

CHIMNEY ROCK LUTHERAN CHURCH -- DECEMBER NEWS

Pastor's Message

In November 1620, the Mayflower anchored in Plymouth harbor. Over the course of the winter, ravished by disease, hunger and cold, half of the colony perished. As the Pilgrims buried their loved ones, one after another, a young Indian brave named Squanto, silently watched, and was filled with love and compassion for the sad and grief-stricken settlers. The next spring, with Squanto's help, the Pilgrims prospered. He taught them how to survive in the new land. He taught them how to plant corn and squash, what berries to eat, how to fish and hunt. By harvest-time, the Pilgrims had much to be thankful for. And so do we. The true test of thankfulness is whether we can give thanks from the heart for what we do have despite the struggles of life.

Consider Douglas, a little first grader. Douglas was a different kind of boy: quiet and shy, frail and afraid. He didn't have many friends but he liked school and most of all he liked his teacher. When Thanksgiving Day drew near, the teacher asked her class to draw a picture of something for which they were thankful. Most of the class drew turkeys. But not Douglas. Douglas drew a hand. Just an empty hand. His odd, abstract image captured the imagination of his peers. Whose hand could it be? One child guessed it was the hand of a farmer, because farmers raise turkeys. Another suggested a police officer, because they protect and care for our freedoms. Still others guessed it was the hand of God, for God feeds us. And so the discussion went. No one, however, asked Douglas what it meant. As the other children went on to other assignments, the teacher paused at Douglas' desk, bent down, and asked him whose hand it was. The little boy looked away, shyly, and softly murmured, "It's yours, teacher." Suddenly she recalled the many times she had taken his little hand to give him courage to walk here or there. How often she had said, "Take my hand, Douglas, we'll go outside together." Or "Take my hand, Douglas, it will be all right." Of all the effort she had put into planning her lessons so carefully she had never realized how important and meaningful the small act of simply offering her hand had been. Has someone offered you their hand? Have you offered your hand to someone in need?

On Sunday we will celebrate the first Sunday of Advent; the season where we look forward to celebrating the Birth of the Christ Child. The greatest gift of all time. The Bible says, because God so loved the world He gave His only Son. I say a greater helping hand has never been given. How do we thank Him? How do we share that gift? During this Holiday Season, this Season of Giving, this Season of Love, this Season of Thankfulness – what gift will you give? How will you show your love. To whom will you extend that helping hand? As you ponder that thought, may I suggest that you consider remembering the needs of this church? A place for you, your family, your neighbors to come together, to be a community, a source of strength and hope, a place to thank and worship God who is the maker and founder of all gifts. This place, this house of God, could use a helping hand; without help this holy house cannot survive and will not be here to help anyone face the struggles that await us tomorrow. The future is determined by what we choose to do today.

In Thankfulness and Gratitude,
Pastor David Sands

Worship Assistants Needed

Please check the green sheet in the narthex and sign up to read, greet, or usher on open dates. Maybe you'd like to sign up for an entire month—or an occasional Sunday. Whatever you can do will be greatly appreciated. We would appreciate volunteers from our young members too! Also, if you're musically talented, contact Pastor Sands or Monica and volunteer your talents.

Coffee Is Served!

Thank you to those who have served coffee after worship on Sunday mornings. When you sign up in the narthex, be prepared to bring food for approximately 25 people. Beverages and paper products will be provided. Remember that our Sunday School and Confirmation students work up an appetite during their classes and really appreciate these treats!

Trempealeau County Health Care Center Asking for Resident Christmas Gifts

Currently, donations are being accepted to help bring holiday spirit to more than 250 residents residing in multiple facilities. SSPP Catholic School in Independence will be a collection drop-off location again this year for TCHCC. The final drop-off day is Wednesday, December 4th, to allow TCHCC time to wrap and distribute items. Donations being accepted are: holiday shirts, throw blankets, toothpaste and toothbrushes, socks with grippers, candy, shampoo, body wash, deodorant, monthly calendars, Packers, Brewers, or Badger items, winter hats, gloves and mittens, decks of cards, puzzle books, microwave popcorn, and T-shirts, pants, sweatpants size L-3XL. Any donations are greatly appreciated and make a huge difference in the lives of others. Thank you to all who donate.

Living Nativity Planned for December 8

Youth groups of Elk Creek and Immanuel Lutheran will present the "First Christmas" at Elk Creek Lutheran Church Living Nativity on Sunday, December 8, at 4:30pm and 6pm. Please dress for the weather, as the event will be held outdoors. Donations of non-perishable food items, paper goods, or money will be collected for the food pantry.

Wreaths Across America Program and Placement to be Held December 14

We hope that we have several volunteers to place wreaths on veterans' graves on December 14 like we did last year! Remember that many hands make light work! The time for Chimney Rock is approximate, so maybe plan to be there before 10:30am so you don't miss the placement! Rob Rasmussen, Commander of Legion Post #459 of Eleva sent the following information:

"Plans for Wreaths Across America is to have a program at the Eleva American Legion at 9am on Saturday, December 14th. We will then go to Eleva Cemetery at approximately 10am, then to Chimney Rock about 10:30-10:45am. From there we will go to East Bennett Valley and finally to Norden Cemetery. Timing will all come down to how many volunteers and participants show up to help place the wreaths. I hope to get out to the cemeteries beforehand to place wreath holders at each veteran's headstone before the ground freezes. This will make finding the veterans easier and keep the wreaths off the ground."

"Christmas in Eleva" Scheduled

"Christmas in Eleva" is scheduled for December 15th. The day begins at Eleva Lutheran Church at 9am with their Sunday School Pageant and worship. At 10am (until gone) they have "Baking Spirits Bright—Sweets Stroll." At this unique event you can purchase delicious, homemade Christmas cookies, candies, and special holiday treats. Bring your own container or purchase one of theirs. From 10:30am-3pm purchase Christmas Home Tour tickets for \$10 at the church. Tour sites include: Eleva Lutheran Church Sanctuary, Dick & Natalie Evenson, Pastor Karen Ressel—parsonage, Linda Twerberg, and Jesse & Kirsten Jaskowski. At 3pm there will be Bingo at the Eleva American Legion. After dark, drive through Lake Park on Highway 93 to see the light displays created by the Legion and the Eleva-Strum Rail Riders. These events are sponsored by the Eleva Lutheran Church, Eleva Historical Society, Eleva American Legion, and the Eleva-Strum Rail Riders.

Sunday School Christmas Program to be Followed by Brunch

Sunday School will be held on December 1, 8, and 15, with plans for the Christmas program to be presented on December 22 at 9:30am during the regular worship time, followed by the traditional brunch. There will be a signup sheet in the narthex for anyone who can furnish egg bakes, milk, juice, etc. There will be no Sunday School on December 29, but it will resume on January 5.

Worship with Us on Christmas Eve

Christmas worship is scheduled for 4pm on Christmas Eve, which is Tuesday, December 24. As in the past several years, this will be the only service. There's no worship on Christmas Day.

Thank You to . . .

- ❖ Mavis Erickson and family for donating two new stoves for our kitchen! It's such a nice gesture, and we truly appreciate it!
- ❖ the Sunday School kids for singing in church every Sunday.

We Offer Our Sympathy to . . .

- ❖ the family of Montford (Monty) Loomis. Monty passed away on October 18, but no service is planned at this time. Please keep his wife, Rose, and their family in your thoughts and prayers.

We Acknowledge the Following Memorials . . .

- ❖ Dale, Roxie and Terry Erickson memorials to the Cemetery Fund given by Jerry Erickson.
- ❖ Gordie Twerberg memorial to the Cemetery Fund given by Debra Twerberg.
- ❖ Ella Kensmoe memorial to the General Fund given by Pamela Flikkeshaug.
- ❖ Raymond Knudtson memorial to the Sunday School given by Bob and Barb Sylla.
- ❖ Raymond Knudtson memorials to the General Fund given by family and friends.
- ❖ Raymond Knudtson memorials to the General Fund given by June Johnson, George & Roberta Ross, Pam and Gary Knudtson, Sharon Peterson, and Deanna Johnson.

Please Inform Pastors of Illness & Hospitalizations

If you hear that one of our members is hospitalized, please let Pastor Sands or Monica know. Because of HIPAA laws, hospitals no longer contact pastors when someone is admitted. Also, please contact them about illnesses—even when the member isn't hospitalized.

Please Support the Strum Food Pantry

The Strum Food Pantry is seeing a large increase in the number of households we are providing with food. We are very appreciative of all the support we receive from churches and people in our surrounding area. All non-perishable items are great but other items we can use are paper products, cake mixes, Jell-O and instant pudding mixes, peanut butter and dish soap. Monetary support is also appreciated. We buy milk and egg vouchers from Feed My People so we can provide milk and eggs to the families also. If you choose to give a monetary donation, PLEASE make your check out to STRUM FOOD PANTRY and send to: Immanuel Lutheran Church, 109 Elm Street, Strum, WI 54770. We are located at Immanuel Lutheran Church and are open the First Saturday of the month from 9-11am and the third Wednesday of the month from 4:30-6:30pm (note change of time for Wednesday). THANK YOU in advance for your support of this Community Ministry.

Strum Is Senior Dining Site

Trempealeau County ADRC began offering Senior Dining at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Strum in 2022. The meals are catered by Sweet Temptations, are now served both Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:30am-12:30pm, and the suggested donation is \$5 for those who qualify (60 years and older). Reservations are required by 9am a day prior by calling 715-695-3511. This is not only for senior citizens from Strum—anyone can attend if you meet the age requirement and call ahead.

Membership

If anyone is interested in becoming a member, please talk to Pastor David Sands or Synodically Authorized Minister (SAM) Monica Dejno. Their contact information is located on the calendar page and also in the weekly bulletins.

Church Offerings

Please remember that our church needs your continued financial support. Jason has put a "donate" button on our church website (www.chimneyrockchurch.org) for those who wish to contribute electronically. E-Pay information is also included in this issue. Of course, checks are the preferred method of donation and should be made payable to Chimney Rock Lutheran Church. If you don't attend Sunday worship, your offering can be sent to one of the addresses listed below.

Chimney Rock Lutheran Church
N43255 Church Rd.
Strum, WI 54770

Daniel Solfest
N43178 State Rd. 93
Strum, WI 54770

E-Pay Available at Chimney Rock

If anyone would like to send their contributions to the church electronically, please contact Treasurer Dan Solfest for the correct information. You will need the church's account name, account number, depository bank's name, and bank's Federal Reserve Bank routing number. You will also need to tell your bank the amount to send and frequency of remittance. Dan can be reached at 715.985.3242 or in church on Sundays. Thank you for your interest in supporting Chimney Rock Lutheran Church.

Newsletters

For those who can't access the monthly newsletters electronically via email, our church website, or Facebook, please pick up a printed copy the last Sunday of each month for the next month's calendar and

news. Newsletters will be mailed to those who don't have electronic access or aren't in church to pick up a copy. Any questions, please contact Barb Sylla at 715.985.3496 or bbsylla8246@gmail.com. Information to be included in the newsletter should be submitted by the 20th of each month.

Our Vision Statement

Be alive and well in ten years with healthy evangelism and vital family fellowship.

Our Mission Statement

We, as a family of God, rooted in the strength and inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, are called forward facing challenges by the promises of God to reach out in love to our rural community, especially cherishing and welcoming children.

December Birthdays and Anniversaries

- 1st--Vicky Loesel
- 4th--Sue Murray
- 8th--Pam George
- 9th--Lucy Olson
- 11th--Dan Mamary
- 16th--Dorin Knudtson
- 17th--Travis Perry
- 20th--Jon Flury
- 21st--Augustus Hovey
- 24th--Billie Loesel
- 26th--Dylan Bohlinger, Bill & Mary Hermanson
- 28th--M/M Glen Woychik
- 29th--Erin Kensmoe, Michael Wogh
- 31st--Avery & Katie (Solfest) Buggert

Council Members

Trustee	Randy Olson	715.985.3309 715.797.2988
Trustee	Richard Gunderson	715.797.3721
Trustee	Don Solfest	715.287.4562 715.797.3014
Deacon	Bev Paulsen	715.287.3323
Deacon	Barb McGee	715.695.3448
Deacon	Jerry Erickson	715.530.2079
Memorial Secretary	Forrest Nutter	715.695.3487 715.533.1720
Treasurer	Dan Solfest	715.985.3242
Secretary	Barb Sylla	715.985.3496 715.530.0338



Chimney Rock Congregational Council Minutes – November 18, 2024

Call to Order—President Randy Olson called the November 18, 2024 meeting to order at 6:30pm. Others present were Monica Dejno, Jerry Erickson, Richard Gunderson, Forrest Nutter, Randy Olson, Pastor David Sands, Dan Solfest, and Barb Sylla. Barb McGee and Bev Paulsen were absent.

Devotions—Pastor Sands read from John 18 and led in discussion. Monica led in prayer.

Secretary's Report was read by Barb. Don and Richard motioned to accept, and motion carried.

Treasurer's Report—Dan distributed the report ending October 31, 2024. Richard and Barb motioned to accept, and motion carried.

Old Business:

- 1) No bid yet for painting/repairing small bell tower windows.
- 2) Community Resources—Monica and Barb have checked the ADRC website and will meet to decide what information and links to post on our website. Monica also mentioned that dialing 211 offers free and confidential local assistance for anyone in need.
- 3) Thanksgiving Eve Community Service is at Immanuel Lutheran in Strum on Wednesday, November 27, at 7pm. Pastor Sands will have a part in the service.
- 4) Barb has not contacted local newspapers yet to inquire why our worship schedule is not being included, but it was possibly deleted during the beginning of Covid when in-person services were not held.

New Business:

- 1) The Ministry Team Contract will renew in January. Forrest reported that the cost of living allowance has increased 2.53%, which would mean an increase of \$45/month for Pastor Sands and \$5/month for Monica. Monica wishes to decline an increase. Forrest has contacted the synod and will also report any feedback he receives from them at the December or January council meeting, at which time the contract will be finalized before being voted on at the Annual Meeting.
- 2) The consensus was to give Katie Solfest Buggert \$500 in appreciation for recorded and in-person music she has been providing this year.
- 3) McAdam Kensmoe and Brooklynn Olson have reserved the church for their wedding on October 11, 2025. The council approved her cousin, April (Olson) Hillestad, to officiate. Pastor Sands will do the pre-marriage sessions with the couple.
- 4) Stoves—We thank Mavis Erickson, who has ordered two new kitchen stoves which will be delivered on November 19.
- 5) Water samples passed inspection.
- 6) Lent—It was the consensus of the council not to be a part of the "round robin" in 2025. Also, due to low attendance at midweek services, we discussed having only Ash Wednesday and Good Friday services during Lent.
- 7) Immanuel and Elk Creek youth are having a Living Nativity at Elk Creek Church on Sunday, December 8, at 4:30pm and 6pm. They will be collecting non-perishable food items, paper products, and monetary donations.
- 8) Wreaths Across America program/ceremony will be held at Eleva American Legion Hall at 9am on Saturday, December 14. Placement of wreaths will begin at Eleva cemetery, then on to Chimney Rock Cemetery at approximately 10:30am or 10:45am, then to East Bennett Valley, and finally to Norden.

The next council meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 16, at 6:30pm.

Adjournment—Don and Jerry motioned to adjourn. The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer at 7:43pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Barb Sylla, Council Secretary