

Benton & Willow Creek Lutheran Churches
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September Newsletter 2026



Benton & Willow Creek Lutheran Churches

Newsletter—September 2026

Note from Vicar Kendra Kappler

I've been thinking a lot lately about the questions we carry about things that happen in our lives. I have had my own moments of course of looking at certain experiences and wondering, "Why on earth did God let this happen in the first place?" Sometimes we go through something difficult and cannot see any good that could possibly come from it. Sometimes we wish we could go back and change a particular chapter of our story. And sometimes, with enough time and distance, we begin to notice things we could not see before. Maybe this includes ways that God was shaping us, teaching us, or opening our eyes to something we would not have otherwise understood or learned.

I was reminded of this recently when I was talking to a friend. She started out by telling me that she missed her former boyfriend, which probably does not sound unusual, and missing someone after a relationship ends is a very human experience. However, this was not a healthy relationship, and it had been filled with a lot of hurt and anger. He could often be harmful towards her and those around him. She knew that going back to that relationship would not be good for her, and she had no intention of returning. And yet, she still found that she missed him. And as we talked, she told me that she sometimes struggled to understand why God allowed that relationship to be part of her life in the first place. If this was not a relationship that was good for her, why had God allowed it to happen? Why let someone become such an important part of her life, only for that relationship to end in so much hurt and sadness? And honestly, I do not think there is always an easy answer to questions like that.

But as we continued talking, she told me something else. Over time, she had begun to see her former boyfriend and others like him a little differently. She learned more about the kind of household he had grown up in and some of the experiences that had shaped him. That did not excuse the way he had treated her, and his difficult past did not make his harmful behavior acceptable. But it helped her understand that people who hurt others often carry wounds of their own. And she went on to share that she was praying for people she might once have simply judged or dismissed. She even found herself praying for her former boyfriend, not because she wanted to be with him again, but because she wanted God to be at work in his life. She could recognize the harm he had caused while still praying that he might one day find healing and become a healthier person.

As I listened to her, I wondered if she had stumbled upon part of an answer to the question she had been asking just minutes earlier. Maybe the purpose was not that she was supposed to experience that relationship, and maybe God did not need the hurt to happen in order to teach her something. But maybe, even in the middle of something God never desired for her, God was still able to bring something good from it. She had come through that experience with a deeper compassion for people whose stories she might have never understood before. She had learned to see the brokenness behind some of the brokenness she encountered. And, she had learned that forgiveness and prayer do not require returning to an unhealthy situation.

Sometimes we ask God, "*Why did this happen?*" Sometimes, years later, we begin to see pieces of an answer. We recognize how a difficult season changed us or opened our eyes to someone else's experience. We may discover a new compassion, a new calling, or a new way of seeing the world. But, at the same time, we also know that sometimes we never understand. There are things in this life for which we may never find a satisfying explanation. But, faith does not mean that every painful experience will eventually make perfect sense to us. But even when we cannot understand *why* something happened, we can trust that God has not abandoned us in it. Because our hope is not found in being able to look back on every difficult chapter of our lives and explain why it happened. Our hope is found in Jesus Christ, who enters into the brokenness of this world and promises to remain with us through it. God has loved us in Christ, forgiven us, claimed us, and promised never to leave us.

As September begins, the world around us begins another transition. Summer gives way to fall. The days grow shorter. Children return to school, and routines change, and a new season of ministry begins. We do not know everything this coming season will bring. There will be joys we cannot yet anticipate and challenges we cannot yet see. And, there will probably even be questions for which we will not have answers. But, we can enter this new season trusting the One who goes ahead of us and walks beside us. And when we look back someday and wonder about the things we experienced along the way, maybe we will understand some of it... and maybe we won't. But, either way, the promise remains the same: God is with us. Christ is for us. And God's grace is at work, even in the places where we cannot yet see it.

May God bless you as we enter this new season together, and may we have the courage to trust God not only when we understand, but also when we don't.

Vicar Kendra Kappler ☺

605-951-8841 kappler2002@gmail.com

“PARISH NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS”



Worship Hours – starting 9/13/2026

Willow Creek Worship at 9:00am, followed by
Sunday School and Coffee/Treats
Benton Sunday School at 9:30am,
Coffee/Treats during Sunday School
Worship at 10:45am

*Sunday, September 13th is the first day of
Sunday School, 3 years to 5th grade.*

All are welcome!

Let's have some fun!!!!

Willow Creek -following worship

Benton- 9:30am



“Other dates to Remember”

Aug. 30th – Sept. 5th - Kendra will be at Wartburg Seminary for the start of the school semester. She will be available by phone. Please contact Pastor Renae for immediate needs.

Sept. 8th, Church Council, 6:30pm

Sept. 9th - 9th Graders Confirmation Meeting at Willow Creek, at 6:30pm

Sept. 23rd - 7th & 8th graders, Confirmation class starts, 6:30pm at Benton

Sept. 27th - 3rd Graders – receiving Bibles – there will be a meeting of 3rd graders and parents on following worship at Benton, you will receive your Bibles on Sunday Oct. 4th during worship

October- Youth Group will start some time in Oct. More to Come.



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

August 9th, 2026, Joint Worship at Willow Creek and Backpack Sunday

What a great success this event was!!!!

It was so fun to have fellowship time with our two churches.

We received generous donations, enough for 96 backpacks and the school supplies to fill them.

Below are a few pictures from the event.



Children's Message



Worship



Baltic School



Dell Rapids School



Tri-Valley School



West Central School

Also delivered backpacks to Brandon School. (unable to get a picture)

Thank you all so much for this wonderful day.

All the schools were so grateful that we thought of their students.

More Joint Worship times will be coming. Mark your calendars for Nov. 8th. We will be having special music during worship "The Hallelujah Hooligans". This event will be at Benton Lutheran Church at 10:00am.

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 6:00-7:00 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.

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

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

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

“WILLOW CREEK NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS”

Willow Creek Church Council Members – 2026

President – Katie Hoekman

Vice President- David Olson

Secretary-Mary Mesner

Treasurer-Kevin Hoekman

Trustee-Jarod Deters, Sandy Zwart

Deacons-Kevin Jackson, Steve Bazata

Education Committee-Kim Bazata, Lyndsey Koepp

Worship & Music Committee- Paul Mesner, Courtney Hansen

Mission Committee- Steve Schmidt, Phyllis Koepp, Pat Nytroe

Cemetery Committee- Craig Dybedahl, Keith Warne, Matt Dybedahl Paul Sunderman

Auditing Committee- Kris Smart, Linda Linge, Ann Sunderman

Willow Creek - WORSHIP TEAMS

Duties are listed at the church - this includes helping throughout the service, coffee, cleaning up.

Team 1 - Tim & Lisa Rave, Pat Nytroe, Rick & Sandy Zwart, Phyllis Koepp, Chad & Alyssa Warne, Steve & Sherri Tokeim

Team 2 - Kevin & Katie Hoekman, Jarad & Brenda Deters, Shane & Beth Warne, Zach & Jayni Schroeder, Courtney Hanson & Kevin Jackson

Team 3 - Craig & Bonnie Dybedahl, Justin & Lindsey Koepp, Jay & Tina Soderquist, Jordan Schemmel, Melissa Dellman, Linda Linge

Team 4 - Jason & Erin Mitzel, Paul & Mary Mesner, Andy & Laura Berg, Keith & Shiloh Warne, Steve Schmidt, Shawn & Danielle Geigle

Team 5 - Terry & Kris Smart, Ken & Debbie Mader, Steve & Kim Bazata, David Olson, Matt & Sarah Dybedahl

Coffee is not served at Easter or Christmas, but the TEAM still must help guide the worship.

Sept. 6th, Team 4 – Communion- altar
Sept. 13th Team 5, Communion, **RALLY SUNDAY**
Sept. 20th Team 1, Communion -continuous
Sept. 27th Team 2, Communion – continuous



*Coffee/Treats are served after worship each Sunday.
All are welcome to join us for a great fellowship opportunity.*

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.

“BENTON NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS”



Coffee/Treats are offered during Sunday School. Please join us for fellowship.



Please join us for a Potluck Dinner following worship on Rally Sunday, 9/13/26.



*Blessed by Benton,
We are so thankful to Vicar Kendra and to so many folks who supported
us after the death of our beloved son.
We will miss Aaron for the rest of our lives, but we will be grateful for him
the rest of it too.*

In Christs love, Roger & Lynda Fonder

BENTON WORSHIP TEAMS FOR SEPTEMBER 2026 (team leaders are listed)

Sept. 6th, First Team – Doug & Sandy, Communion (altar)

Sept. 13th, Second Team – Roger & Linda, Communion, RALLY SUNDAY, POTLUCK DINNER

Sept. 20th, Third Team – Cheryl & Connie, Communion

Sept. 27th, Fourth Team - Butch & Lori, Communion

BENTON WORSHIP TEAMS – updated 5/2026

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), Jim Leines

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), Mike & Holly Ralston (Sam and Will)

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

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

BENTON WORSHIP SERVICE DUTIES EACH SUNDAY

ALL DUTIES FOR THE TEAMS ARE POSTED ON THE FRIDGE DOOR IN THE KITCHEN AND THE BULLETIN BOARD BY THE ENTRANCE TO THE SANCTUARY.

Team Members - Should be the last to leave the church to make sure all lights, computers, screens – everything is off.

Please call your team leader if you are unable to help on your assigned weekend.

Team Leaders-

1. Doug & Sandy Larson 605-360-5912
2. Roger & Linda Person 605-351-0959
3. Cheryl Schoer 605-366-6562, Connie Foster 605-359-7859
4. Butch & Lori Oseby 605-359-5537
5. Russ & Becky Schmidt 605-360-1697



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS, 2026

1	Colin Foster	20	Dalton Foster
1	Isaac Hilmoe	21	Gwyn Reiners
3	Verla Hanson	22	Tyler Klein
6	Lizzy Dahl	22	Cynthia Amundson
6	Mike Ralston	23	Lynda Fonder
7	Kelsey Strong	23	Brooklyn Schuette
8	Tyler Joppa	23	Russ Schmidt
9	Evan Schnaidt	24	Janessa Nelson
9	Caroline Halverson	24	Terry Smart
10	Michelle Amundson	24	Mariah Snaza
10	Kay Anderson	24	Kim Bazata
11	Mack Bazata	26	Austin Schmidt
11	Paige Oien	26	Todd Kendle
12	Claire Berg	27	Trevor Benson
13	Lanae Schnaidt	28	Alex Hegge
13	Jan Larson	29	Laura Lueders
14	Judy Fox	30	Maverick Tokheim
15	Rylee Grave		
15	Chad Nelson		
17	Dave Rogness		
19	Nathan Stroschein		

hello September Word Search

Find the September words below.

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

- SEPTEMBER
- AUTUMN
- FALL
- LEAVES
- APPLE
- HARVEST
- PUMPKIN
- SQUASH
- CIDER
- ACORN
- HAYRIDE
- BACK TO SCHOOL
- OUTDOORS
- WEATHER
- JACKET
- TRACTORS
- SUNSET
- FRIENDS



SEPTEMBER 2026			BENTON AND WILLOW CREEK CHURCHES			
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
						8:30am Men's Coffee at Willow
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
COMMUNION Willow Creek Worship, 8:30am, Coffee/treats to follow, Team 4 Benton Worship 10:00am, Group Leaders- Doug & Sandy, Coffee/Treats at 9:15am Benton Committee Meetings following worship	Labor Day	Church Council 6:30pm Bulletin Announcements due by noon in Church office.	9th graders- Confirmation meeting at Willow Creek, 6:30pm			8:30am Men's Coffee at Willow
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
COMMUNION RALLY SUNDAY WORSHIP TIME CHANGE!!! Willow Creek Worship, 9:00am, Sunday School/Coffee to follow worship. Team 5 Benton Sunday School, 9:30am, coffee/treats during SS Benton Worship, 10:45am POTLUCK DINNER to follow worship, Group Leaders-Roger and Linda	9am Quilting at Willow	Bulletin Announcements due by noon in Church office. <i>Newsletter info due to the church office by noon.</i>				8:30am Men's Coffee at Willow
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
COMMUNION Willow Creek Worship, 9:00am, Sunday School/Coffee to follow worship. Team 1 Benton Sunday School, 9:30am, coffee/treats during SS Benton Worship, 10:45am Group Leaders-Cheryl & Connie	9am Quilting at Willow	Bulletin Announcements due by noon in Church office.	First day of Confirmation, 6:30pm at Benton, 7th & 8th graders			8:30am Men's Coffee at Willow
27	28	29	30			
COMMUNION Willow Creek Worship, 9:00am, Sunday School/Coffee to follow worship. Team 2 Benton Sunday School, 9:30am, coffee/treats during SS Benton Worship, 10:45am Group Leaders-Butch & Lori 3rd graders/parents meet after worship at Benton	9am Quilting at Willow	Bulletin Announcements due by noon in Church office.	Confirmation, 6:30pm at Benton, 7th & 8th graders			