

January 2026



Volume 23 Issue 1

Parish Visitor

Belfield Lutheran Church · Daglum Lutheran Church · Medora Lutheran Church

Rebecca Kasian's Sermon – December 7th, 2025

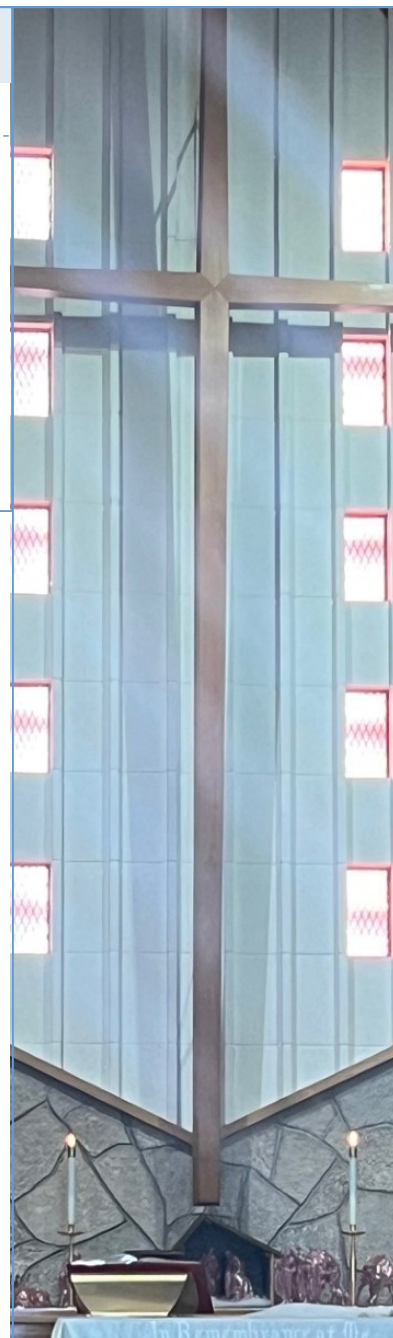
Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Last Sunday, after I finished here, I ran to Dickinson to fill in for Pastor Mike. Violet was with me – and if you know Violet and I, you know we like our coffee, it more like a necessity for me! Now, the closest coffee shop to Peace Lutheran that was open was Starbucks – so of course, that's where we went. I thought I was being proactive – ordered ahead on the app so it'd be ready when we got there. Well, Violet's hot chocolate was sitting there waiting, just like it should be. But my coffee? My coffee was nowhere to be found. We waited. And we waited. And my coffee was still not done. And the longer I waited, the more agitated I got. I was in a hurry to get back to Belfield for our worship-planning meeting. Finally, the barista looked up, saw my face, and said, "I'm so sorry for the delay." The espresso machine has not been working this morning, "I just wanted to make sure it was right." And that stopped me. She wasn't rushing. She was careful. She was calm. Meanwhile, I was doing the exact opposite – impatient, frustrated, losing my peace over a cup of coffee. That's kind of what Advent reminds us of, isn't it? The second candle – the Peace Candle – calls us to slow down, to breathe, and to remember that God is still at work, even in the waiting.

In our Gospel reading today, John the Baptist bursts onto the scene out in the wilderness. He's not exactly the picture of calm or comfort – camel's hair, a leather belt, locusts and honey for lunch – he's wild and loud. But his message is simple and powerful: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near!" Now, repentance isn't about shame – it's about turning around. It's a spiritual reset. It's the moment when we realize we've been standing in the wrong line, getting impatient about the wrong things, and God says, "Turn around. There's something better waiting." That's how peace begins – when we stop fighting the pace of God's grace.

Earlier this morning we asked the kids, "Are you ready?" And they showed us what readiness looks like – waiting, watching, being patient. So let's ask ourselves those same questions. (Pause, look around) Are you ready for Christmas? Have you finished decorating? Shopping? Baking? Wrapping? Got all the travel plans figured out? Those are fun questions – but there's a deeper one beneath them: Are you ready for the Christ of Christmas? Because Advent isn't just about getting our houses ready – it's about getting our hearts ready.

John's message and this second candle both remind us that peace doesn't come from checking off our lists. Peace comes when we make space for Jesus – when



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Wednesday School Program
- Baptisms
- Santa Lucia Celebration
- Annual Meetings
- First Communions

"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" Isaiah 43:19



we turn toward Him and let Him steady our hearts.

Maybe you need peace in your family right now.
 Maybe you need peace in your schedule.
 Maybe you need peace in your soul.

The good news is: the Prince of Peace is already drawing near.

The psalmist prays in Psalm 72: “May the righteous flourish; let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.” That’s not the kind of peace that comes from everything being easy. It’s the peace that grows out of justice and love — when people care for one another, when the poor are lifted up, when compassion becomes a way of life.

This is the peace that Jesus came to bring, and the peace that still changes the world today — one heart, one home, one act of kindness at a time.

John said, “Bear fruit worthy of repentance.” That’s what it means to live as people of peace — to let the love of Christ show up in our actions. When we forgive instead of holding a grudge, when we listen before we speak, when we choose gentleness instead of control — that’s how we prepare the way of the Lord.

“Trust in the Lord with all of your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.” *Proverbs 3:5-6*



John also said, “The one who is coming after me is more powerful than I.” That’s our Advent hope. The one who is coming — Jesus — will baptize us with the Holy Spirit and fire. That fire doesn’t destroy; it refines. It clears away the noise and the hurry and fills us with peace that lasts.

When that peace takes hold, something beautiful happens — justice begins to flow — just like the hymn we’ll sing in a moment, “Let Justice Flow Like Streams.”

So yes, my coffee took longer than I wanted. And sometimes, peace does too. But Advent teaches us that waiting isn’t wasted. God is at work in the delay, preparing something better than we expected.

Here’s your invitation for this week: find one way to be a peacemaker. Offer forgiveness where there’s been tension. Speak a kind word to someone who’s worn out or overlooked. Pray for someone who’s difficult to love. Or simply slow down and notice where God is already present.

Let peace begin with you. Because when we live as people of peace, we prepare the way for Christ — right here, right now.

May our hearts be ready — not perfect, just ready — to receive the Christ of Christmas, the Prince of Peace.

Amen.



ANNUAL MEETINGS 2026

CHURCH MATTERS

January is the time for our annual meetings to take place. All members are encouraged to attend and take part in the annual meeting for your congregation. **January 25, 2025**

All annual meetings will be held at Belfield Lutheran. We will have a joint worship service at 10:00am followed by a potluck and annual meetings.

The presence of voting members at annual meetings is greatly encouraged as we elect council members, discuss the future and make decisions on items important to the ongoing health of our parish.



*"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven."
Ecclesiastes 3:1*

2025 Medora Lutheran Wednesday School Program



Baptism

Tucker Boone Toso



We rejoiced with Tyler and Mattea Toso as their son, Tucker, was baptized on November 30th, 2025 at Belfield Lutheran Church.

Tucker Boone Toso was born on March 7, 2025. Tucker's baptismal sponsors are McKenna and Tate Nordby.

We welcome you into the Lord's family, Tucker!

"Trust in the Lord with all of your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding." *Proverbs 3:5-6*

SERVE

S — STEADFAST

Our church continues because of people who show up, pitch in, and say "yes" more often than they probably planned. Week after week, familiar faces quietly make sure worship happens, doors are opened, coffee is brewed, music is played, and ministries continue. In times of transition, steadfast service matters more than ever. It keeps us grounded, connected, and moving forward together as a community of faith.

E — ENCOURAGEMENT

To those who have been serving faithfully—sometimes doing the same job again and again—please hear this clearly: you are deeply appreciated. Your dedication has carried our congregation through change, uncertainty, and busy seasons. You are living examples of Christ's love in action. Thank you for your continued service!

R — RESPOND

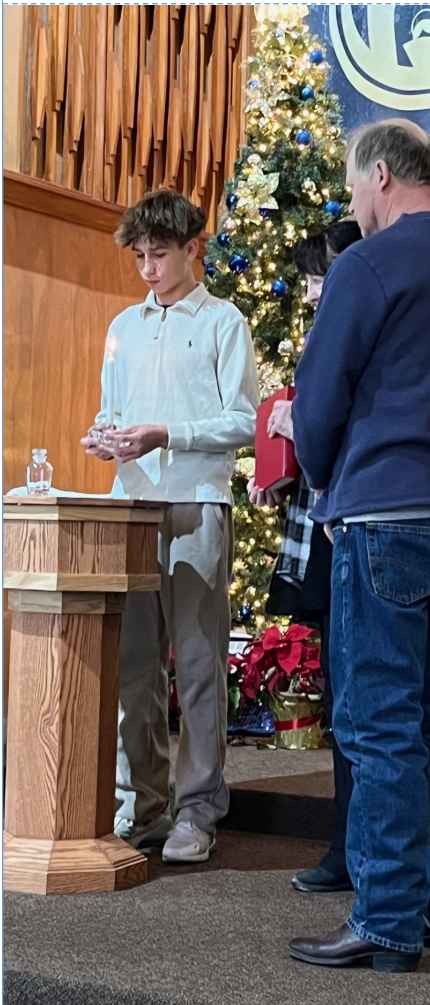
This season is also a time to respond. If you've ever thought, "*Someone should help with that,*" good news: that someone might be you! Serving doesn't require special training, lifelong commitment, or knowing all the answers. Many opportunities simply need a willing heart and a helping hand. Even small acts of service make a big difference when shared among many people.

V — VOCATION

Serving is more than filling a spot on a schedule—it's living out our calling as followers of Christ. God has given each of us unique gifts, skills, and experiences meant to be shared for the good of the whole church. Some serve up front, others behind the scenes, and many in ways that quietly support everything else. Every role matters, and no contribution is too small to be meaningful.

E — EVERYONE

In this season without a pastor, we are reminded that church is not built on one person—it is built on all of us. When many hands share the work, the load feels lighter, joy grows stronger, and no one carries everything alone. If you're interested in serving—or just want to learn more—please talk with **Darryl or Rebecca**. They would be happy to help you find a place to plug in as we continue to serve together in faith.



Baptism

Landon James Curun



Congratulations to Landon James Curun who was baptized December 28th at Belfield Lutheran Church. He is the son of Cyrena Bechtold and Michael Curun. He is the grandson of Joanne Bang and Shawn Gawryluk. His baptismal sponsors are Joanne Bang & Shawn Gawryluk.

We welcome you into the Lord's family, Landon!

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." *Lamentations 3:22-24*



First Communion

Abby Rear, daughter of Michael & Hanna Rear
Landon Curun, son of Cyrena Bechtold & Michael Curun
Aiden Chamberlain, son of Jordan Hutzenbiler
Conner Mohler, son of Jared Mohler and Michelle Doughty



We celebrate with Tess Mlynar who was welcomed to the table of Holy Communion on December 7th at Medora Lutheran Church. Tess is the daughter of Kyle and Alyssa Mlynar. Welcome to the Lord's table, Tess! (not pictured)

On December 28th, we welcomed Aiden Chamberlain, Conner Mohler, Abby Rear and Landon Curun to the table of Holy Communion at Belfield Lutheran Church.

Congratulations and welcome to the Lord's table!



SAVE
THE DATE

2026 Parish Extravaganza February 22nd at St. Bernard's Parish Center in Belfield

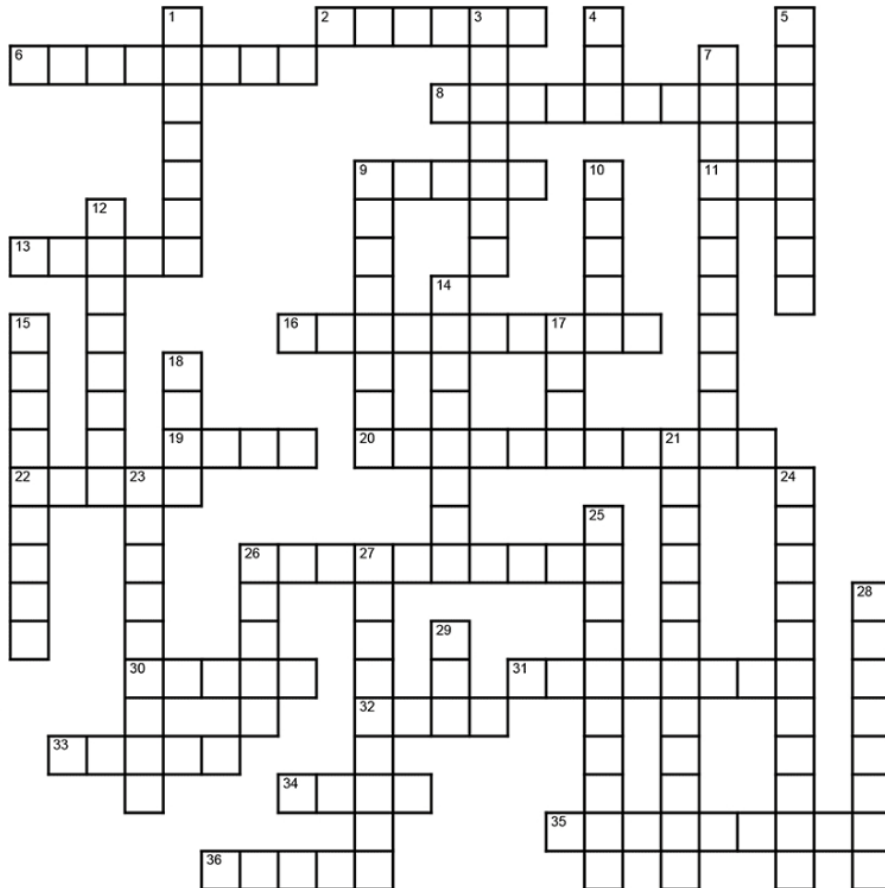
ACROSS

2. Formal attire for a New Year's gala
6. Colorful decoration unfurled at midnight
8. Written request to join the festivities
9. Auditory entertainment for the party
11. Night before the big day
13. Joyful state of mind for the occasion
16. Device for creating a ruckus at 12 AM
19. Spherical object dropped to mark the new year
20. Famous New York location for celebrations
22. Social gathering to welcome January 1st
26. Symbolic elderly figure of the passing year
30. Raised glass with well-wishes for the future
31. Tool for tracking days in the coming year
32. Elegant female attire for a New Year's soiree
33. Device counting down to midnight
34. 365-day period coming to an end
35. Vocal tally of seconds until midnight
36. Fun activities at a New Year's gathering

DOWN

1. First month of the new calendar
3. Rhythmic movement to celebrate
4. Festive headwear for the occasion
5. Small paper bits thrown in celebration
7. Explosive noisemaker for the festivities
9. Moment the new year officially begins
10. Stemware for sipping bubbly beverages
12. Handheld firework for celebrations
14. Final month of the outgoing year
15. Bubbly beverage for toasting
17. Romantic gesture at the stroke of twelve
18. Symbolic infant representing the new year

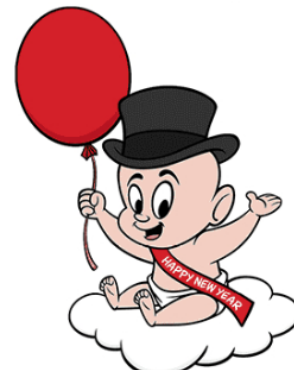
HAPPY NEW YEAR!



21. Traditional song sung on New Year's Eve
23. Customary practice for the holiday
24. Festive event to welcome the new year
25. Personal promise for self-improvement
26. Initial occurrence in the new year

27. Sand-filled timer symbolizing passing time
28. Inflatable decorations for the party
29. Commitment made for the upcoming year

Auld Lang Syne	Father Time	Music
Baby	Firecracker	Noise Maker
Ball	First	Party
Balloons	Flute	Resolution
Calendar	Games	Sparkler
Celebration	Gown	Streamer
Champagne	Happy	Times Square
Clock	Hat	Toast
Confetti	Hourglass	Tradition
Countdown	Invitation	Tuxedo
Dancing	January	Vow
December	Kiss	Year
Eve	Midnight	





santa LUCIA celebration 2025

A Celebration held at Belfield Lutheran Church on December 18th, 2025

Thank you to Maci Wanner, Morgan Vesey, Irelynn Ross, Abby Rear, Kaylee Froehlich, Ivan Froehlich, and Kaleb Romanyshyn for celebrating as Saint Lucia and Star Boys.

Thank you to Dana Wanner for reading the meaning of the celebration.

We celebrate Saint Lucia in honor of our Scandinavian heritage. The song the choir sang was called "Santa Lucia", the lyrics highlight the cold, dark winter nights, the peace and goodwill, and the light being brought into homes by the saint. We also have the tradition of the candle-lit procession honoring St. Lucy on her feast day.

So what is the history behind these Scandinavian traditions?

Santa Lucia (Saint Lucy), whose name Lucia refers to "light", is a Catholic saint who was born in Syracuse, Sicily, in 283 AD and was martyred at the age of 20. At a time of Christian persecution, Lucia vowed at a young age to live her life in the service of Christ. According to legend, Lucia brought food and aid to Christians hiding in the Roman catacombs, wearing a candle lit wreath on her head to light her way and have her hands free to carry as much food as possible. Though she lived a considerably short life, she is still celebrated in different parts of the world almost two thousand years later, particularly in Sweden.



It is believed that Lucia and her feast day were adopted as a bearer of light at the beginning of the dark, cold Swedish winter. Her feast day, which coincided with the shortest day of the year, is widely celebrated as a festival of light. Falling within the Advent season, Saint Lucy's Day is viewed as a precursor of Christmastide, pointing to the arrival of the Light of Christ on Christmas Day. Today's Lucia celebrations involve the oldest daughter of the family dressing in a long white robe with a red sash around her waist, along with a crown of fresh greens and lit candles worn upon her head. The young lady rises before the rest of the family and serves them traditional Lussekatter (Lucia buns), ginger cookies, and coffee. In many villages and towns across Sweden, there are Lucia processions and concerts, and the celebrations signify the beginning of the Christmas season.



Santa Lucia's male attendants are called Star Boys, who represent Saint Stephen who was the first Christian martyr. Dressed in winter white like the girls, Star Boys wear tall conical hats sprinkled with stars and usually also carry a star on a stick. Star Boys sing the praises of the St Lucia. Their stars reflect a bit of Her sacred light during the night of long darkness and act as a promise of the greater light to come.

It has been said that we should think of St. Lucia Day as a stopping point in a busy season, a pause, a time to remind ourselves that the coming of Christmas is a celebration of the spirit. During the season of Advent, we prepare our hearts and wait for the coming light of Christ. In a world that can be overshadowed with darkness and uncertainty, we can be assured that the light of Christ will shine through the deepest darkness. As Christians, we are called to not only walk in the light but be the light for others.

Matthew 5:14-16 says: 14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

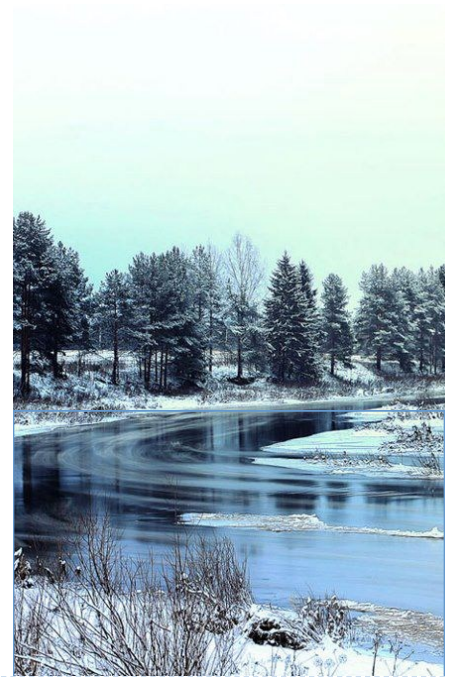
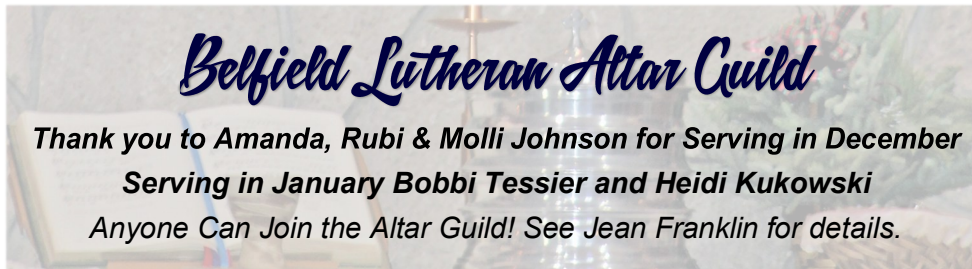
We are to be a beacon of hope and truth in a world that is dark and full of despair. When we let our light shine, we are not only Glorifying God, but also inspiring others to do the same. Share your faith, be a bearer of light, be like St. Lucia.

January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Happy New Year	2	3
4 Worship 8:30 am – Medora 9:00 am - Choir Practice 10:00 am – Belfield 11:45 am - Daglum	5	6 8:00 pm – AA Meeting @ Belfield Lutheran	7 3:30 pm - Wednesday School @ Medora Lutheran Church 5:30 pm - Confirmation @ Belfield Lutheran	8 7:00 pm – Bible Study @ Belfield Lutheran	9	10
11 Worship 8:30 am – Medora 9:00 a m - Choir Practice 10:00 am – Belfield	12	13 8:00 pm – AA Meeting @ Belfield Lutheran	14 3:30 pm - Wednesday School @ Medora Lutheran Church 5:30 pm - Confirmation @ Belfield Lutheran	15 7:00 pm – Bible Study @ Belfield Lutheran	16	17
18 Worship 8:30 am – Medora 9:00 am - Choir Practice 10:00 am – Belfield 11:45 am - Daglum	19 6:30 pm – Belfield Council Meeting @ Belfield Lutheran	20 8:00 pm – AA Meeting @ Belfield Lutheran	21 3:30 pm - Wednesday School @ Medora Lutheran Church 5:30 pm - Confirmation @ Belfield Lutheran	22 7:00 pm – Bible Study @ Belfield Lutheran	23	24
25 Worship 9:00 am - Choir Practice 10:00 am – Joint Parish Worship @ Belfield Lutheran. Potluck and Annual Meetings following worship	26	27 8:00 pm – AA Meeting @ Belfield Lutheran	28 3:30 pm - Wednesday School @ Medora Lutheran Church 5:30 pm - Confirmation @ Belfield Lutheran	29 7:00 pm – Bible Study @ Belfield Lutheran	30	31



The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you...



“So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.” Psalm 90:12

In our ongoing prayers...

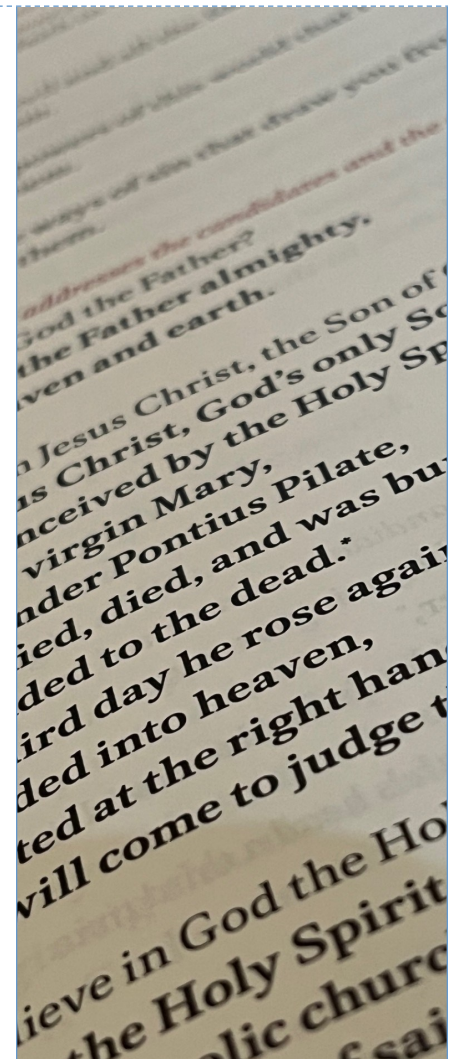
Remembering those in our prayers:

The Family of Roger Myers, Brian Ott, Barbara Hurt, Harold Hugelen, Donald Suomala, Joey Berger, Kevin Kuntz, Diedra Hlibichuk, Sherri O'Brien, Rick Baxter, Kris Hastings, Bonnie Streitz, Debbie Baca, Robin Sandaker, Barb Newton, Sandy Simnioniw, Tom Adams, Rick Wolfram, Shirley Olson, Randy Wolfram, Emma Hlibichuk, Denise Tibbs, Christine Perrin, Duane Tessier, Gerry Suomala, JoAnne Suomala, Mary Knotts, Dolores Roy, Cord Kessel, Halle Blain, Marilyn Oyhus, Craig McLaughlin, Lincoln Lee Johnson, Mindy O'Brien, Josephine Shypkoski-Thompson

Please continue to pray for those who have lost their jobs, those with mental illness, those seeking Sobriety, those struggling with infertility, all troops and their families & those working for peace in our world.

Please help us keep this prayer list active.

To add a loved one to the prayer list for next month's issue, please fill out a prayer request slip during worship, making sure to indicate your desire to have the request published in the newsletter, and place it in the offering basket or email us at newsletter@belfieldlutheran.org



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Parish Visitor
January 2026

TO:

January 2026 Worship Schedule

4	8:30 a.m.	Medora Worship
	10:00 a.m.	Belfield Worship
	11:45 a.m.	Daglum Worship
11	8:30 a.m.	Medora Worship
	10:00 a.m.	Belfield Worship
18	8:30 a.m.	Medora Worship
	10:00 a.m.	Belfield Worship
	11:45 a.m.	Daglum Worship
25	10:00 a.m.	Parish Worship
	11:00 a.m.	Belfield Lutheran Annual Meetings

If you can't join us in person, please join us online.
You can find us on the Medora Lutheran or Belfield
Lutheran Facebook Pages.

Thank you to
Ron & Laurie Baranko
for sponsoring this edition of the
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John & Alice Meisner and
Mike & Betty Baranko

Sponsorship Matters

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