

THE MESSENGER

Arendahl | Grace | North Prairie | Pilot Mound

**Pastor Sarah's at "Dusk" ZOOM
BOOK CLUB LIST 2026**

Thursday, 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

1/22 - The Women, Kristin Hannah

2/26 - Raising Hare, Chloe Dalton

3/26 - The Latehomecomer (A Hmong Family Memoir), Kao Kalia Yang

4/23 - The Man Who Sold America, Jo-Ann Reid

5/28 - My Friends, Fredrik Backman

6/25 - The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store, James McBride

7/ 23 - Falling Upward, Richard Rohr

8/27 - Endling, Maria Reva

9/24 - Twice, Mitch Albom

10/ 22 - The Storyteller's Death, Ann Davila Cardinal

11/19 - The Director, Daniel Kehlmann

12/17 - Secret of Secrets, Dan Brown



Embrace the new adventure ahead and let go of what no longer serves you. Let us journey forward where God leads us into a fantastic year!

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Sarah



PHOTO SUBMITTED

The HWY 30 singing group — Willa Holger (front, from left), Keith Agrimson, Jo Anne Agrimson and Barb Morrison; (back) Beth Vitse — gathers at Arendahl Lutheran Church near Peterson. The group started in 2004, and though some members have changed, the group continues to meet weekly for rehearsals.

CHRISTMAS at Arendahl

HWY 30 praise team, Norwegian treats headline festive celebration

BY AMY KYLLO | STAFF WRITER

PETERSON —

On the first or second Sunday in December, Arendahl Lutheran Church members are in Christmas celebration mode. From the country church basement wafts aromas of the potluck and thoughts of all the baked goodies. Upstairs in the turn-of-the-20th-century sanctuary, Christmas songs, hymns and carols are led by the local rural singing group, HWY 30, whose members are almost all attendees at Arendahl Lutheran.

Arendahl Lutheran is part of a four-point parish, sharing a pastor with three other local churches. Each year, the church has a musical Christmas service followed by an abundant potluck and Norwegian treats. An offering is taken towards hunger relief, and a Christmas tree has ornaments showing agriculture items and other gifts that can be sent to those in need overseas through Lutheran World Relief's Gifts of Love program. The day is one of the highlight events of the year for the church.

“As a small congregation, we have found things that work well for our group, and Christmas at Arendahl is one,” said congregation member Willa Holger. “We just have really special events that work well for us.”

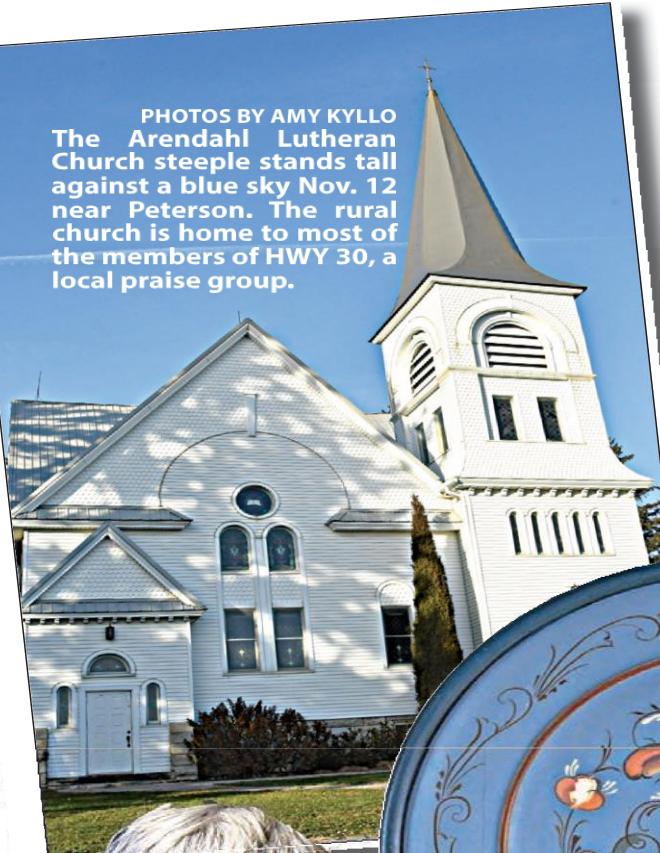


A gift tree to benefit individuals through Lutheran World Relief stands in the sanctuary Nov. 12 at Arendahl Lutheran Church near Peterson. The donations for the predominantly agriculture-related gifts as well as an offering towards hunger relief are part of Christmas at Arendahl Lutheran.

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Arendahl

PHOTOS BY AMY KYLLO
The Arendahl Lutheran Church steeple stands tall against a blue sky Nov. 12 near Peterson. The rural church is home to most of the members of HWY 30, a local praise group.



This December, Holger, who lives on the farm where Arendahl Lutheran was started by Norwegian settlers in 1856, will play a special part in the service. Holger is the pianist for HWY 30.

HWY 30 consists of Holger, as well as Barb Morrison, Beth Vitse, and Jo Anne and Keith



(ABOVE) A platter decorated with rosemaling hangs on the wall Nov. 12 at Arendahl Lutheran Church near Peterson.

The church was started by Norwegian settlers.

(ABOVE) Shari Boyum puts Christmas decorations on a table Nov. 12 at Arendahl Lutheran Church near Peterson. Boyum, who has been a member of the church for 56 years, helps with food preparations and decorating for Christmas at Arendahl.

Agrimson. The group of predominantly rural musicians has changed in membership over the years, but overall, HWY 30 has been together since 2004. They sing at the Christmas service yearly. In addition to Christmas at Arendahl Lutheran and some regular Sunday services, the group sings at around four or five events a year including weddings, funerals, baptisms and town celebrations. The group sings sacred songs of every genre as well as other music.

This year, a few of the songs they plan to sing at Christmas include "Still, Still, Still," "Christmas Lullaby," "Straw Carol" and "Shout! Sing Hallelujah!"

"(When) you are singing, oftentimes it's a straight Bible verse," Jo Anne said. "It's like that spark goes into people, and they maybe think of God's word in a different way. ... Or it brings back some memory."

Holger agreed. "It helps us focus on why we're here, what the church is all about," she said. "Many times, there's Jesus' words (in the lyrics), which are good to keep at the forefront of my mind."

The group practices weekly as they are able. Keith is a farmer, so fall harvest season means he sometimes has to miss. The group begins preparing their Christmas program months before December.

"We start earlier than the stores," Holger said.

The decision-making progress to choose the content of the program is casual, Holger and Jo Anne said. Generally, the finished program is a blending of what everyone wants to sing, what they have not sung in a while, and which songs go well together for a blend of styles and tempos.



Willa Holger flips through music Nov. 12 at Arendahl Lutheran Church near Peterson. Holger is the pianist for HWY 30, which will lead a special musical Christmas service in December at the church.

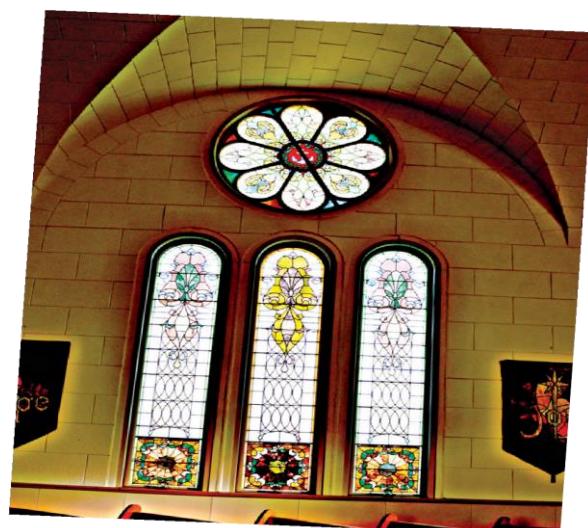
It always comes together, and it makes a good program, but it's chaotic," Jo Anne said. "Everybody has an opinion on what to sing and what not to sing." Though the group takes their music and its meaning seriously, they also like to have fun. "My husband, who does not sing in this group, has threatened to come and time how much we really practice and how much we laugh," Holger said. Some years, HWY 30 invites others to join the group for the Christmas service, but this year, at the celebration Dec. 7, the group will sing alone as well as alongside the congregation.

"I love when I am singing, I can look out and see people are just so much enjoying it," Jo Anne said. "Especially when we lead hymns that the congregation can sing with. There are some people who love to sing but just would never get up in front. ... You can just see how joyful it is for them to come together and have this special event." As the service wraps up, the congregation and any guests troop to the basement of the church that was built in 1899 for the feast. There, Shari Boyum, a member of the church for 56 years, has been making sure the food preparations are underway. She and other members also decorate the church for Christmas.

We just work together; ... we get along really well," she said. "Everybody knows, 'Well, they're going to be bringing that, and they (someone else) are going to be bringing that.'" All the parishioners have brought something to share for the smorgasbord. A meal of barbecue sandwiches and salads are the precursor for the Christmas treats. Some specialty items include rømmegrøt, sweet soup, lefse, sandbakkels, rosettes, krumkake, pizzelles, nut breads and sometimes homemade caramel or fudge. "Each person kind of has their specialty," Holger said. The meal is enjoyed around round tables, purchased specifically to make conversation easier. "It's an enjoyable day," Boyum said. "We're here in church until sometimes 3 o'clock." The fellowship shared is not something that occurs just at Christmas time. Jo Anne, Holger and Boyum said every Sunday has lots of visiting, and often times, a group goes to get lunch together after the service.

Pews glow from the warm sunlight coming through the stained glass Nov. 12 at Arendahl Lutheran Church near Peterson. After the Christmas celebration service in December, a potluck meal with traditional treats such as rømmegrøt, sweet soup, lefse, sandbakkels, rosettes, krumkake, pizzelles, nut breads and sometimes homemade caramel or fudge is served.

PHOTOS BY AMY KYLLO



North Prairie-Arendahl Sunday School's Christmas program "Born to Bring Us Joy" included songs, bells and reminders of God's love as seen in the symbols and decorations of Christmas. The following students sang and rang out joy: Allison & Jameson Brown; Brantly Burt; Gemma, Jack & Rex Charlebois; Nora Eide; Brooks & Reid Kimball; Bailey, Paisley & Riley Lorenz; Tatum & Tyson Vitse.

Thank you to Cora Mayer for reading the Christmas story, to Allison Brown for her solos, to Heidi Gerry for accompanying and leading the bells, Stella Charlebois for the bulletin design and Justin Brown for building the stable. Thanks always to Anita Brown for assisting and serving snacks and to the parents for all you do to help these children learn about Jesus and His love.

Beth & Jo Anne



UNITED LUTHERAN PARISH Congregations

2026 Annual Congregational Meetings



following worship services:
Arendahl – Sunday, January 4
Grace -- Sunday, January 18
Pilot Mound – Sunday, January 25
North Prairie – Sunday, January 25



Please have your annual reports submitted to the secretaries as soon as possible!

AS WE CONTINUE TO KEEP OUR MEMBERSHIP LISTS CURRENT, PLEASE CONTACT US WITH ADDRESS CHANGES or if you are a member of another church or do not wish to remain a member at Arendahl, Grace, North Prairie or Pilot Mound, let us know so your name can be removed from the membership and mailing address lists.

You can contact our church secretaries:

Allan Kingsbury at secretaryglc@goacentek.net or leave a message at Grace (and Arendahl) Lutheran Church office – 507-875-2218 or Sheri Holtegaard at holte@acegroup.cc .

Thank you in advance for helping to keep the memberships at United Lutheran Parish up-to-date!



North Prairie WELCA Announcements for JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2026

***Sunday, January 25th** - Congregational

Annual Meeting following worship.

Refreshments will be available.

STEWARDSHIP GOALS for 2026

Mission Quilts (locally and LWR)



PARAMENTS for Jan-Apr: Doreen Goodman, Sue Moen

BULLETIN BOARD for Jan-Apr: Circle # 1

The 2026 Program yearbooks will be available soon.

Upcoming events for WELCA include:

During the 2026 year we have scheduled several WELCA meetings throughout the year, quilting days from July thru November, and fundraising events - annual meatball dinner in April and Christmas Holiday Bake Sale in December.

Sunday, March 8th, 2026 - 9:30 am, WELCA meeting prior to worship



Women of the Church

Please add this to your calendar.

YOUR participation makes for a great opportunity to volunteer and support the work of our Women of the ELCA at North Prairie.



Looking forward to working with **YOU** during 2026. To streamline communications for WELCA with e-mail, text, and/or calls and to cut costs for postage and paper, please forward your e-mail address and phone #s - WELCA President Diane Drinkall: 507.459.1776 or dedrinkall@hotmail.com

GRACE WELCA - JAN/FEB 2026

QUILTING

Wednesday, January 14 9:00AM

Wednesday, January 28 9:00AM

Wednesday, February 11 9:00AM

Wednesday, February 25 9:00AM

Everyone is welcome to join the quilting group!

NO MONTHLY MEETING

There are no Welca meetings scheduled for January or February.

Our next Welca meeting is March 19th at 2pm.

Officers need to put together the 2026 Welca booklet before then to be handed out to members. The 2026 officers will be installed at this meeting.

Susie Norby and Val Hasleiet will serve.

*WELCA is our church organization for all women members.
Everyone is invited and encouraged to participate in WELCA activities!*

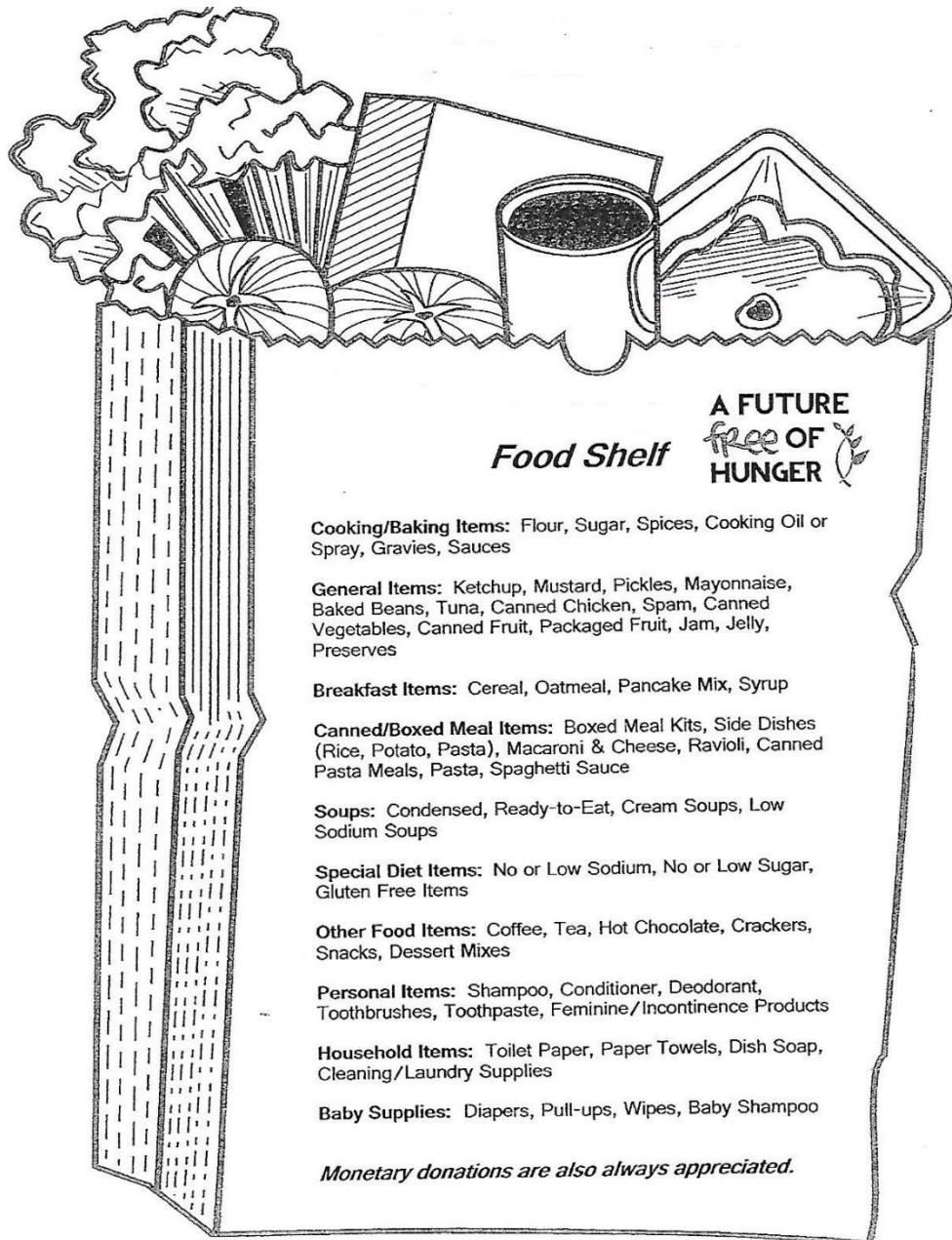


SUPPORT OUR LOCAL FOOD SHELVES

Children and families still need our support and donations. We have a cart located in the entryway of North Prairie church. Whatever you donate, whether it be just one item or several, we can make a difference in the lives of many.

Please join us in doing what we can to make sure families in need don't go to bed hungry. Items will be delivered at the end of each month to the local food shelf.

Cash Donations to local food shelves are encouraged at this time. Checks can be mailed to: SEMCAC Rushford Food Shelf 113 E Jessie St, PO Box 549 Rushford MN 55971 (OR a local food shelf where you live).
NP WELCA





UNITED LUTHERAN PARISH
Birthdays and Wedding Anniversaries

ARENDAHL

Birthdays

14-David Holger
16-JoAnne Agrimson
17-Isaac Roos

GRACE

Birthdays

04-Stephanie Kingsbury
08-Diane Mathison
14-Bill Grindland
17-Nicole Eidenschink
19-Betsy Blixt
20-Laurie Johnson
20- Jennifer Graham
23-Mark Olson
26-Megan Holien
29-Lori Hallum

Anniversaries

*2-Ronald & Lucy Benson
26-Lyle & Karen Thompson*

NORTH PRAIRIE

Birthdays

02-Paisley Lorenz
04-Aaron Woxland
05-Crystal Bries
05-Carissa Newman
06-Taiya Brown
07-Lauren Olson
08-Tony Russell
09-Jelon Hogie
09-Amy Lawstuen
09-Caroline Mayer
10-Heidi Gerry
10-Nicole Hockert
12-Allison Brown
13-Quentin Johnson
15-Rebecca Lange
15-Ella Ann Gantverg
18-Annette Bradley
21-Ian Brown
23-Jayson Johnson
23-Tamara Monohan
25-Shelista Culbertson
26-Ken Connaughty
27-Aryana Himle
28-Irene Hatlevig
28-Ron Mayer

Anniversaries

25-Jared & Shelista Culbertson

PILOT MOUND

Birthdays

01-Nadine Merkel
07-Ethan Thompson
12-Reed Merkel
19-Kevin Horsman
26-Kelly Wrubel

The Birthday/Anniversary lists are not complete.
Please help us keep accurate lists of these special days for our members

February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:00 am Worship and SS at Grace 10:30 am Worship at Arendahl	2	3	4 6:30-7:30 pm Zoom Confirmation Class	5	6	7
8 9:00 am Worship at Pilot Mound 10:00-11:00 am PM SS 10:30 am Worship and SS at North Prairie ULP Meeting following worship at North Prairie	9	10	11 9:00 am Grace Quilting 6:30-7:30 pm Zoom Confirmation Class	12	13	14
15 9:00 am Worship and SS at Grace 10:30 am Worship at Arendahl 2:00 -3:30 pm Root River Conference Assembly at Grace Lutheran, Peterson, MN	16	17	18 Ash Wednesday 7:00 pm ULP - Ash Wednesday Service at Grace NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	19	20	21
22 9:00 am Worship at Pilot Mound 10:00-11:00 am PM SS 10:30 am Worship and SS at North Prairie	23	24	25 9:00 am Grace Quilting 7:00 pm ULP Mid-Week Lenten Worship at Pilot Mound	26 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm Pastor Sarah's "At Dusk" Zoom Book Club – Raising Hare, by Chloe Dalton	27	28

THE MESSENGER NEWSLETTER

Arendahl-Grace-North Prairie-Pilot Mound

United Lutheran Parish

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