



# January 2026 Newsletter

A few Special Announcements: Our Annual meeting is this month. That means it's time to get your reports submitted. Please have them in a shareable format (Microsoft Word is great) and email them to [haleighjlewis@gmail.com](mailto:haleighjlewis@gmail.com) and [sraderma@hotmail.com](mailto:sraderma@hotmail.com)

\*\*\*Please have your Annual Report information submitted to Haleigh & Sandi by January 9<sup>th</sup>\*\*\*

Another item of housekeeping FYI is to please help us keep the doors open on the front side sanctuary room (Communion supplies) during the winter months. This will allow for better air flow of heat so we don't have any pipes freezing. They can be closed during worship service, but open again after.

One more, this year we will be changing the format of our Annual meeting a little bit. We are going to have the meeting following worship service. We will start at approximately 11:30am in the sanctuary, and then we will have the Potluck meal following the completion of the meeting. We are trying something new and hope it will work out for more to attend.

Winter Greetings and Happy New Year! Let's see what 2026 has in store for us!

December was so busy with all the events of the Holiday Season. I hope you are were able to enjoy time with family and friends. Many times, we are so busy in December that parties and gatherings are still happening. I look forward to the calm of January to help organize and start the new year off right. Time to clean off 2025 from my desk and let 2026 start piling up! I am looking forward to another great year.

Open communication is something I strive for in my life. It isn't always easy. I don't always have enough time. Some believe you can over communicate. I don't believe that. We have worked hard to make the best decisions for Emmanuel Lutheran. We need our congregation to communicate with us and let us know if they see something wrong or loved it this way, but disliked it that way. We need you to say something or even do it yourself and let someone know. That can work too. We are all a team. We are here to serve.

As always, pray for those on our prayer list.

Peace and Blessings,

Sandi

[sraderma@hotmail.com](mailto:sraderma@hotmail.com)

701-269-0706

## Learning from the Shepherds

As we transition from the season of Christmas into Epiphany, I hope you'll keep the joy of Christmas in your hearts throughout the coming year.

One of my favorite books to read at Christmas time is *Martin Luther's Christmas Book* edited by Roland H. Bainton. This year, as I revisited its pages, the chapter entitled 'Shepherds' resonated with me in a special way. It prompted me to wonder: Why did God choose to announce the most important gift we would ever be given to a group of shepherds? And why was this good news shared with the shepherds near the small town of Bethlehem? What lessons can we draw from their response to these glad tidings?

Shepherds occupied the lowest rung of the social ladder. They were not highly esteemed in society, lacked positions of influence, and possessed little in terms of material wealth. Their lives were spent in tireless labor, caring for flocks of sheep—animals often dismissed as slow and unintelligent. This raises the question: why would God select shepherds to be the very first to hear the news of the Savior's birth?

Yet, these are the very ones that God lifted up. Perhaps they were more faithful. Perhaps they were content doing the work required of a shepherd. More likely, God knew that we all need the Good Shepherd and what an example these shepherds give us.

God sent Jesus into the world to dwell among us, offering His presence to lead and guide us through life. Jesus came not only to guide, but also to sacrifice Himself for our sake, so that through His death, we could be completely reconciled to God. On that first Christmas, this extraordinary gift was revealed in a spectacular way—angels filled the sky with song, and radiant lights announced the birth. In this moment, God made it clear that this gift was meant for everyone: for you, for me, and for shepherds—those whom society might overlook or deem unworthy. No one was excluded from God's invitation; the joy and hope brought by Jesus was offered to all people, regardless of their status or background.

The story of the shepherds serves as a remarkable example of steadfast faithfulness. Even though they were initially overwhelmed by fear at the sight of the angels, the shepherds listened intently to the message spoken to them. Moved by what they had heard, they hurried to Bethlehem, eager to witness the fulfillment of this extraordinary proclamation.

Their response required great courage and commitment; they left behind their flocks—their very means of livelihood—to see for themselves what had taken place. This act was not only a demonstration of their faith, but also of their willingness to set aside personal concerns in order to be part of something far greater.

Upon seeing the newborn child, the shepherds could not keep the news to themselves. They shared what they had experienced with others, and those who heard their story were astonished by the message. As recorded in Luke 2:18 (NRSV), "And all who heard it were

amazed at what the shepherds told them.” The shepherds seized the opportunity to spread the Good News, ensuring that the joy and wonder of the event would reach beyond themselves to all those around them.

As we reflect on the shepherds’ response to the announcement of Jesus’ birth, we are reminded that God calls each of us to share the joy of this great gift. Most of us have just celebrated Christmas with festive lights, abundant food, and joyful gatherings. We exchanged gifts, sang songs, and enjoyed time with loved ones.

However, looking to the example of the shepherds, there is something more to be learned. We should not miss the opportunity to tell others about the incredible gift of God’s love, which is meant for *all* people. Like the shepherds, we may sometimes feel hesitant or afraid to share the gospel, but it is important to remember that this experience was new for them as well. Instead of letting chances pass by, let us, like the shepherds, respond with eagerness and courage. We are invited to share all that we know about Jesus, our Lord and Good Shepherd. It does not matter who we are or where we come from—just as the shepherds were ordinary people from Bethlehem, so too are we called to tell the story of God’s love for us, a love that endures now and forever.

Blessings in this New Year,

Shar



### January Calendar of Events for our Church & Community

January 1<sup>st</sup>- Belgian Waffles at Gackle Senior Center 9am- 1pm

January 4<sup>th</sup>- Worship Service with Communion 10:30am, Fill My Cup 10am, No Sunday School

January 9<sup>th</sup>- All Annual meeting reports due to Haleigh

January 11<sup>th</sup>- Worship Service 10:30am, New Member Sunday, Noisy offering, Sunday School 9:45am

January 14<sup>th</sup>- Church Council meeting

January 18<sup>th</sup>- Worship service with Communion 10:30am, Annual meeting after service at approximately 11:30am in the sanctuary, Potluck following meeting, Sunday School 9:45am

January 21<sup>st</sup>- Gathered by Grace community meal 5-6pm

January 23<sup>rd</sup>- Girls Basketball Game at school

January 25<sup>th</sup>- Worship Service 10:30am, Installation of New Council during worship service, Sunday School 9:45am

We want to continue to improve our monthly newsletter. Do you have something to add? Please let Haleigh know. Send her your information to her via email:

[haleighjlewis@gmail.com](mailto:haleighjlewis@gmail.com)



#### Those in need of continued Prayer:

Gackle Care Center: Helen Elhard, Wilbert Denning, Arlyss Mertz

Edgewood: Quentin Mertz

Wishek Living Center: Violet Diede

New Salem: Karen Miller

Also in need of prayer: Dawn Veil-Stein, JD Dahl, Haleigh Hermanson, Ruth Staber, Kenny Gumke, Jim Lewis(father of Haleigh Zenker), The family of Tommy Wegner, The family of Harry Ruff, the family of Harvey Fiechtner



## January Worship Support

Ushers	Mike & Chris Zenker, Taylor Lund, Derek Hust
Greeters	Chris & Christina Zenker Family
Altar Guild	Christine Zenker
Steward/Acolyte	Denise Wittmier

## February Worship Support

Ushers	Ardell & Barb Schmidt Wayne & MaryAnn Widmer
Greeters	Ardell & Barb Schmidt
Altar Guild	Barb Schmidt & MaryAnn Widmer
Steward/Acolyte	Lisa Zenker

### WORSHIP SUPPORT LIST FOR 2025

The list will remain the same from year to year unless there's a request to change it.

If you need a sub please refer to the list posted in the sacristy or contact stewards Lisa Zenker or Denise Wittmier.

Lisa- 701-368-9291 or [lisamzenker@gmail.com](mailto:lisamzenker@gmail.com)

Denise- 701-269-1475 or [denwitt@daktel.com](mailto:denwitt@daktel.com)

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### Visitations and Personal Communion

We are committed to looking into new options and the best ways to serve our congregation. Are you not able to make it to communion and wish to receive? We want you to know that we can serve you communion anytime. Would you like a personal visit? Let us know and we will schedule a time to get together. Know of anyone that hasn't been able to come to church that

could use a visit? Let us know and we will give them a call and check in. We are still looking for people that would like to help with visits too. All you need is the ability to talk, we can help with the rest.

### Offering Envelopes:

If anyone does not have or is in need of offering envelopes, please let Bonnie Denning know. She will get them to you!! Thanks.

### New Members

Are you interested in becoming a member of our church and we haven't asked you yet, please let a pastoral leader know or any council member. We are looking to plan a new member Sunday January 11<sup>th</sup>!!



Our synod website has so much information to share with us about events happening in our area, training courses that we can attend or participate over Zoom, and so many more resources. They also have a newsletter that you can subscribe to through email. Please take a look!

[www.eandsynod.org](http://www.eandsynod.org)



### Online Donations

Forget to bring your offering to church, haven't made it in for a while, or just want an easier way to donate to our church? You are able to donate online. Just a few clicks and you can share funds with us. Go to the address listed below, click on the donate button on the top. Select contribute under select support a specific congregation, click on another partner congregation, and then you can select Emmanuel Lutheran from the listed congregations.

[www.ndchristiansact.org](http://www.ndchristiansact.org)

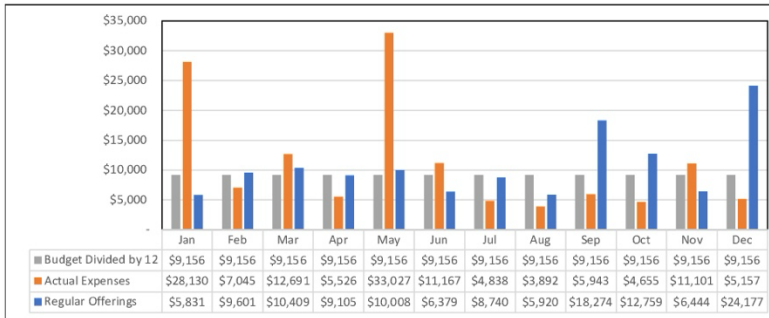
Those members who bank at Dakota Heritage can also donate easily by setting up regular transfers between accounts. Contact the bank directly and see how they can help set this up for you.

## Emmanuel Lutheran Church Financial Report

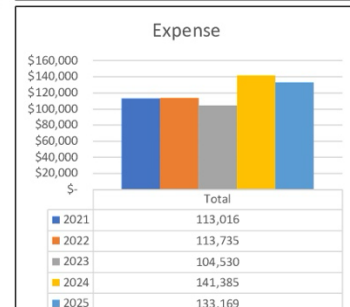
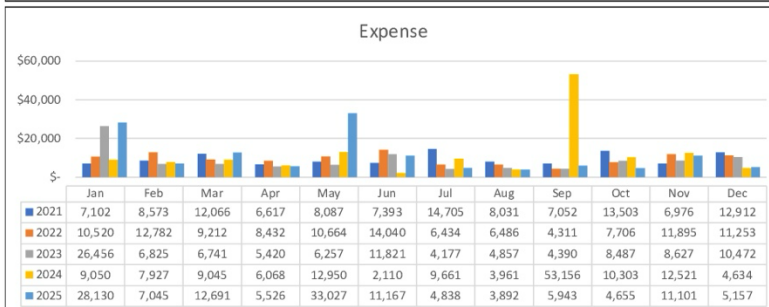
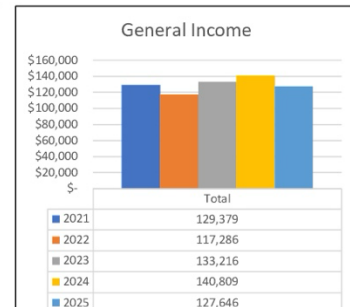
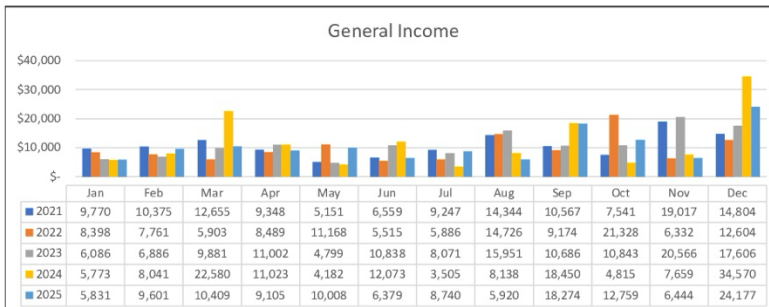
As of 12/26/202

### 2024 Year to Date

Item	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Regular Offerings	\$5,831	\$9,601	\$10,409	\$9,105	\$10,008	\$6,379	\$8,740	\$5,920	\$18,274	\$12,759	\$6,444	\$24,177	\$127,646
Actual Expenses	\$28,130	\$7,045	\$12,691	\$5,526	\$33,027	\$11,167	\$4,838	\$3,892	\$5,943	\$4,655	\$11,101	\$5,157	\$133,169
Balance	(\$22,299)	\$2,556	(\$2,282)	\$3,579	(\$23,018)	(\$4,789)	\$3,902	\$2,028	\$12,331	\$8,105	(\$4,656)	\$19,021	(\$5,522)



### Year over Year



Expenses for 2024 and 2025 exceeded Income due to Sanctuary repairs and flooring. Dwight Schmidt fund was utilized to cover the expenses over the special offering collector

If you have any questions or feedback, please contact Marella Sebring.  
marellasebring@msn.com  
763-228-0599

# Christians in Action Ministry – 281BOLD

Launching a new way to connect with our communities

January welcomes 281BOLD – a digital forward faith community with roots in rural North Dakota. This online space is for Christian inspiration and local connection.

The site will include locally made short form videos, questions to inspire your faith in Jesus Christ, and one longer video each week. The theme for videos in January and February 2026 is Exploring Favorite Bible stories. As the community grows, content variety will expand.

Look for content on **Instagram at 281bold**. Additional details are available at [NDChristiansAct.org](https://NDChristiansAct.org)

281BOLD is affiliated with Christians in Action Ministry and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Thank you to everyone who watched the Advent devotion videos on [sjlcjamestown](https://www.facebook.com/sjlcjamestown) and [englishlutheranmedina](https://www.facebook.com/englishlutheranmedina) and helped grow interest in this new way of connecting with neighbors. Sharing the posts invited people to hear the good news of Jesus in the voices of members of the congregations that participate in Christians in Action Ministry.

Thank you also to the 281BOLD leadership team of Haleigh Zenker (Emmanuel, Gackle), Alannah Valenta (Montpelier), Chris Flann (Trinity, Jamestown), Shane Ede (St. John's, Jamestown), Pastor Kristi Weber (Trinity, Jamestown), and Deacon Tara Longden (initial content editor) who helped envision this ministry. Initial financial support has come from grants from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Eastern North Dakota Synod, St. John's Endowment Fund, and Trinity Lutheran Foundation. Additional financial support will come from other congregations from Christians in Action Ministry and from individual donors who give online at [NDChristiansAct.org/donate](https://NDChristiansAct.org/donate) or through their local congregations in Dickey, LaMoure, Logan, and Stutsman counties.

## Congregations participating in Christians in Action Ministry:

	Board Member	Officers
Atonement, Jamestown	Taryn Schurhamer	
Christ the King, Ellendale	Dianne Billey	Vice-Chair
Emmanuel, Gackle	Joyce Spitzer	
English, Medina	Bryan Behm	Secretary/Treasurer
Montpelier, Montpelier	Abram Valenta	Chair
St. John's, Jamestown	Paulette J Ritter	
Trinity, Jamestown	Christopher Flann	Takes Notes at Meetings
Zion, Kulm	Lucinda Malm	

Pastor Kristi Weber serves as the ministers' representative on the board.

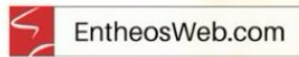
Pastor Lucinda Lien will become the new ministers' representative in February.

Common website: [NDChristiansAct.org](https://NDChristiansAct.org)



# WISHING YOU A BLESSED NEW YEAR!

For we are God's  
masterpiece. He has  
created us anew in Christ  
Jesus, so we can do the  
good things he planned for  
us long ago.  
- Ephesians 2:10



## Coffee & Fellowship

Sunday, January 4th  
starting at 10am

It's coffee  
& treat  
time

## Time

Relax with your  
cup of coffee





# Gathered by Grace

Free Community Meals



**January 21st  
from 5-6pm**

**Join us for a Valentines  
Day craft!**

Finished crafts can be taken home.

**Now offering delivery and take-out meals!**

**Emmanuel Lutheran  
Church, Gackle**

**Everyone is welcome!**

# JANUARY ACTIVITIES

● Go on a winter hike



● Read books about winter

● Do a New Year interview with the kids

● Winter sensory bin



● Paint with ice



● Learn interesting facts about polar animals

● Play a snowball toss game

● Have a family art night



● Design mittens (craft)

● Playdough play: Winter landscape

● Have an indoor color hunt

● Build a snowman



● Have an indoor snowball fight

● Watch a fun winter movie

● Make a family bucket list for the new year



● Build a blanket fort (or an igloo)



● Create a family time capsule

● Go ice skating



[Click to download the printable poster](#)

Happy New Year to All

January 2026 is the start of bringing back monthly Birthdays, Baptism and Anniversaries.

If your name is missing or on the wrong date -please let me know.

It may have been entered wrong, or we may be missing your information for our records.

This is just a friendly reminder to update your information on the form included in this newsletter.

Information to be updated for the records include any change of address, marriage, email address or phone number. This is a good way to keep our church records up to date with all memberships and any changes or transfers.

You can return the form or any information to me by dropping off at church and put in my mail box or email it to [sports@daktel.com](mailto:sports@daktel.com)

Any questions – you can talk with me or any council member.

Thanks,

Bonnie Denning

Day	January Member Life Events		
	Birthday	Baptism	Marriage
1	Emery Schmidt	Jon Burkle	Steve & Patty Moos - 2008
2			
3			
4			
5			
6	Deanna Zenker	Amber Widmer	
7	Alan Meyer, Jane Schoonover, Ardell Schmidt		Dean & Carol Entzminger - 1972
8	Allison Zenker	Brian Delfino	
9		Gabe Rivinius, Kip Veil	
10	Izabel Rivinius, Katy Ruff		
11			
12	Jacob Nitschke	MaryAnn Widmer, Erica Zillmer	
13	Marella Koenig, Janelle Schmidt		
14	Cory Koenig	Jennifer Haadem	
15	Delores Rath, Alyssa Moldenhauer	Becky Rivinius, Abby Rivinius	
16	Eastyn Monson		
17	Chris Zenker, Deb Gienger	Jayne Zillmer	
18	Sarah Lehr		
19			
20	Gary Schlecht, Linda Zenker		
21	Susie Martin, Joel Zenker		
22			
23			
24	Oliver Schwarz	Joy Ruff	
25			
26			
27		Katy Ruff, Journey Ruff	
28	Jacob Seigman		
29			
30	Marilyn Roaldson		
31	Joyce Spitzer		

## Church Records

We are updating our Church records. Lots of information is missing.

Please fill out a sheet for each family member with the following information to assist with the records.

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Where: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Maiden Name \_\_\_\_\_

Brothers: \_\_\_\_\_

Sisters: \_\_\_\_\_ Baptism: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Where: \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsors: \_\_\_\_\_

Confirmation: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Where: \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Marriage: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Where: \_\_\_\_\_ To Whom: \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Children: \_\_\_\_\_

Spotlight: Getting to know- Bonnie Denning

1. Please share some of the basics about yourself- about family, work, hobbies. I grew up on a farm SE of Gackle with my parents, 4 sisters and 1 brother. We were raised to assist with farm chores and fieldwork. Weekends and evenings were spent visiting neighbors, friends and family. Attending church was a big part of our growing up. Emmanuel Lutheran Church is where I was Baptized, Confirmed and Married. Danny and I were married on Oct. 24, 1981 and have made Gackle our home. We were blessed with the following children, spouses and grandchildren. Jay – deceased, Jessica & Chad, Jayden, Savannah Coreson – live in Mapleton. Jennifer & Justin, Josie, Julia, Jayce Haadem live in Steele, Nathan – lives in Gackle. I worked at Farmers Union in Jamestown, then did Road Construction around the Gackle area. June 4, 1984 -started working for REM Inc., now known as Gackle Care Center. I enjoy working and getting to know each person that is or has been a resident and also their families and all co-workers. My kids would always say “Mom, you know so many people.” Hobbies – I enjoy the outdoors in the summer – garden and flowers, puzzles, games and cards – just to name a few.

2. As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? Play keyboard for a band.

3. How many years have you played organ and piano at Emmanuel Lutheran? What are your top 5 favorite songs to play?

Jan. 1978 – I was a Freshman in High School and started playing Organ at church. I probably started playing for Sunday School around my 6th or 7th grade. I should have kept track of all the Weddings, Funerals and Special Services or Events that I have played for throughout the years. It is hard to pick favorites with so many great hymns. Here are a few – I Love to Tell A Story, Here I Am Lord, Give Thanks, Silent Night(sung in German), Jesus Loves Me

4. What's the one word people who know you best would use to describe you? Hard Worker – Always Busy. Someone said, "One word is not enough."

5. When you're having a bad day, what do you do to make yourself feel better? Go for a walk – enjoy God's beauty outdoors.

6. If you could give your high school self one piece of advice, what would it be? Whatever happens in life – remember God is always walking beside you and will listen to your prayers.

7. Share with us a couple of your most memorable moments in your life.

Being in the Delivery room with my first grandchild Jayden being born.

When I took our 3 kids and a nephew to South Dakota on Vacation not knowing Sturgis Rally was going on.

8. What is your most favorite place you have traveled and why? Tell us about a few places that remain on your list to visit and why?

A sister trip to Colorado for a Wedding. 5 Sisters together and making many memories that won't be forgotten. I don't have a list – But, Arizona is being talked about.

9. What's the weirdest food you've ever eaten? What is your most favorite foods? Do not like the taste of Spinach. Favorite – Walking Taco / German foods

10. What is your biggest goal that you want to complete in the near future? Updating family history books to carry on for future generations. Organizing and scanning all photos into my Forever Account to pass on to my family and friends.

**Duties of the Ushers**

(reviewed on 3/2022)

1. Arrive at church 30 minutes prior to service.
2. Turn Sanctuary lights on and off before and after service.
3. Raise and lower shades on windows before and after service.
4. Put up hymn numbers (numbers are in room to left of altar in cupboard).
5. Turn on the Cross at altar (switch is labeled in room to the right of altar).
6. Turn lamps on for the Lectern and Pulpit. Turn off after service.
7. Fill ceramic pitcher with water and place on baptismal font along with silver bowl that goes in the baptismal font (pitcher and bowl are located in room to the left of altar on the counter by sink).
8. Hand out bulletins, newsletters, etc.
9. Ring church bell at least 3 times just before beginning of the service.
10. Count the number of people attending the service (easily done from the balcony sometime after service has begun) (number in attendance is to be written in the book which is in the fellowship hall).
11. Receive offering plates, gathering offering, and bring offering forward when pastor signals.
12. Usher people forward for Holy Communion (one usher stands towards the front to allow worshipers to advance to front).
13. Usher people out when church service has concluded.



# 2025 EMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Church Office 701-485-3368  
SAM-Shar Gumke 701-320-1920  
SAM- Joel Zenker 701-997-9047

## **Council Members:**

Sandra Rivinius, President <i>sraderma@hotmail.com</i>	701-269-0706 (cell)
Marella Sebring, Council Treasurer <i>marellasebring@msn.com</i>	701-485-3543 (home) 763-228-0599 (cell)
Tina Nitschke, Council Secretary	701- 830-1957 (cell)
Bonnie Denning, Financial Secretary <a href="mailto:sports@daktel.com">sports@daktel.com</a>	701-485-3798 (home) 701-320-5864 (cell)
Lisa Zenker, Steward <i>lisamzenker@gmail.com</i>	701-368-9291 (cell)
Denise Wittmier, Steward <i>denwitt@daktel.com</i>	701-269-1485 (cell)
Steve Moos, Trustee <a href="mailto:Smoos59@msn.com">Smoos59@msn.com</a>	701-320-3597 (cell)
Taylor Lund, Trustee <i>bubbalund@gmail.com</i>	701-307-0056 (cell)

## **Other Contacts:**

Haleigh Zenker, Church Office Secretary <i>haleighjlewis@gmail.com</i>	952-270-1747 (cell)
Bonnie Denning, Organist Church Work Groups <i>sports@daktel.com</i>	701-485-3798 (home) 701-320-5864 (cell)
Julia Friez, Custodian	435-256-5631 (cell)