



# ALL SAINTS

## LUTHERAN CHURCH

# NEWSLETTER

September 2026



## CALL TO COMMUNITY

**T**his fall and the coming year are about community. I've heard experts across disciplines and varying perspectives remark about the ways that our society has fallen into a kind of hyper individualism. Of course, individualism has its benefits and rationale. We wouldn't have arrived here if it didn't. But, many of us feel isolated. With the prevalence of digitized social connections, the prospect of AI chatbots as friends, and political and social divisions, we're losing some of the social practices that build real human community and relationships. Even for those of us who are more introverted, studies show that engagement in relationships and community literally add years to our lives and can positively impact our physical and emotional wellbeing. Strong community is also critical for the health of our wider society. A commitment to community is a practice of personal and social wellbeing!

Christian and other faith communities have practices that go back thousands of years that we can draw from.

Starting in late September, we will begin a new

sermon series based on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's book *Life Together*, which is considered a Christian classic. Written during another time of great social upheaval, it's a short read and we will be offering at least a couple of book discussion groups for you to join. If you would like to host a book group yourself, reach out to Pastor Jon or Pastor Jennifer. Look for signups soon.

There's a lot more coming up this fall, and more yet to be announced. There are many ongoing groups and ministries for you to participate in. Check out this newsletter and stay tuned to announcements on Sundays and in the weekly E-News for more information throughout the year. I encourage you to find time for regular worship and to find at least one additional way to serve, or to attend or participate in another experience this fall. I can tell you from experience that your very presence sometimes brings the added inspiration and energy that someone else needs that day.

*Be well,  
Pastor Jon*

## SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

|      |                                              |
|------|----------------------------------------------|
| 2nd  | Knitting, Quilting, and Crafting Group, 1pm  |
| 8th  | Beautiful Souls Grief Support Group, 10am    |
| 9th  | Saints Chorale First Rehearsal, 7:15pm       |
| 13th | Kickoff Sunday Worship, 10am                 |
| 13th | Kids Connection Begins, 10am                 |
| 13th | Kickoff Sunday Ministry Fair, 11am           |
| 13th | Crossroads Confirmation Orientation, 11:15am |
| 16th | Knitting, Quilting, and Crafting Group, 1pm  |
| 16th | Carillon Choir First Rehearsal, 6pm          |
| 16th | Crossroads Confirmation First Wednesday, 7pm |
| 24th | St. John's Bible Day Trip, 9:15am-5pm        |
| 27th | Adult Study, 11:15am                         |
| 27th | First Session of FLOW, 6:30pm                |

For up to date info, visit [AllSaintsMtk.org/events](https://AllSaintsMtk.org/events).

## REGISTER NOW FOR SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAMMING

Registration is now open for school year 2026–2027. We have opportunities for kids and youth of all ages.

- Kids Connection (age 3 – 5th grade) - [AllSaintsMtk.org/kids](https://AllSaintsMtk.org/kids)
- Crossroads (6th – 8th grade) - [AllSaintsMtk.org/youth](https://AllSaintsMtk.org/youth)
- F.L.O.W (Future Leader of the World) High School Leadership Training (9th – 12th grade) - [AllSaintsMtk.org/youth](https://AllSaintsMtk.org/youth)

Mark your calendars!

- First day of Kids Connection: Kickoff Sunday, September 13
- First day of Crossroads: Wednesday, September 16
- First day of FLOW: Sunday, September 27



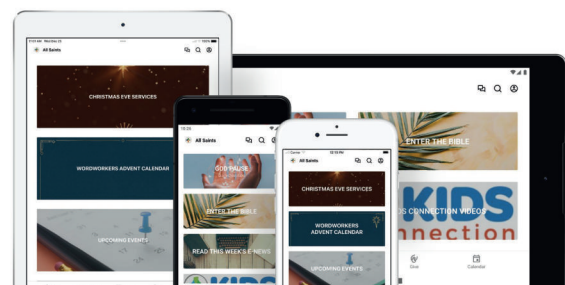
All Saints Lutheran Church

Available in App Stores



## BACK TO SCHOOL RESOURCES

NAMI's (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Back to School Resources are a one-stop shop for mental health resources for educators and families. Go to [nami.org/kids-teens-and-young-adults/school-resources/back-to-school-resources](https://nami.org/kids-teens-and-young-adults/school-resources/back-to-school-resources).





# MEDORA 2026 SERVICE TRIP

On the last morning of the service trip, we were unsure if we could finish the work. It was 7:30 in the morning and already 80 degrees out. The sun burned harshly above the rolling plains of western North Dakota as a dry, dusty breeze blew across the desiccated grass and yellowed weeds of the yard. We had weeds left to pull, piles of branches to cut, all of this lawn waste yet to haul away, and two rooms inside that needed a third coat of paint. So, as a crew started making breakfast, some of us donned sweat-stained caps and dusty shoes to finish the work.



It was a bit cooler, in the high seventies, when we all gathered the previous Tuesday afternoon at All Saints to begin our service trip. The dozen of us that were going ranged in age from a first grader to retirement age. Some of us had been on multiple service trips while others had gone no further than Feed My Starving Children in Chanhassen. But we all had the same goal: to make a difference during the week.

The twelve of us loaded three vehicles with luggage, work tools, food, and sleeping bags. We'd planned for a variety of contingencies and had the supplies to prove it. The first day of travel went well, save for some traffic getting out of the Twin Cities that evening, and we made it to Fargo in the late evening.

The next day, however, threw the first challenge at us: the rest stop we were planning to eat lunch at was closed for construction. A few texts later, however, and we were enjoying our lunch on the deck of a house in Bismarck. One of the participants had family that lived in the area, and they were gracious enough to let us rest and eat at their home.

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## Medora 2026 Service Trip



We arrived that evening in Belfield to find an empty house awaiting us. The local congregation, whom we would be helping with their food shelf the next day, had an empty parsonage house. In exchange for a place to stay, we also would do cleanup and painting in the house. After moving three carloads of stuff in for the week, we headed into the town of Medora.

Medora is a charming little town, nestled in the valley of the Little Missouri River beneath the towering bluffs of badlands. Quaint shops and bistros stand alongside more modern play areas and water parks. At the top of the bluff to the west of town, built directly into the side of the hill, is the amphitheater for the Medora Musical. We went as a group to enjoy this jukebox musical and revue before the real work of the trip began.

Thursday morning, we slathered on sunscreen, stuffed backpacks with water bottles, and headed into Medora for our first service task. We were asked to help weed the rocky area around a miniature golf course and public area. We set to work beneath the beating sun, moving aside rough rocks to tear out weeds from their roots and then toss them into buckets.



Our crew split into teams. Two teams worked their way around the perimeter of the area, cleaning up the smaller patches of weeds. Another two teams worked from opposite ends of a large patch of weeds, heading towards a meeting point in the center. The jagged, course rocks bit into skin and the dry heat necessitated regular reminders for all to drink more water.





After three hours, we'd managed to clear all of the weeds from the area. A final trek was made to dump the buckets of torn out plants and we headed back to our temporary home for some lunch and a rest before our next task.



In the afternoon, we walked a few blocks to Belfield Lutheran Church, our connection in the area. The Belfield-Medora Food Pantry is an all-volunteer run on the church property. The day we were there, they were having their monthly distribution. We started by helping them set up tents to shade the food, then hauling out breads, pastries, and other non-perishables.



After the initial set-up, there were some house-keeping chores that they needed assistance with. We broke down about fifty cardboard boxes so that they were flat and could more easily be hauled away, clearing off their porch. We also put an old wooden table into storage and moved a milk refrigerator into a new room for them.

As the time for distribution got near, we hauled out the frozen meats, dairy, and vegetables. We also helped restock the tables as items were taken. In total, 112 people were served the day that we helped.

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## Medora 2026 Service Trip

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During quiet times, the kids and youth did a Bible study. Since we wouldn't be back for the Sunday service, they read through the readings and talked about them. These small moments of connection were just as important as the big projects we worked on.



Outdoors, the crew worked to rake up pinecones, trim plants, and pull weeds. Then work moved to trimming the bushes that had overgrown the deck. It was so overgrown that it was nearly impossible to climb the steps up to the front door or access the side door. We'd spent the first few days entering only through the garage.



On Friday, our task was to clean up the yard of the parsonage and paint two of the bedrooms. Our crew split into two teams, with several of the youth and kids bouncing between them. In the painted rooms, the crew put up painters tape, remove outlet covers, and got on two coats of paint.



By the time evening came, a lot of work had been done in both areas. But there were still tons of weeds beneath the deck, large branches that needed to be trimmed, and the rooms needed a third coat of paint.



Saturday dawned bright and hot. We buckled down, grabbed our supplies, and headed out together to tackle the final two projects. By lunch time, the final coat of paint was finished in both rooms. And outside, thanks to a few loaned trash cans from a neighbor, we'd loaded up all of the weeds and brush that we'd taken out. With a happy sigh of relief, we finished the hard work.

The kids made up Birthday Bags for food shelf, so that kids could still have cake and decorations on their birthday. They also wrote thank you cards for all of the people that helped us during our visit.



Construction and scheduling problems changed our plans, heat and wind troubled our work, and time was always working against us. But our teamwork and perseverance kept us going. We utilized our unique skills to make a relevant impact in the communities of Belfield and Medora. We grew closer to each other in shared hardships and triumphs.

As we drove back across the rolling prairie towards home, we knew that we had changed, and had changed the world for the better.





# INTERGENERATIONAL SUMMER POTLUCK

**O**n a beautiful summer evening, 46 people of all ages gathered out at Lake Minnewashta Regional Park for our annual summer intergenerational potluck. It was an opportunity for us to share favorite recipes, play games, and engage with meaningful conversation.

After dealing with some stubborn charcoal that refused to light, we enjoyed grilled hot dogs, chips, salsas and dips, salads, mac and cheese, and a variety of desserts. The kids enjoyed

playing on the huge playground out at the park. It was the perfect time for them to reignite old friendships and make new ones as well.

It wasn't just the kids who got to build relationships. Adults got a chance to talk about the recipes they brought, their personal lives, and plans for the upcoming program year. These gatherings build our community through sharing in food, fun, and conversation. Come to these community events when you can to build and maintain your own connections.



## Intergenerational Summer Potluck

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## SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

### September Wellness Focus

Our wellness focus of September is Spiritual Wellness. God's love for us is never failing and his work in this world is all around us, if we take the time to notice. Bolstering our spiritual wellness happens as we take the time to see God working in and around us and through connecting in worship and community. For additional ideas on spiritual wellness, see our social media posts or the All Saints website: [AllSaintsMtka.org/spiritual-wellness](https://AllSaintsMtka.org/spiritual-wellness)



## LOOKING AHEAD TO OCTOBER

Trunk or Treat is Saturday, October 24 from 2-4pm. Keep an eye out for more details about that and other upcoming events in the weekly E-News.

## PEACE MOMENT

"Autumn whispers leaf by leaf, 'Give Love to others. Fall in Peace.'"

— Angie Weiland-Crosby

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