portions of the worship service and support the pastor. They are an important part of making worship a shared ministry of the congregation rather than something led by just one person.

Our other team members, Marguerite Parrell, Jamie Hallick, Patty Herrling, Kara Fjeld, and Jane Hanson join in the planning and discussion that happens behind the scenes. The team looks ahead at the church calendar, coordinates upcoming services and special Sundays, and works through the many details needed to bring those plans together.

Throughout the year, that can mean planning for Holy Week and Easter, Rally Sunday, Confirmation, Sunday School Christmas program, and other special services. The team also considers the elements we use in regular Sunday worship. This year, for example, members explored several different liturgy settings before choosing *Tree of Life* for the summer and later brought back *Sing Unto the Lord.*

There are practical details, too, from coordinating accompanists and worship assistants to discussing ways to enrich our worship service. Much of this work may not be noticed on a Sunday morning, but it helps make our worship possible.

Whether leading from the front of the sanctuary, accompanying a hymn, singing with the choir, or helping plan behind the scenes, each person brings a different gift to our worship life. Together, the Worship & Music Team helps create a space where our congregation can gather around God's Word, lift our voices in prayer and song, and be strengthened for the week ahead.

Team & Committee Updates

- Building & Grounds Team
- Care for Creation Team
- Cares Team
- Education/Faith FormationTeam
- Events Team
- Inreach Team
- Kitchen Team
- Missions Team
- Outreach Team
- Safety & Security Team
- Stewardship Team
- TAG Team
- Visibility & Marketing Team
- Worship & Music Team

- Audit Committee
- Call Committee
- Cemetery Committee
- Endowment Committee
- Legacy Fund Committee
- Mutual Ministry Committee
- Nominating Committee

VERMONT LUTHERAN

HØST FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2026

Norwegian Fall Fest
11 am- 2 pm

- 🍽️ Meatball Sandwiches & Potluck — 12:00 PM
- 🎨 Children's Activities
- 🎃 Trunk-or-Treat
- 🔎 Family Scavenger Hunt
- 🌾 Wagon Rides on the Prairie
- 🥾 Hiking & Find Torin
- 🎯 Outdoor Games for All Ages
- 🚙 Golf Cart Tours
- 🥧 Pies & Preserves Auction — 1:30 PM
- 🏆 Scavenger Hunt Winners Announced — 1:30 PM
- 🧵 Quilt Silent Auction — Closes at 1:30 PM

Seventh Annual Lefse & Meatball Take-Out
10:30 am - Noon
Take-Out Orders Due Oct. 1 (www.vermontlutheran.org)

Vermont Lutheran CHURCH
9886 Church Road - Black Earth

Month at a Glance . . .

QUILTING
1st & 3rd Monday's, 8:30 am

AA MEETINGS
Monday's & Saturday's, 7 pm

TAI CHI
Tuesday's, 9:00 am

MEATBALL RESERVATIONS
Last Day for Orders
October 1

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY
October 3, 9:30 am

CONFIRMATION CLASS
October 4, 10:45 am

MEATBALL PREP
October 9 & 10, 8:30 am

GODS WORK OUR HANDS.
October 11, 10:30 am

MEATBALL/LEFSE PICK-UP
October 17, 10:30 am-Noon

HOST FALL FEST
October 17, 11 am-2 pm

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE
October 25, 8 am

AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM
October 25, 9:30 am

COUNCIL MEETING
October 25, 10:45 am

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

October 04	Buford	Olson
October 04	Patricia	Ziemer
October 04	Steven	Holzhueter
October 06	Justin	Herrling
October 08	Anna	Herman
October 09	Debra	Barsness
October 10	Cricket	Stapelmann
October 12	Elizabeth	Childs
October 14	Sara	Herrling
October 16	Steven	Miller
October 17	Hana	King
October 18	James	Herrling
October 22	Katie	Schultz
October 23	Amelia	Burton
October 26	Caleb	Kann
October 28	Sophie	Laurent
October 30	Cynthia	Humphrey
October 30	Joseph	Herrling
October 30	Elijah	Gold
October 31	Timothy	Gold
October 31	Elizabeth	Gold
October 31	Samantha	Herrling

May God bless you on your birthday and throughout the year ahead. May you be surrounded by love, filled with joy, and reminded of the many ways you are a blessing to others. May God's grace guide you, His presence comfort you, and His love shine through you in all that you do.

PRAYER CHAIN REQUESTS
Prayer requests are received by Laura Winchip.
Please text/call prayer requests to (563) 940-8468.



For What Shall We Pray...

- For peace and reconciliation among the nations, especially in Iran, Gaza, Ethiopia, Yemen, South Sudan, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Ukraine, and Myanmar...
- For an end to genocide across the world...
- For flooding in southwestern Ohio and all those affected by natural disasters...
- For Luther Seminary and all seminaries navigating reimagination or relocation...
- For the United Nations General Assembly and for all agencies working for peace...
- For victims of gun violence, especially in Ontario, Canada and Durban, South Africa...
- For immigrants and all marginalized populations who live in fear of violence
- For those in the path of Tropical Storm Nolo...
- For all in need of access to affordable healthcare...

prepared by a variety of leaders in the ELCA

Contacts

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CUSTODIAN
Bo Olson

ANNOUNCEMENTS &
NEWSLETTER ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

If you would like an announcement included in Sunday's bulletin or the weekly e-mail (News From the Pews), please e-mail it to **vermontoffice@vermontlutheran and social@vermontlutheran.org** by **8:00 am on Wednesday**. Announcements should be brief (a couple sentences) and will run for two weeks, unless space allows for longer.

Longer articles should be submitted to the church office by **8 am the 25th of each month** for publication in the Newsletter.

Late submissions will be included in the next issue.

CHURCH LINKS



Synod E-News
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
ELCA website

Donate and Support our ministry

OCTOBER

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
27 9:30 am, Sunday Service 10:45 am, Council Meeting 10:45 am – Noon, Confirmation	28 7 pm, AA Meeting	29 9 am, Tai Chi with Bob	30 6:30 pm, Choir	1	2 3 pm, Reservation	3 Adopt-A-Highway Reservation 7 pm, AA Meeting
4 9:30 am, Sunday Service 10:45 am – Noon, Confirmation	5 8:30 am, Quilting 7 pm, AA Meeting	6 9 am, Tai Chi with Bob	7 6:30 pm, Choir	8	9 8:30 am, Meatball Prep	10 8:30 am, Meatball Prep 7 pm, AA Meeting
11 9:30 am, Sunday Service 10:30 am, God's Work Our Hands Sunday	12 7 pm, AA Meeting	13 9 am, Tai Chi with Bob	14 6:30 pm, Choir	15	16	17 HØst Festival 10:30 am – Noon, Mission Take-Out Lefse and Meatballs HØst Festival 7 pm, AA Meeting
18 9:30 am, Sunday Service	19 8:30 am, Quilting 11:00 am, Dave Dybdahl Memorial Service 7 pm, AA Meeting	20 9 am, Tai Chi with Bob	21 6:30 pm, Choir	22	23	24 10 am, Reservation 7 pm, AA Meeting
25 8 am, Newsletter Articles Due Service – Confirmation of Students 9:30 am, Sunday Service 10:45 am, Council Meeting	26 7 pm, AA Meeting	27 9 am, Tai Chi with Bob	28 6:30 pm, Choir	29	30	31 7 pm, AA Meeting

You can find the calendar on the website 'Events Calendar'. If you need contact information for Vermont's members, please remember you can always go the 'Members' Tab on the church's website. Here you will find church contacts as well as member contacts. If you need help or have questions, please reach out to the church office.