

Benton & Willow Creek Lutheran Churches
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Address Service Requested

January Newsletter 2026



"Happy New Year Everyone"

Benton & Willow Creek Lutheran Churches

Newsletter—JANUARY 2026

Note from Vicar Kendra Kappler

New Year, Same Grace

January often greets us with a familiar message: “New year, new me.” It’s a time for resolutions and reflection, and many people use this season to name habits they would like to change, goals they would like to accomplish, ways they hope to grow, or patterns they would like to leave behind. Many of us take this opportunity to ask honest questions about our lives: What habits do I want to change? What relationships need attention? Where do I hope to grow? Wanting to grow or live more intentionally is not a bad thing. In fact, Scripture speaks often about renewal and transformation.

But the danger of this season is subtle. Without realizing it, the focus can easily and quickly shift from hope to pressure, from intention to self-judgment. We can begin to believe that the success of this year depends entirely on our discipline, our follow-through, or our ability to finally get things right.

Into that pressure, the gospel speaks a gentler and truer word. “If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17). This verse does not say that we become new because we tried harder or resolved better; rather, it says that newness begins in Christ. Our identity is not something we construct through self-improvement; it is something we receive as a gift. This is the heart of our faith: before we do anything, God has already acted. Before we change, God has already claimed us. Before we succeed or fail at our goals, God has already said “yes” to us in Jesus. That “yes” does not depend on how this year unfolds. It is rooted in grace.

And this does not mean that our actions, choices, or growth are unimportant. Instead, it means they are no longer the foundation. As Ephesians 2:8-10 reminds us, we are saved by grace through faith, not by our own doing, and *then* created for good works that God has prepared for us. Growth flows from grace; it is never the price we pay for it. We work on ourselves not to earn God’s love, but because we are already loved. Jesus meets us not at the version of ourselves we hope to become, but exactly where we are right now. He meets us in our weariness and our hopefulness, our discipline and our struggle, our confidence and our doubt. From that place of mercy, we are free to reflect honestly, to try new practices, to let go of habits that harm us, and to seek lives shaped more fully by love. Not because everything depends on us, but because God is still at work in us.

As we step into this new year, we are invited to hold two truths together. We can set intentions and seek growth, while also releasing the burden of perfection. We can work on ourselves, while trusting that our worth is not measured by progress charts or kept resolutions. We begin this year grounded not in pressure, but in promise. It is a new year with the same grace. And that grace is enough for you in every beginning, every setback, and every step along the way.

God’s blessings to you this year!

Vicar Kendra ☺

605-951-8841

kappler2002@gmail.com

“PARISH NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS”

Willow Creek Worship – Sundays, 9:00am Worship,
Sunday School, coffee, treats and fellowship to follow worship

Benton Worship- Sundays, 10:45am Worship, 9:30-10:30am Sunday School
Coffee, treats and fellowship during Sunday School

ANNUAL MEETINGS

All reports due to the church office by Sunday, Jan. 4th, 2026 – please.

Willow Creek Annual Meeting – Sunday, Jan. 18th, 2026

Benton Annual Meeting – Sunday, Jan. 25th, 2026

Confirmation- 7th & 8th graders, Wed. evenings at 6:30pm
at Willow Creek for the month of January

YOUTH GROUP – *month of January at Willow Creek*

Wed. Jan 7th, 6:30pm – Church on the Street is coming to help us with a service project.
Confirmation and Youth Group will be combined.

Wed. January 21st, 7:30pm at Willow Creek

REMINDER!!! ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEWS: All Willow Creek & Benton Announcements for the weekly bulletin should be **emailed by Tuesday at Noon** each week, and Newsletter Announcements by the **15th of each month**. Thank you! (bentonwillowoffice@gmail.com)



OFFERINGS - WAYS TO GIVE:

If you are unable to attend services but would like to give, we have made some convenient ways to continue your offerings. We appreciate your faithfulness, Thank you.

MAIL : Benton PO Box 706 Crooks, SD 57020

Willow Creek 24795 470th Ave Dell Rapids, SD 57022

ELECTRONIC GIVING Check the websites giving image.

www.wclcdellrapids.org & **www.bentonelca.org**

BENTON'S 'TEXT TO GIVE'

1: Text "give" to the number **1-605-205-7789**. The automated response will direct you to the webpage. Once the system has your number stored, this will be a simple way to give right during the offering time!

2: The donations webpage through your browser is

<https://bentonchurch.breezechms.com/give/online>

Benton, Vanco - Here is the site link for your online giving tiles.

<https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZEX9>

Vanco users- you may have to create a new account. If you don't want to do that, you may email Dennis Aker with your changes, daker@alliancecom.net

Baltic Food Bank Needs List:

Hearty soups, crackers, sugar (white, brown, powdered), oil, juice, tea or coffee, cereal, breakfast bars, canned fruit, ramen, chicken/tuna helper, condiments (mayo or miracle whip, ketchup, barbeque sauce), salad dressings, pancake mix and syrup, pasta or rice sides, spaghetti sauce, pasta, jell-o and pudding, cake/brownie/muffin mixes, dish soap, laundry soap, personal hygiene products (tissues, bar soap or body wash, toothpaste, toothbrushes, dental picks or floss).

The Baltic Food Bank, 550 3rd Street, is open to all residents of Baltic and Crooks. It is open the second Wednesday of every month from 6:30-7:30 p.m., as well as the fourth Sunday of every month from 10:30-11:30 a.m., as well as by emergency appointment by calling 605-529-5032. Food donations can be dropped off at: Baltic School Commons, Baltic City Hall, Baltic Lutheran Church, East Nidaros Lutheran Church, or West Nidaros Lutheran Church. Monetary donations can be sent to: PO Box 244, Baltic, SD 57003.

Thank you for supporting families in your community!



If you are out and about and would like to visit with some great people, the following Church Members would love to have a call, visitors or both!

Dorothy Rogness
4709 E 6th St
Apt. #301
Sioux Falls, SD 57110
605-321-0714

Bernie Opland & Bonnie Pinnerud
24635 470th Ave
Dell Rapids, SD 57022
605-310-0329

Russ & Irene Midden
#302 Bernadine Place
Hartford, SD 57033
605-370-7368

Keith & Caroline Halverson
26026 469th Ave
Sioux Falls, SD 57107
605-332-6201

Maureen Eide
Orchard Hills
200 W 10th St
Dell Rapids, SD 57022
605-940-0315

“BENTON NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS”



**Every Sunday at Benton, coffee and treats are served before worship, 9:30am (during Sunday School). Bring your kids to Sunday School and enjoy treats and fellowship.
If you don't have Sunday School kiddos – you are still very much welcome!
If no Sunday School, coffee/treats start at 10am.**

BENTON WORSHIP TEAMS FOR 2025 (team leaders listed)

Jan. 4th First Team – Doug & Sandy, Communion

Jan. 11th Second Team – Roger & Linda, Communion, ***potluck dinner***

Jan. 18th Third Team – Cheryl & Connie, Communion

Jan. 25th Fourth Team, Butch & Lori, Communion – ***Annual Meeting***

Pictures from Benton Childcare Evening, 12/5/25



Cotton ball on a spoon game.



Christmas bow dodge ball.

A good time was had by all!!!!!!

BENTON WORSHIP TEAMS – updated 12/1/2025

Below is a list of the members of each Worship Team. It may look like we always have enough help but due to everyone being so busy, often not enough people show up to help. As you can see each Sunday there is quite a bit of responsibility. Please try to help us out with your assignment. If you are not assigned a Sunday, please call the church office so we can add you. You will never be alone on your Sunday, there is always someone to help.

First Sunday – Leaders – Doug and Sandy Larson: Wade & Angie Mulder, Garrison Mulder, Bryant & Lori Filler, Nate & Kim Strosheim, Shannon Lofswold, Dave Phelps, Dave & Dixie Rogness, Chantel Olson, Dan & Laura Larson (Dawson & Dominick), Joe & Jayna Backus (Boston, & Brystal), Jordan Person, Tammy Person (Justin & Jessalynn), Edna Haase, Rocky & Jackie Foster (Marin, Hadlee, Payson & Conlin)

Second Sunday - Leaders Roger & Linda Person: Jolene Izadaness, Keith & Lisa Johnson (Tyler & Trey), Patty Mork, Gary & Rhonda Jongewaard (Gabrielle, Nash), Dave & Faye Gilderhus, Dennis & Cheryl Aker, Todd & Maria Kendle & Brittany (Braylynn & Nora), Lynda Fonder, Kari Vosburg, Bob & Sandi Schuette, Eric & Amanda Schuette (Ethan & Audrey), Lee & Julie Person (Connor), Gwyn & Joyce Reiners

Third Sunday- Leaders Connie Foster & Cheryl Schoer: Jim & Jackie Johnson, Ashton Benson (Riley), Kenny & Linda Benson, Judy Bernards, Susie Schmidt (Nolan, Blake & Logan), Scott & Bonnie Mews, Tom & Barb Lanning, Pat & Noel Ahl, Darryll & Jan Lason, Ryan McNamara & Lacie Foster (Bridger, Sutton & Leighton), Kay Peterson, Evan & Lenae Schnaidt (Elliot, Elizabeth)

Fourth Sunday –Leaders Butch & Lori Oseby: Larry Person, Dale & Pat Benson, Derry & Jan Benson, Tyler & Melissa Klein (Blakeley, Cooper, & Shiloh), Ron & Judi Person, Ronae Foster (Dalton & Tori), Jamen & Jackie Benson (Trevor & Brady), John & Jenny Mohr (Landon, Lilli, Jaxton & Jace), Trevor & Annie Freudenthal (Jace, Rhett & Liam), Christopher & Sara Rokeh (Kipton, London)

Fifth Sunday – Leaders Russ & Becky Schmidt, Matt & Amy Schmidt (Emmitt), Scott & Natalie Lind, Cam & Sharon Lind, Jeremy & Taylor Hubers (Ava and Liam)

Volunteers are needed when we have special services (Lent, Maundy Thursday, Christmas Eve...)

BENTON WORSHIP SERVICE DUTIES EACH SUNDAY

- Unlock doors, turn on lights
- Make Coffee & Snacks for fellowship before worship (start at 45 minutes prior to worship time), clean up
- Greeter at main door
- Hand out bulletins
- Reader – first and second lesson
- Ushers- turn on sound system, remove covering from piano, count all people present during service, communion, collect offering...
- Light Candles before service, extinguish at end of service, turn on Altar Lights
- Update Hymn board with hymn numbers if needed (if not already completed)
- Camera & AV people - one to record service for Facebook, second to run the screen for the service, help with communion
- Make sure all doors are locked when leaving (all outside doors)
- Shut off all lights – check basement**
- Winter-clear snow if needed from the walkway.***

Benton Church Council Members 2025

President- Dan Larson	Vice President-Wade Mulder
Secretary- Maria Kendle	Treasurer- Dave Vinzant
Other Members of Council- Roger Person, Gary Jongewaard, Julie Person, Nate Stroschein, Sandy Schuette, Amanda Schuette	
Mission- Maria Kendle	Evangelism-Roger Person and Gary Jongewaard
Education-Amanda Schuette	Stewardship-Dan Larson
Worship-Julie Person	Property-Gary Jongewaard and Wade Mulder

“WILLOW CREEK NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS”

Willow Creek Church Council Members – 2025

President – Katie Hoekman
Secretary-Mary Messner
Trustee-Jarod Deters

Vice President- David Olson
Treasurer-Kevin Hoekman
Deacons-Chad Warne & Steve Bazata

Willow Creek - WORSHIP TEAMS

Please let the office know if the team members have changed.

TEAM 1: Tim and Lisa Rave, Kevin and Katie Hoekman (*Anna, Peter, Esther, & Elijah*), Phyllis Koepp, Zach and Jayni Schroeder (*Otto*)

TEAM 2: Craig and Bonnie Dybdahl, Mary & Paul Mesner, Pat Nytroe, Andy and Laura Berg (*Claire & Ben*), Steve and Sheri Tokheim

TEAM 3: Linda Linge, Terry and Kris Smart, Jared and Brenda Deters, Jay and Tina Soderquist (*Mya & Grace*)

TEAM 4: Justin and Lindsay Koepp (*Faith & Sawyer*), Ken & Debbie Mader, Shane and Beth Warne, Nancy Offerman, Steve Schmidt, Austin and Shelby Schmidt (*Lily & Elliot*)

TEAM 5: Rick and Sandy Zwart, Jason and Erin Mitzel (*Max*), Steve and Kim Bazata (*Kael & Mack*), David Olson (*Levi*)

Coffee is not served at Easter or Christmas.

WILLOW CREEK WORSHIP TEAMS: 2025

Jan 4th, Team 4, Communion

Jan. 11th, Team 5, Communion

Jan. 18th, Team 1, Communion – *Annual Meeting*

Jan. 25th, Team 2, Communion



MEN'S COFFEE- Join us Saturdays at 8:30am at Willow Creek for food, coffee, and fellowship.



QUILTING LADIES - Join us on Mondays at 9am as we enjoy quilting and fellowship at Willow Creek





JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

2026

1	Bennett Opland	20	Kamber Warne
1	James Schuette	21	Roger Person
1	Phyllis Koepp	21	Erin Mitzel
1	Breanna Keogh	22	Esther Paulson
2	Megan Kindelspire	22	Lori Jappa
2	Dorothy Hansen	23	Kay Peterson
3	Daryll Larson	23	Matt Schmidt
4	Jay Soderquist	23	Brian Anderson
4	Donna Berg	23	Lake Oien
5	Greta Lutz	24	Jaxen Kindelspire
6	Rocky Foster	25	Blake Schmidt
8	Kayleen Hansen	26	Alex Tiesen
8	Norah Long	26	Sheri Tokheim
10	Jacob Kinder	27	Lori Filler
10	Ryan McNamara	27	Keith Warne
12	Levi Olson	28	Scott Mews
14	Jeffrey Amundson	29	Ryan Tellberg
16	Faith Koepp	29	Joshua Fox
17	Marshall Dunham	29	Amy Schmidt
18	Blakeley Klein	29	Kyle Opland
18	Lacie Foster	30	Angela Opland
19	Kristen Smart		

JANUARY



COLD
FROZEN
GLOVES
ICICLES
IGLOO
MITTENS
NEW YEAR
PENGUIN

RESOLUTION
RUNNY NOSE
SCARF
SHOVEL
SKIING
SLEDDING
SNOWBALLS
SNOWFLAKES

S C S O L D F P G L O V E S R
K N G N E Z L E V O H S O R E
I L O E E O V N E S I E C I S
I D O W O T L G I S E K L C O
N L M Y B I T U T F R A C S L
G O W E N A S I N R E L T E U
Y C E A R P L N M O E F N L T
L O S R E R N L I Z U W G C I
U R U N N Y N O S E T O N I O
I G L O O E S N Y N U N R C N
S A C R G N I D D E L S F I S

JANUARY 2026			BENTON AND WILLOW CREEK CHURCHES			
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
						8:30am Mens Coffee at Willow
4	5	6	7		9	10
COMMUNION 9AM WILLOW CREEK WORSHIP, team 4, Sunday School to follow worship Benton Sunday School, 9:30am 10:45AM BENTON WORSHIP, Doug & Sandy ANNUAL REPORTS DUE TO THE CHURCH OFFICE.	9am Quilting at Willow	Bulletin Announcements due by noon in Church office.	Confirmation, 6:30PM at Benton 7th & 8th grade at Willow YOUTH GROUP, 6TH-12TH GRADES, 6:30PM at Willow			8:30am Men's Coffee at Willow
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
COMMUNION 9AM WILLOW CREEK WORSHIP, team 5 Sunday School to follow worship Benton Sunday School 9:30am 10:45AM BENTON WORSHIP, Roger & Linda, Potluck Dinner	9am Quilting at Willow	Bulletin Announcements due by noon in Church office. Church Council, 6:30pm	Confirmation, 6:30 at Benton 7th & 8th grade at Willow	Newsletter info due to church office by noon		8:30am Men's Coffee at Willow
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
COMMUNION <u>WILLOW CREEK ANNUAL MEETING</u> 9AM WILLOW CREEK WORSHIP, team 1, Sunday School to follow worship Benton Sunday School 9:30am 10:45AM BENTON WORSHIP, Connie & Cheryl	9am Quilting at Willow	Bulletin Announcements due by noon in Church office.	Confirmation, 6:30 at Benton 7th & 8th grade at Willow YOUTH GROUP, 6TH-12TH GRADES, 7:30PM at Willow			8:30am Men's Coffee at Willow
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
COMMUNION 9AM WILLOW CREEK WORSHIP, team 2, Sunday School following worship Benton Sunday School 9:30am <u>BENTON ANNUAL MEETING</u> 10:45AM BENTON WORSHIP, Butch & Lori	9am Quilting at Willow	Bulletin Announcements due by noon in Church office.	Confirmation, 6:30 at Benton 7th & 8th grade at Willow			8:30am Men's Coffee at Willow