



December 2025



HILL AND VALLEY PARISH NEWS

Svea and Eidsvold Lutheran Churches

Greetings from the Parsonage,

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote that he did not truly understand Advent until he was in prison. There, so much of his day revolved around waiting for a door to be thrown open and a new reality to step in. It is a far cry from a scene of gingerbread, lights, and tinsel, but his experience captures the heart of Advent. In this season, we wait for God to throw open the door and step into our lives.

Waiting can bother us. As a general rule, Americans are busy people with busy lives who do not like to wait. In preparation for this article, I read far too many studies on the decline of patience in this country—something that ultimately affects us all. If you have ever scarfed down a meal so you can get back to work, or bought rice with the word “instant” on it, or flipped the channel during a commercial break, or felt a rush of frustration with traffic, then you know exactly what I mean.

We do not like to wait, because it challenges our sense of control—our ability to make demands upon the world. This does not make us any worse than any other human being in this world, just in need of Advent more than ever before—a season when God asks us to wait.

I love Christmas: the sights, the smells, the carols, the traditions that tie my family together through generations, a church full of strangers and friends singing as they rarely do—and Advent asks me to wait for those things. Why? Why not celebrate with gusto all the way through December? Why not jump to the manger? Because waiting forces us to realize that we are not in control, but rather, live on God’s terms and on God’s time.

There is beauty in waiting, if we stop and look for it. Some of the most meaningful moments of my life came during times when it was clear that I was not in control, but rather had to wait for God to throw open a door. This waiting brought conversations I never would have had, thoughts that I would have otherwise buried in work and distraction, realizations that take time to form. You might call this the hold music of life—moments when God sets a beat and rhythm and begs us to move along.

Like most periods of waiting, we know the end result of Advent—for us a Savior is born!

We can practice patience this Advent because we know, Jesus is coming into the world and bringing with Him twelve whole days of celebration. I encourage you to lean into the waiting this year. How might our Advent hymns, wreath, and readings open your ears to the places that God calls you to give up control wait for Him to throw open the door? Wait and see.

I leave you with a prayer by Bonhoeffer.

Lord Jesus, come yourself, and dwell with us, be human as we are, and overcome what overwhelms us. Come into the midst of my evil, come close to my unfaithfulness. Share my sin, which I hate and which I cannot leave. Be my brother, Thou Holy God. Be my brother in the kingdom of evil and suffering and death. Come with me in my death, come with me in my suffering, come with me as I struggle with evil. And make me holy and pure, despite my sin and death. Amen.

Al Aakre

Eidsvold-Svea Lutheran Parish

(608) - 799 - 9703

CHURCH SERVICE INFO

EIDSVOLD LUTHERAN CHURCH
W6111 COUNTY RD EE
BAY CITY WI 54723
DECEMBER SERVICES
AND SUNDAY SCHOOL
9:00 AM

SVEA LUTHERAN CHURCH
N2610 770TH ST
HAGER CITY WI 54014
DECEMBER SERVICES
10:30 AM

Parish Social Media

[Facebook](#)

[Church Website](#)

<https://www.eidsvoldsvea.com>

December Birthdays

Eidsvold

1 - Derek Borchardt
2 - Colin Johnson
3 - Justin Mandelkow
5 - Brenda Singer
6 - Charlie Alms
13 - Tim Singer
14 - Joshua Yotter
15 - Tracie Esterby
17 - Brady Scharpen
23 - Linden Johnson
23 - Tim Deden
24 - Gwen Brenner
27 - Nikki Alms
28 - Tori Benck
30 - Jeremy Plote
31 - Jerome Lacroix
31 - Tana Langer



Svea

8 - Orlando Anderson
11 - Madelyn Maxwell
11 - Dustin Anway
15 - Brock Strain
21 - Kelly Knutson
21 - Andrew Girdeen
22 - John O'Keefe
27 - Arnie Sarnstrom

We are excited to announce **electronic** giving through **Vanco!**
Your generosity will help us impact our community with the good
news of the gospel.

Eidsvold



Try the QR codes printed below.



Svea



Christmas Services

Christmas Eve

Wednesday, December 24th

2:00 at Svea

4:00 at Eidsvold

8:00 at Svea

NO Services on December 25th

Joint Service at Svea on

Sunday, December 28th

CONTACT INFORMATION

PASTOR AL AAKRE 608-799-9703

AAAKRE002@LUTHERSEM.EDU

CHURCH: BELUTHER@BEVCOMM.NET

OFFICE 715-594-3182

LEAVE A MESSAGE



Behind the scene:

Do you know updates the facebook page?

Answer:

Anne Girdeen

PRAYER LIST

Prayers for Healing

Darla Gilliland, Leonard Gilbertson, Patty Butenschoen, Kathy Huppert, Beth Johnston, Gail Gusa, Diane Hines, Virgil Hinrichs, Tammy Price, John (Butch) Sebion, Jim Bostrom, Mick Borst, Jerry Lacroix, Sandy Place, Dave Betthausen, Bob Soden, Wendell Manore, Dave Ericson, Elwyn Manore

Prayers for Sustained Strength and Comfort

Verlene Benck, Laura Anderson, Larry Gerdes, Terrence Emery, Chris Larson, Rose Ann Powers, Gerry Hoffman, Connie Rieck, Mavis Flack, Julie Patterson, Jim Swenson, and all caregivers in our parish

Prayers for our Ministry Partners

Bishop Martin Halom, the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, Debi Emery (CRU), Isaac and Isabella Thrill, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi

Prayers for those serving in the military

Carson Anway, Tyler Ballman, Nathan Solomon, Andy Smith



Community Events



EUCHRE

Friday, December 5

Meet at 7:00 at Eidsvold

Bring a snack to share (optional).

Coffee will be provided.

Svea Quilters

2nd and 4th Tuesday

No Quilting in December

We will resume in January

9 am-noon

No experience is needed. All are welcome!

Ruby's Pantry

First Saturday of the Month
December 6
10-11:30 at
Pierce Pepin Co-op



Parish Choir Schedule:

Rehearsals will be on

Wednesdays at Svea

Dec. 3 at 5:00

Dec. 10 at 6:00

Dec. 17 at 6:00

Christmas Cantata: Dec. 21

9 a.m.- Eidsvold

10:30 a.m.- Svea

Chili Cookoff

6:00 pm at Svea



Wednesday, December 3.

Following the cookoff, we will have our first of three Advent services at 7:00 pm.

Advent Services:

Wednesday, Dec 3

Wednesday, 10

Wednesday, Dec 17

Volunteers Needed

At the **Pierce County Food Pantry** in Ellsworth.

Just a few hours a week will help. Clean, friendly environment.

Call Heidi at 715-821-7763 for more information.

A variety of ways to get in the Christmas spirit...



Our Savior's Candy Walk

Fundraiser

All proceeds benefit the college kits and outreach ministry.

Homemade Candy \$15 per pound

Saturday, December 13th

8 am - 12 pm

See flyer on bulletin board



English Lutheran Church

Advent Social

Tuesday, December 16th

6:30 pm.

Holiday Music and Refreshments.

Music provided by

Missy Kowalchyk

Christaina Kowalchyk

and Ava Maxell

See flyer on bulletin board

Zion Covenant Church

Pierce County

Community Band

Christmas Concert

Friday, December 5

7:00 pm

See flyer on bulletin board

Do you like to sing?



The Pierce County Ecumenical Choir is inviting anyone who loves to sing to join them for the upcoming season. The choir is open to all voices. The concert theme for 2026 is Soli Deo Gloria (Glory to God Alone).

The choir rehearses on Sunday afternoons starting January 4, 2026.

Rehearsals are at the Ellsworth Senior High School in the choir room at 1:30 P.M.

Concerts are held in area churches on Sunday afternoons and evenings in April except for Easter Sunday.

The choir also performs at a Haitian benefit concert in River Falls that is held in late February or early March.

Singers of all levels and abilities are encouraged to participate.

The ability to read music is helpful but not required.



The Pierce County Ecumenical Choir is under the direction of Janet Hansmeier.

Organizing committee members are Connie Anderson, Shelly Johnson, Ione Hayes, Joanne Farrell, Rita Anderson and Pat Shutes.

People interested in joining the choir should contact the director for more information, Jan Hansmeier at jansmeier62@gmail.com or 320-241-1829.



SVEA CHURCH HAPPENINGS

Contact Bonnie Hasenberg if you have information you want included in the newsletters **612-720-7411**.

SALE!! SALE!!

The **Svea cookbooks** are on sale
\$20.00 or 2 for \$35.00.
They will make a great
Christmas gift!

Help is needed for setting up communion.

Anyone who could help for a month or a couple of weeks, please let Bonnie Hasenberg know.

(612-720-7411) Thank you



The SPECIAL FRIENDS Christmas Dinner
will be on December 14th

Service will be at 10:30 with
pot luck dinner at 11:45

Everyone is welcome and hope to see you there.

A SUCCESSFUL "NO BAKE BAKE SALE"

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO PARTICIPATED,
THROUGH DONATIONS ON A HELPING HAND.

WE WERE BLESSED WITH A TOTAL OF \$640.00 TO HELP SUPPORT THE
CHARITIES WE SPONSOR THROUGH WELCA.

ALSO TO PURCHASE NEEDS THAT MAY ARISE FOR OUR WELCA GROUP.

APRIL SARNSTROM WAS THE LUCKY PERSON IN THE QUILT DRAWING.

CONGRATULATIONS!

AGAIN A BIG THANK YOU FROM THE SVEA WELCA GROUP.

EIDSVOLD HAPPENINGS



Thank you for your Time and Talents December

Readers

Eidsvold

Dec 7 Judy Lacroix
Dec 14 Phyllis Beastrom
Dec 21 Fay Albarado
Dec 28 Service at Svea

Altar Committee

Phyllis Beastrom

Bake Communion Bread

Phyllis Beastrom

December 7, 21, 24



Wash Communion Glasses

December 7 _____

December 21 _____

December 24 _____

Ushers

Dec 7 DeLoris B and Jan K

Dec 14 Rita A

Dec 21 J

Dec 24 (4:00 Christmas Eve) _____

Dec 28 Service at Svea

Church Cleaning

Eidsvold

Dec 7 _____

Dec 14 Schroeder Family

Dec 21 _____

Dec 28 N/A



thank
you!

Sunday School News!

December 7 - Christmas Program Practice

December 14 - Christmas Program Performance
at the 9:00 am Church Service

December 21 - No Sunday School - Winter Break

December 28 - No Sunday School - Winter Break

Sunday School Resumes January 11, 2026



WE ARE EXCITED TO BE IN SUNDAY SCHOOL!

PLEASE CONTACT BREE IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR IF
YOU KNOW SOMEONE THAT WOULD LIKE TO JOIN SUNDAY
SCHOOL!

WE ARE ALSO LOOKING FOR EXTRA PEOPLE TO HELP WITH
OUR CHILDREN.

BREE_LUND@OUTLOOK.COM OR 651-764-2227

2026 Is just around the corner!

We have members that have dedicated their time and talents serving on the council. We are fortunate to have a variety of voices to make decisions that are needed to keep our church in a good spot.

As stated in the constitution: Officers are elected for a 2 year term with the opportunity to serve for an additional two years.

Officers shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.

The council shall consist of [president](#), [vice president](#), [secretary](#), [treasurer](#), [financial secretary](#), building and grounds, stewardship, and two members of the board of education.

**Council Members
needed:**

The [council members](#) meet quarterly (Feb - May - Aug - Nov)

The council members also meet as a Joint Council quarterly with Svea.

Treasurer - Phyllis has temporarily filled this term until someone is elected

Financial Secretary - Laura Peterson has served four terms (8 years)

If you are willing to take one of these position or know who would be a good fit,
please contact [Phyllis Beastrom 715-273-5847](#) or [Carla Schuster 651-380-5631](#).

As the end of the year approaches, we encourage members to support missions both here and abroad. One such opportunity is the ministry of Debi Emery, who currently works with young adults (CRU) in the Eau Claire area. We pray for Debi each week but those interested in further supporting her work are encouraged to connect with her at (651) 263-9442.



OLD BUSINESS:

- Reformation program with the Sunday School kids was amazing. Everyone very happy with how the Sunday School turnout has been. The kids did great!
- Cleanup at the cemetery went very well. Was quick and efficient with many hands helping.
- Pie and Ice Cream Social was a success.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Had a discussion on what the church needs for new building insurance. Phyllis has been proactive on that, thank you! Gene Benck came and did a building inspection of the electrical and gave recommendations. He will donate some of his time being he is a member to do a few items. We may look at someone else to come in just to get a second opinion for protection / conflict of interest. Walter's Electric was called but he is scheduled out 3 months to even come and look at the building. We will discuss it further.
- Alvin Eidem presented a furnace quote from Lund Heating & AC for replacing motors on the 2 furnaces with refurbished motors which would save money. Right now they are working fine but the 2 furnaces are 20 years old. Laura P was going to contact someone else to come and give us a second opinion.
- Chili Feed potluck after a service, possibly Super Bowl Sunday. Most were in favor of that instead of having it on a Wednesday evening. No decisions yet.

Financial Review:

Current Balances at of 11/5/2025

| | | | | | |
|-------------|--------------|----------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| • Youth: | \$ 236.16 | Bldg: | \$ 9,753.58 | Parsonage: | \$ 40,233.82 |
| • Memorial: | \$ 27,490.26 | Gen Ckg: | \$ 77,107.89 | Ckg Balance: | \$ 154,821.71 |

Discussion had on what we pay towards parsonage vs. Svea. Wanted to get everyone on the same page before the joint council meeting on 11/13. Eidsvold pays \$583 (50% of rental value \$1166) plus 58% utilities approx \$177

5 Year Plan revisit

- Continued discussion on the 5 year plan; windows, water leakage. Since gutters installed seems OK right now. To be continued.
- Discussed Parsonage
 - A railing needs to be installed going down to the basement for safety reasons.
 - A rental agreement needs to be drawn up for the tenant to sign and the council will do a walk through every year before the signing of it to make sure everything is satisfactory.

Church Membership List; ·Went through the church membership list line by line to determine what our current membership is and who is active and not active. Again, with Joint Council on 11/13 this will be used to determine percentage each church pays.

Joint Council meeting scheduled for Thursday November 13 @ 6PM at Eidsvold.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer. Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by Kendra Hanson, Council Secretary

Eidsvold-Svea Joint Council Meeting-November 13, 2025 (Eidsvold Church)



NEW BUSINESS:

- Membership Review: (CCC members-Confirmed, Commune, Contribute)
 - o Svea= 73 = 45% Eidsvold=90 = 55%
- Financial Review
 - o Parish agreement review - Need to reword section regarding who leads and takes notes at Joint Council
 - o Utilities at parsonage are currently split: 58/42 (phone, internet, elec)
 - o Value of the parsonage split: 50/50
- Discussion had on the fair market value of the 2 parsonages
 - o Pastor Al lives in Svea's / Eidsvold rents theirs out
- Pastor Al will contact Randy at the synod to find out more about more about how the fair market values of the houses affect the split. Joint council will vote on the split we have gotten information from Randy for some guidance. Pastor Al will email when he hears back from Randy. How does the parsonage value affect his benefit package. How do we divide it?
- Advent Services
 - These are held at Svea Dec 3 Chili at 6PM/ 7PM Service, Not at Eidsvold
 - § Dec. 10 and Dec 17 – hot chocolate and cookies (Svea) prior to the 7PM Service
- Pastor Al's salary packaged discussed.
- Phyllis handed out information on full time Pastor salary package 2026 for 3 years of experience.
- Voted to increase Pastor's salary by 4% / Select 2000 Portico health package
- Base salary 2025 \$49,185 x 4% = 1967.40 / increase = \$51,152.40

Next Joint Council Meeting: February 19, 2026 @ 6 PM at Svea.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer. Meeting adjourned

Meeting minutes submitted by Kendra Hanson, Council Secretary

Complete Minutes Posted on the Bulletin Board