



## FEBRUARY 2026 HAPPENINGS

**Pastor Paul Thompson** Cell: 507-273-8504 Email: [pthomp821@gmail.com](mailto:pthomp821@gmail.com)

**Office Hours:** 9:00 am–Noon (Monday & Thursday ... or by appointment) **Websites:** [eaststolaf.org](http://eaststolaf.org) ...OR.... [weststolaf.org](http://weststolaf.org)  
**Gina Moser, Secretary:** Office: 365-8222 Cell: 507-951-4964 Emails: [eastwest@kmtel.com](mailto:eastwest@kmtel.com) AND [certainty@kmtel.com](mailto:certainty@kmtel.com)



## February Worship & West Annual Meeting

**EAST:** EARLY service at 8:30 am for Feb. (*East coffee after church*)

**JAM:** 9:30 am at West for all parish students (*also West coffee*)

**WEST:** LATE service at 10:30 am (*West coffee 9:30 am*)

>>> **WEST:** ANNUAL MEETING & POTLUCK Feb. 1 (BACKUP date is Feb. 15)

>>> **BOTH:** ASH WEDNESDAY Worship: Feb. 18 at WEST at 7:00 pm (*no supper Ash Wed.*)

>>> **BOTH:** LENT Supper & Worship: Feb. 25 at EAST: 6:00 pm supper, 7:00 pm worship (*supper served by East Circle 4*)

**OFFERINGS:** Our congregational councils ask you to prayerfully continue your financial support church. Please be sure to make your check out to "West St. Olaf Church" or "East St. Olaf Church" and mail to:

West members mail to: Dave Peterson 25378 720<sup>th</sup> St., Hayfield, MN 55940

East members mail to: Bryan DeCook at 7583 80<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW, Stewartville, MN 55976

## Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,



The Solanus Casey Center in Detroit, Michigan, has a series of statues of real-life people who personify each of the beatitudes, the first verses of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. The statues include Mother Teresa ("Blessed are the merciful"), Takashi Nagai ("Blessed are the meek"), Clement Kern ("Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness"), Martin Luther King Jr. ("Blessed are the peacemakers"), Jean Donovan ("Blessed are those who mourn"), Catherine de Hueck Doherty ("Blessed are the pure in heart"), Óscar Romero ("Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness"), and Dorothy Day ("Blessed are the poor in spirit").

The season of Lent is about reminding ourselves that we are blessed not in greatness, but in humility. We are blessed when we bless others. We are blessed when we are humble; and put others ahead of ourselves. By worshipping a second time each week, we give ourselves a second chance to humble ourselves, a second chance to be empowered to good deeds, a second chance to learn peacemaking, purity, and righteousness.

Come join in good food and discussion of blessedness each Wednesday this Lent. We once again intone the beautiful Holden Evening Prayer and send ourselves into the night renewed, to be blessings to the world.

In Christ's name,  
 Pastor Paul Thompson

## Membership Updates, WELCA News, Serving Schedules

### MEMBERSHIP INFO

#### ETERNAL REST

**Janet Anderson (East member)** passed into eternal rest January 9, 2026. *Her family will celebrate her life at the family farm in the spring.*

### WOMEN OF EAST & EVENTS

**Meeting 10am Sat. Feb. 14** in the East church dining room.

**East Women's Minutes** are on page 3 of this newsletter.

**Quilting & Sack lunch Tuesdays** at 10:00 am at church.

### WEST WELCA NEWS

Time goes by so quickly. We are already beginning the second month of the new year. We pray for God's blessing for our country. During this time of turmoil, we pray for understanding and compassion for one another.

*Thank you to all who served in January. Chairperson was Sue Hyland and altar guild ladies were Mary Brandt and Sandy Iverson.*

**In February** our chairperson is Sandy Iverson & altar guild ladies are Donna Larsen & Cindy Senjem.

We thank Sheryl W. and Sue H. for organizing our successful Heritage Days. JAM students enjoyed making Krumkakke and Lefse and tasting the variety of Scandinavian treats. A generous offering was given to the St. Olaf Heritage Association.

WELCA donated 2 quilts to the cancer telethon in Hayfield. We pray for all those affected by this disease and hope research can discover the cause and provide successful treatment in the near future.

*Continued in next column...*

On **February 1**, West St. Olaf has our annual meeting. A potluck dinner will follow the meeting so please bring a dish to pass; and join us in fellowship.

In February we will quilt on the **10<sup>th</sup>** and **11<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>** at 9 AM. Please bring a sack lunch and come join us. On the **11<sup>th</sup>**, we will have a WELCA meeting at 1 PM with Pastor Paul leading us in discussion after our Bible Study and Cindy Senjem will be our hostess.

It seems hard to believe we are already talking about the Lenten season but **Ash Wednesday is on February 18<sup>th</sup>—Ash Wednesday services are at 7 PM at West.**

*East will host the Lenten services at 7 PM on February 25<sup>th</sup> with supper at 6 PM.*

Happy Valentine's Day!  
Sharon and Nancy



**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 4-7, 13**

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup> It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup> Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

<sup>13</sup> And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.



### WEATHER-RELATED CANCELATIONS

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### SERVING SCHEDULES

#### WEST—JANUARY

**Ushers:** Pete D. organizes

**Deacon:** Carma Bjornson

**Altar Guild:** Donna Larsen, Cindy Senjem

**Acolytes:** Ushers covering **Stewardship:**

1<sup>st</sup> Sun. — Luther League

2<sup>nd</sup> Sun. — JAM (or B.O.E.)

3<sup>rd</sup> Sun. — WELCA

4<sup>th</sup> Sun. — Church council

5<sup>th</sup> Sun. — Church council

#### EAST—JANUARY

**Acolytes:** Ushers covering

**Altar Guild:** Danny Zieman

**Deacon:** Mary Madson

**Coffee Servers:**

1<sup>st</sup> Sun.— Quilting Sisters

2<sup>nd</sup> Sun.— Sarah Circle

3<sup>rd</sup> Sun.— OPEN: Contact

*Marylin Carlson, if willing*

4<sup>th</sup> Sun.— Circle 4

5<sup>th</sup> Sun.— Council members

## EAST: Minutes of Women of East Meeting



We held our meeting on Saturday, January 10, 2026. President Amy Schwarz called the meeting to order. Devotions were given. The secretary's report was read and approved. The treasurer's report was read and approved. Diane will be sending the end of year financial statement into the Church Office. Amy and Jane completed the End of Year Summary for WELCA and it was approved and sent to Gina for the Annual Meeting Report.

There was no Old Business. New Business was planning for the upcoming year's events.

### **Fellowship Schedule will remain the same for 2026.**

First Sunday: Sewing Sisters

Second Sunday: Sarah Circle

Third Sunday: Open, Contact Marylin Carlson

Fourth Sunday: Circle 4

Fifth Sunday: Council Members

*If there is a special dinner scheduled, it takes precedence over the schedule.*

*Funerals: Pastor will contact Marylin Carlson, Kitchen Manager, and she will contact members to help serve.*

### **Lenten Dinners for East will be**

**Feb. 25:** Circle 4

**March 11:** Sarah Circle

**March 25:** East Council Members

**Women of East Meetings** will continue to be held the second Saturday of the month at 10:00am in the dining room.

### **Officers for the 2026 Year:**

Copresidents: Marylin Carlson, Amy Schwarz

Secretary: Dawn Evjen, Jane Williams

Treasurer: Diane Severson

Kitchen Manager: Marylin Carlson

**The next meeting will be Saturday, February 14**, in the East St Olaf Dining Room. Women who are members of East are members of our group. Please stop in. We would LOVE to hear your ideas and spread some Godly fun in our congregation and community.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Williams

WELCA Secretary

## **EAST: Valentine's Sunday: February 15 after our Worship**



Join us **after church, Feb. 15**, for some Love, and Affection, and Fellowship! East WELCA is serving up some Valentines Day fun. Stop in and visit.

## BOTH: ASH WEDNESDAY & LENTEN SERVICES



Ash Wednesday is the solemn start to Lent, marking a time for self-reflection, repentance, and recommitment to faith, emphasizing God's grace found in Christ's sacrifice, not earning salvation; we receive ashes in the shape of a cross on our foreheads, symbolizing mortality ("dust to dust") but also God's intimate presence and the promise of new life through Jesus' resurrection, uniting human fragility with divine love and hope.

### Schedule for Ash Wednesday & Lenten Services with Supper before Services

**Feb. 18:** at WEST at 7pm Ash Wednesday worship

**Feb. 25:** at EAST with 6pm soup supper (served by Circle 4), and 7pm Lenten service

**Mar. 4:** at WEST with 6 pm soup supper (served by JAM & LL), and 7pm Lenten service

**Mar. 11:** at EAST with 6pm soup supper (served by Sarah Circle), and 7pm Lenten service

**Mar. 18:** at WEST with 6 pm soup supper (served by WELCA), and 7pm Lenten service

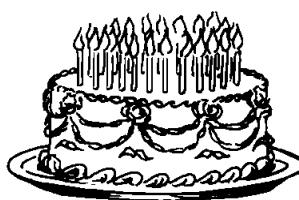
**Mar. 25:** at EAST with 6pm soup supper (served by East Council), and 7pm Lenten service

**OUR BIRTHDAY LISTS:** If you are not on our birthday lists in the monthly newsletter and you wish to be listed, please email our church secretary, Gina, at [eastwest@kmtel.com](mailto:eastwest@kmtel.com)

**Feb. Birthdays: EAST**

- 1 Mark Brakke
- 1 Jennifer Schwanke
- 3 Haylee Lantz
- 4 Heather Rud
- 5 Diane Severson
- 10 Pat Lee
- 21 Zach Carstensen
- 24 Robert Braaten

# Happy Birthday!



**Feb. Birthdays: WEST**

- 2 Rebecca Dahle
- 5 Gwenda Tiegen
- 5 Tammy Johnson
- 5 Gail Laxen
- 6 Rachel Arett
- 8 Carol Christopherson
- 10 Dee Rabehl
- 11 Amie Schei
- 12 Nikole Kaehler
- 12 Calvin Keckhafer
- 16 Orin Johnson
- 17 Peyton Jervis
- 18 Katie Schuck
- 18 Brad Lechnir
- 19 Heidi Schrader
- 20 Erin Hellickson
- 23 Annabelle Bamlet
- 24 Sarah Glynn
- 25 Wayne Lee
- 26 Luann Christopherson
- 28 Isaac Glynn

# FEBRUARY

## East & West St. Olaf HAPPENINGS ~ 2026 February edition

Page 5

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
<b>1</b> <b>8:30 am EAST</b> Worship, <u>Comm.</u> <u>East coffee after svc</u> <b>9:30 am</b> JAM classes West Coffee <b>10:30 am WEST</b> Worship, <u>Comm.</u> , <u>THEN WEST HAS</u> <u>ANNUAL MEETING</u> <u>FOLLOWED BY A</u> <u>POTLUCK DINNER</u>	<b>2</b> 9:00am-Noon Pastor office	<b>3</b> <b>10:00 am</b> East Quilt/sack lunch  <b>6:00 pm</b> <u>East</u> <u>Council meeting</u>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b> 9:00am-Noon Pastor office	<b>6</b> <u>Pastor</u> <u>day-off</u>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> <b>8:30 am EAST</b> Worship <u>East coffee after svc</u> <u>Backup date <u>NOT</u></u> <u>needed for EAST</u> <u>Annual Meeting</u> <b>9:30 am</b> JAM classes West Coffee <b>10:30 am WEST</b> Worship & <u>INSTALL</u> <u>OFFICERS</u> , and <u>HOLY BAPTISM</u> of Walker Jervis	<b>9</b> 9:00am-Noon Pastor office	<b>10</b> <b>9:00 am</b> West Quilt / sack lunch  <b>10:00 am</b> East Quilt/sack lunch  <b>7:00 pm</b> <u>West</u> <u>Council meeting</u>	<b>11</b> <b>9:00 am</b> West Quilt / sack lunch  <b>1:00 pm</b> <u>WEST</u> <u>WELCA Meeting</u> <u>Host: Cindy S.</u> <u>Study: Pastor Paul</u>  <b>7:00 pm</b> <u>BOTH</u> <u>CONFIRMATION</u> <u>Class at chapel</u>	<b>12</b> 9:00am-Noon Pastor office	<b>13</b> <u>Pastor</u> <u>day-off</u>	<b>14</b> <b>10:00 am</b> <u>Women of EAST</u> <u>meeting in the</u> <u>Church dining</u> <u>room—All women</u> <u>invited.</u>
<b>15</b> <b>8:30 am EAST</b> Worship & <u>then</u> <u>WELCA Valentine</u> <u>Fun for East folks.</u> <u>East coffee after svc</u> <b>9:30 am</b> JAM classes West Coffee <b>10:30 am WEST</b> Worship, <u>Comm.</u> <u>Backup date <u>IF</u></u> <u>needed for WEST</u> <u>Annual Meeting</u>	<b>16</b> 9:00am-Noon Pastor office	<b>17</b> <b>10:00 am</b> East Quilt/sack lunch  <b>7:00 pm</b> <u>DEADLINE</u> <u>to submit info for</u> <u>next newsletter</u>	<b>18</b>   <b>7:00 pm</b> <u>BOTH</u> <u>At WEST—</u> <u>ASH WEDNESDAY</u> <u>Worship</u>	<b>19</b> 9:00am-Noon Pastor office	<b>20</b> <u>Pastor</u> <u>day-off</u>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> <b>8:30 am EAST</b> Worship, <u>Comm.</u> <u>East coffee after svc</u> <b>9:30 am</b> JAM classes West Coffee <b>10:30 am WEST</b> Worship	<b>23</b> 9:00am-Noon Pastor office	<b>24</b> <b>9:00 am</b> West Quilt / sack lunch  <b>NEWSLETTER</b> <b>DAY at OFFICE</b> 9:10- print 9:25- fold 9:35- collate/tape  <b>10:00 am</b> East Quilt/sack lunch	<b>25</b> <b>9:00 am</b> West Quilt / sack lunch    <b>6:00 pm</b> <u>BOTH</u> <u>At EAST—</u> <u>Soup</u> <u>Supper (Circle 4)</u> then... <b>7:00 pm</b> <u>BOTH</u> <u>at EAST—</u> <u>LENTEN Worship</u>	<b>26</b> 9:00am-Noon Pastor office	<b>27</b> <u>Pastor</u> <u>day-off</u>	<b>28</b>



#### **WEATHER-RELATED CHURCH CANCELLATIONS**

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## **St. Olaf Heritage Association Annual Report 2025**



The high point of 2025 came on Sunday afternoon, August 17, when our fifth annual “Taste of Norway” event broke all previous attendance records with an estimated 250 guests. We came close to running out of food; the church parking lot was filled to overflowing, with cars parked along the county road. The hymn sing, led by the Hosanna quartet of Hayfield, filled the packed sanctuary with lifted voices. Many people visited the log house across the road, newly whitewashed inside, decorated with fresh flowers, and treated with log preservative outside. Hearty thanks to East St. Olaf for use of their splendid church!

Heightened concern over the future of the St. Olaf parsonage in many ways set the agenda for the St. Olaf Heritage Association (SOHA) in 2025. While taking care to maintain a neutral stance regarding the building’s future, SOHA recognized the importance of informing the public of the historical significance of the parsonage. We published and distributed a booklet that described how pastors’ families supported themselves in part by farming the church’s land surrounding the parsonage, how the parsonage served as a social gathering place and a site for church celebrations. Life on the parsonage was also the theme of the skit performed at the fifth annual Taste of Norway at East St. Olaf Church.

In addition, with discussions taking place in the St. Olaf churches about the possible sale of church land, SOHA became interested in securing ownership of the land on which the Tverberg Log House rests. As the year drew to a close, the future of the parsonage, the church’s land and ownership of a plot of land for the Tverberg Log House remained unresolved, with discussions progressing.

This coming year, 2026, marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SOHA. In 1976, the historic Tverberg Log House was moved from its original location one- and one-half miles south of West St. Olaf church, to its current location where the original St. Olaf’s Evangelical Norwegian Lutheran congregation was founded on June 12, 1856. SOHA is greeting this year with the cabin in good condition, strong finances and three new members: Dudley Davis of West St. Olaf; Sue Starkson of Zumbro Lutheran; and Sylvia Starkson Alberts of Christ Lutheran. We will work to make the next Taste of Norway better than ever, with parking and waiting line issues addressed, and plenty of home-made Norwegian specialty foods for all. We also plan to reach out to daughter churches: Evanger, Trinity, St. John’s, and Zumbro.



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## EAST OFFERINGS

(01/04/26) Current \$930.

(01/11/26) Current \$2,929, Reimbursement \$220, and Benevolence \$75 and In-Memory of Edwin Distad Jr.: Current \$130. Also, In-Memory of Ralph Kyllo: Undesignated \$20.

(01/18/26) Current \$1,532 and Benevolence \$25.

(01/25/26) Current \$960 and Benevolence \$50.

## EAST St. Olaf Council Minutes: January 6, 2026

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order.

**Members Present:** Randy Robinson, Pastor Paul Thompson, Bryan DeCook, Jane Williams, Pete Exe

**Devotions:** Pastor Paul

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor visited 8 members, led worship for 7 services, led confirmation classes, attended St Olaf meetings and the Zumbro River Conferences. He took part in the Luther League Christmas and led a worship service at Field Crest Nursing Home.

**Secretary's Report:** December minutes were read and approved.

**Financial Secretary's Report:** Bryan presented the financial statements.

Current Giving for December was \$26,961.20. This included end of year gifts.

Benevolence was \$2,593.00, There were no Memorials for December.

**Treasurer's Report:** The Treasurer's Report from December was read and approved.

The Total Income for the month was \$19,564.20

Expenses for the month were \$6,025.73. The larger expenses this month included Pastor's salary/pension, insurance for the church, electric, phone/internet.

**Deacon's Report:** Thank you to all readers for the past year.

**Trustees Report:** The quest for an interior painter continues. Pete will contact a few people.

**Education Report:** No report this month.

**Parsonage Report:** Both Carbon Monoxide Detectors have been replaced.

Mouse abatement continues.

**Old Business:** Church Times will be brought forward at the Annual Meeting for feedback.

At the December joint meeting, it was noted that we would try this for a year, since we started in September, then next September would be a "year".

**New Business:**

- We went over the draft Election Ballot for Annual Meeting. All offices are filled!
- Annual Reports are due January 15.
- Parsonage discussion points will be presented by Randy at the Annual Meeting.

Randy will be contacting Council Members for information and feedback before the meeting.

**Adjournment:** Bryan DeCook made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Pete Exe seconded. We ended with the Lord's Prayer.

**NEXT MEETING: February 3, 6:00PM at East St Olaf (First Tuesday of the month).**

Respectfully Submitted by Jane Williams

# West St. Olaf Council Meeting Minutes: January 12, 2026

## Attendance (P = Present)

Pastor Paul	P	Dave Peterson	P	Deb Schuck	P	Ben Horejsi	
Will Laxen	P	Sheryl Wohlers	P	Clay Hazelmann		Billie Jean Smetana	
Hans Estby	P	Mary Brandt		Greg Brandt	P		
Cindy Stoppel	P	Sue Hyland	P	Chad Thompson			
Jenny Twaddle	P	Carma Bjornson		Del Senjem	P		

Meeting called to order by Will Laxen and devotions led by Pastor Paul.

Motion to approve agenda made by Deb and seconded by Hans, motion carried.

**Secretary's Report:** Report read, motion made to approve by Deb and seconded by Sheryl, motion carried.

**Financial Secretary/Treasurer's Report:** Reports reviewed and discussed. Motion made to approve both reports by Cindy and seconded by Del, motion carried.

**Pastor's Report:** Report reviewed. First Communion Classes will probably be in February and Date of First Communion most likely in March.

**Boad of Education Report:** JAM had a successful Christmas program. There will be no bake sale this year. JAM and LL plan to go snow tubing later this month. VBS planning has started and looking to have it in May instead of August. Considering a lock-in with LL invited to join as well. LL December activity was wrapping gifts for the family the congregation adopted. January activity was attending the animated movie, David.

**Deacon's Report:** Cards sent: Thinking of you to Diane Himle, Jeffrey Thoe, and Wilma Kyllo. The WELCA Christmas party was very nice with good food and wonderful fellowship. Thank you to students and staff for sharing the Christmas program, you did a beautiful program. December 28<sup>th</sup> service was a joint hymn sing. Thank you to all who attended and shared treats for the coffee hour. January 11<sup>th</sup> Heritage Day was held and co-sponsored by Thrivent. Thank you to St. Olaf Heritage association for setting up the history table and for baking (Nancy, Sue, Jana, and Del). Free will offering of about \$200 will be donated to them. Lenten suppers at West will be March 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> with JAM/LL and WELCA serving. The annual meeting is February 1<sup>st</sup> with coffee hour at 9:30, service at 10:30, meeting after service and followed by potluck lunch. Thank you to Mary as December Deacon and Deb is the Deacon for January.

**Trustees Report:** New programmable thermostat purchased for chapel and will be installed soon. Church furnaces have been checked and repaired.

**Old Business:** Proposed 2026 budget reviewed. Motion made to approve budget for annual report by Hans, and seconded by Deb, motion carried.

**New Business:** 2025 Pastoral Rites report reviewed. Motion made to approve report by Sheryl, and seconded by Cindy, motion carried. Benevolence disbursements were discussed. Dave made a motion to transfer \$1000 from the current account to support our Benevolence partners, seconded by Jenny, motion carried. Sheryl made a motion to go with the disbursements as discussed, seconded by Deb, motion carried.

**Motion to adjourn:** Dave made a motion to adjourn, Cindy seconded, motion carried and we closed with the Lord's prayer.

**Submitted by:** Cindy Stoppel, West St. Olaf council secretary

**Next Meeting:** Next meeting will be February 9, 2026 at 7:00pm



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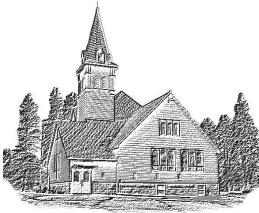
East & West St. Olaf Lutheran  
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Byron, MN 55920

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



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# HAPPENINGS

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