



Country Chronicles October 2026

Cannon River and
Cross of Christ Lutheran
Parish, ELCA

Over Labor Day weekend I visited Beaver Creek Valley State Park near Caledonia. I have to say, the drive down was alone worth the trip. The driftless wooded hills of this region are truly something to behold. Upon arriving at the park, I opted to take the hiking club loop. I quickly came to the first bridge and noticed something rather odd. As I looked out over the creek, there was dense mist hanging over the channel. I was a bit perplexed. It was already late morning, and the air temperature had to be at least 80-90 degrees. It was plenty hot, late enough in the day, why hadn't the foggy mist burned off? Then I realized something. The water flowing through was ground water and bubbled up from the ground at a temperature around 50 degrees. The cooler water from the earth was condensing and cooling the vapor in the air. This convergent zone of water and air, cool and warm, created this beautifully mysterious cover of fog that enchanted my stroll through the woods for much of that day.

At Cross of Christ, we just completed the congregational listening phase of our Vision and Vitality project. I am deeply grateful for the conversations and the earnest efforts to wonder about God's future. We have also been listening to our wider community members to discern just where and how we are being

called to minister and to participate in God's work. It struck me in the days since my hike that we, in a sense, have been searching for these sorts of convergence zones. We are looking for convergence zones where need and opportunity in the community meet the assets and giftedness of our congregations. Where might these show up? It will be important to continue to let the process play out but one thing is clear, people are hungry to cool down, to reach for connection instead of overheated arguments and implacable divisions. It would seem that the cool living water Jesus offers to us all these centuries on. I look forward to continuing our listening and our watching for these convergent zones, the mists of God's Spirit at play and at work in our congregations and larger communities.

The driftless area of Minnesota truly is an underrated landscape in a state where lakes, woods and the Northshore are extolled to the highest heavens. Yet the hills and bluffs of this region are truly astonishing and come alive this time of year in bursts of warm and striking color. At the foot of these hills and bluffs lies these cold clear streams of water, bubbling from the earth itself, convergent zones of water and sky waiting to be discovered.

As Ever in Christ,
Pastor CJ

Contact Information for Pastor CJ Boettcher:
Church Phone: 651-388-3464 ***Cell Phone:*** 920-858-7066
Email: pastor@cccchurch.com



Help Shape the Women's Connection Group's 2027 Programs!

Mark your calendar for the Women's Connection Group Planning Party on **Saturday, November 7, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in Dahlen Hall**. Bring an idea for a 2027 program, along with

the details written on a sheet of paper. Or select a topic from the pink programming folder (found in the lower right corner of the display case in DH).

We will repeat the successful format from our last planning party. Each woman will share her suggestion aloud in a welcoming space—with no judgment and plenty of encouragement. Together, we will group the ideas into broad themes. Next comes the voting round: each participant will receive five stickers to mark her top choices. Evening events will be scheduled during daylight saving time. The WCG hosted seven events in 2026; for 2027, we will adjust the number of events based on our members' capacity so that the schedule remains joyful and manageable.

We can't wait to discover which events will bring connection, encouragement, and blessing to our church and community in 2027. Come ready to share, listen, and help shape an uplifting year together!

Cannon River News

Faith and Family first, helping others along the way.

Attendance

September 6th	15
September 13th	18
September 20th	10

Financial Report

	Income	Expenses	Net
Jan	\$2,153	\$4,174	(\$2,021)
Feb	\$2,095	\$4,346	(\$2,251)
Mar	\$3,005	\$6,878	(\$3,873)
April	\$4,055	\$3,548	\$506
May	\$3,028	\$3,366	(\$338)
June	\$9,955	\$7,515	\$2,439
July	\$2,085	\$3,702	(\$1,617)
Aug	\$2,725	\$4,182	(\$1,457)
Year to Date	\$29,101	\$37,715	(\$8,614)

Coffee Church

Join us for Coffee Church on
Sunday, October 18th Fellowship
will start at 8am and service at 9am.
Hope you can join us.



October Council Rotation

October 4th -David
October 11th -Robert
October 18th -Ellen
October 25th -Les

Cannon Falls Breakfast Club



Cannon River will be serving breakfast at the Cannon Falls Breakfast Club on **October 20 and April 20, 2027**. The Breakfast Club is for any students grades 7-12. It meets at 7am in St. Ansgar's church basement. Besides breakfast, the students hear a spiritual message, enjoy music and play a quick game. As our serving dates get closer, we will be looking for a few people to provide food and serve.

The poster for the FMSC Pack Event is designed with a blue and white color scheme. At the top left, it features the "FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN MOBILEPACK" logo with the tagline "VOLUNTEER • GIVE • CHANGE LIVES" and an icon of two people. To the right, a blue cloud-like shape contains the text "Together we can make a difference!" with a yellow heart. The main title "FMSC PACK EVENT" is in large white letters on a blue background, followed by the date "Saturday, November 7th, 2026" and location "Cannon Falls High School, 820 East Minnesota Street • Cannon Falls, MN". Below this, four icons represent the event's goals: "PACK MEALS" (people icon), "FEED CHILDREN" (heart icon), "SHARE HOPE" (globe icon), and "MAKE A DIFFERENCE" (hands icon). A photo of a smiling child holding a bowl of food is on the left. The "TWO PACKING SHIFTS:" section lists "8:00 AM - 10:00 AM" and "11:00 AM - 1:00 PM". A QR code is on the right with the text "Scan to Register & Donate" and "Register to volunteer and/or make a donation." The bottom banner reads "NOURISHING KIDS • STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES • CHANGING TOMORROWS".

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN
MOBILEPACK™
VOLUNTEER • GIVE • CHANGE LIVES

Together we can make a difference!

MEALS • PEOPLE • A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

FMSC PACK EVENT
Saturday, November 7th, 2026
Cannon Falls High School
820 East Minnesota Street • Cannon Falls, MN

PACK MEALS
Work together to make a difference.

FEED CHILDREN
Nutritious meals for kids around the world.

SHARE HOPE
Help fight hunger and change lives.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE
People of all ages can volunteer!

TWO PACKING SHIFTS:
8:00 AM – 10:00 AM 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Choose the shift that works for you!

Meals Change Lives

Scan to Register & Donate
Register to volunteer and/or make a donation.

NOURISHING KIDS • STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES • CHANGING TOMORROWS

Cross of Christ News

We are called by the Spirit to be a lasting presence in our community, faithfully sharing the Word of God through worship, fellowship and service to our neighbors.

Faithful through Generations

Assistants for October 2026

Readers

October 4 th	Joan Slingsby
October 11 th	Rhonda Meyer
October 18 th	Doris Gruber
October 25 th	Contemporary Service

Greeters

October 4 th	Dennis & Jackie Martin
October 11 th	Jean Kehren
October 18 th	Kelley Mittelsteadt
October 25 th	OPEN

Altar Committee

October 4 th	Cheryl
October 11 th	Cathy
October 18 th	Joan
October 25 th	Kelley

Council Person Sherril Bjornson

October Ushers Darwin & Cheryl, Duke, Joan

Kitchen Person Joan Slingsby

September Attendance

September 6 th 24	September 13 th 36
September 20 th 16	September 27 th 39

Cross of Christ Financial Update

	Income	Expenses	Net
Mar	\$10,798.89	\$14,017.72	(\$3,219.83)
Apr	\$9,634.93	\$14,019.57	(\$4,384.64)
May	\$8,882.09	\$15,881.93	(\$6,999.84)
June	\$14,955.15	\$15,187.09	(\$231.18)
July	\$17,827.45	\$14,233.28	\$3,594.17
Aug	\$11,988.92	\$32,497.80	(\$20,508.88)

Note: expenses were higher, due to paying a balance of \$21,376.25 for the Dahlen Hall siding project.

Thank you to those who continue to give towards that project, those gifts will help replenish the Building and Grounds fund where the balance was paid from.

Thrivent Choice Dollars



If you are a Thrivent member, you can now direct your choice dollars at any time throughout the year. No need to wait, **those funds are available now.** Please consider Cross of Christ when directing funds. Head on over to [Thrivent Choice | Thrivent](#) and click on “Direct Choice Dollars”

Cross of Christ received \$2,277 in 2025.

Thank you for your continued support to Cross of Christ.

Tithe.ly

Thank you to those who have signed up with our new online giving with Tithe.ly. You can still sign up using the following link below or scan the QR code.

<https://give.tithe.ly/?formId=e8c862d8-2f30-4c52-b57e-e04ebe8e66e0>



Thank you!

Deanna

Congregational Listening Session: Casting Our Nets into Deep Water



Cross of Christ gathered on September 27 for an energizing congregational listening session — and the room was filled with engaged members from several generations. Conversation flowed easily as Pastor CJ opened with prayer and reflected on Luke 5:1–11, where Jesus calls his disciples to “fish for people.” Our

guiding question for the day was simple and bold: **What might it look like for Cross of Christ to fish in deep water today?**

Pastor CJ introduced the Asset Mapping process, inviting each person to identify strengths on individual post-it notes. Together, our five small groups named assets across four categories — **Financial, Time, Skills, and Networks** — and celebrated the many gifts already present in our small but strong rural congregation. Instead of focusing on what we lack, we recognized how much God has already placed in our boat.

We also identified potential partners and opportunities to build coordinated, long-lasting relationships throughout the wider Welch community. Our Council President, Anthony Nemcek reminded us, *“We have a very solid boat, and we can cast the net wide in the deep water.”* Another member added with hope, *“We may have holes in our net — but it’s fixable!”*

Pastor CJ shared that the new insights gathered from this session, along with data from recent community-leader listening sessions, will be reviewed by the **Vision and Vitality Task Force**. The team will discern where the Holy Spirit may be leading us next and present their findings to the Church Council in December. A summary will be shared with the congregation, possibly at the annual meeting.

True to Pastor CJ’s promise, the meeting wrapped up right at 90 minutes — filled with gratitude, laughter, and a renewed sense of purpose. Please continue to keep the Task Force, our leaders, and our congregation in your prayers as this important work moves forward. Thank you to Mary Fjetland and Thrivent for an enjoyable light lunch and Hope Dahling for managing the day care!



Cemetery Clean-Up

A fall cleanup in the Cemetery is scheduled for **Saturday October 17, starting at 9am**. Please be sure to empty your pots and discard any items before winter. If you are able to help

us, that would be greatly appreciated. Thank You!



Kwik Trip Cards Help support our Building Maintenance Fund by buying Kwik Trip cards. The next order will be put in on **Tuesday, October 13th** and will be available at the church by **Sunday, October 18th**. If you would like to order cards and are

not on the regular order list, please email hjschreif@live.com or 507-990-7024. Thank you to those who have ordered Kwik Trip Cards. Julie Schreifels

Missions

Some call it Mission work . . . it's also called "Loving Others"

We continue our paper bag collection in the back of the church. These are taken to **Hastings Family Service** where they have a great need for bags for their produce delivery!



Food Shelf- Collection

Thanks for all the breakfast items that were collected. Your continued support has been nothing but AMAZING!!



Octobers collection has us thinking all things fall. We will collect hearty soups and stews (*canned or dry soup mixes*), crackers, hot chocolate, coffee and tea. Thank you in advance for

supporting this mission.

Learning & Youth

Welcome back! Our first Sunday we eased back into Sunday School. We had music with Cheryl and talked about all the fun things we did this summer.

Introduced the prize room, with all new prizes and a new ticket earning system with lots of bonus tickets this year. We

then enjoyed some snacks. Next week we will be getting back into our curriculum. Don't forget your Gabby/Jacob John offering it does include bonus tickets every week.



We will also be looking for Substitutes at this time we will mostly be looking, toward the end of Sunday school in the Spring. If you are interested please let Deanna know.



Schedule

October 4th Rejection in the Vineyard

October 11th The Wedding Banquet

October 18th After worship Sunday School 11:30am

October 25th Fall-o-ween Jesus Party

**Confirmation will be held on Wednesday, October 7th, 21st
and 28th from 6-7:30PM at United.**

Thanks,
The Fox's

After Worship Sunday School Sunday-October 18th Families Welcome!

Join us after worship for Sunday school, fellowship, and
fun for all ages led by Pastor CJ.

**Enjoy fun activities, crafts, games, and time to learn
together!**

Walking Tacos Served Starting at 11:30am

Bring the whole family, enjoy a meal together, and
connect with our church community.





The next **WELCA** meeting will be on **Wednesday, October 14th 6:30 pm. Dahlen Hall.** We will debrief the Taste of Welch and determine distribution of proceeds, discuss having a pie auction in November and take care of any other business.

HELP with the Taste of Welch Saturday, October! Kim Chandler has graciously donated a beautiful tied quilt from her mother. **IF you need more raffle tickets contact Kelley Mittelsteadt.** Ticket packets are available in the Narthex on Sundays. You will also have the opportunity to sign up to help with this our biggest fundraiser: advertising, set up, **BAKE Sale Items**, craft items, help the day of TOW and Sunday after church). Lunch menu: chicken wild rice soup, vegetable soup, roast beef sandwiches, coleslaw 10, chips, desserts, and beverages. **Please price any craft items donated. Make sure to note if your bake sale items have any allergens, such as nuts.** Also, note if items are gluten free. We are excited to have Duff's Meats 2 and Coborn's both in Hastings donate generously with items to make our lunch items. Also to Thrivent for Action Grants. Red Wing Shoe has donated a \$200.00 gift certificate!

SAVE THE DATE JANUARY 15-17, 2027-Annual **Women's Retreat Maiden Rock Retreat**

Enjoy the return of Pr. Emily Carson as our Saturday Presenter. Stay the weekend or come for the day on Saturday. More information to come. Contact Julie Schreifels if you are interested in coming &/or helping to plan the retreat.

Future Events:

Taste of Welch: October 10, 9am – 2 pm

Red Cross Blood Drive: Thursday, Oct. 29 12:00 – 6:00 pm and
Friday, Oct. 30, 8:30 am – 2:20 pm

2027 Women's Retreat: January 15-17 Maiden Rock Retreat

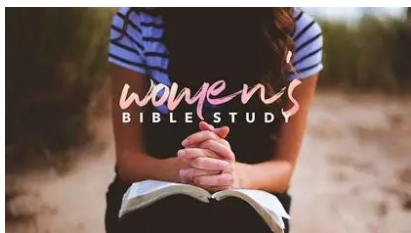
Cannon River Spring Event: April 24, 2027 First Lutheran Church, Red Wing

Convention of the SE MN Synodical Women's Organization:
September 18, 2027, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Rochester, MN (See attached poster)

*Officers: President: Julie Schreifels Secretary: Joan Slingsby
Treasurer: Jean Kehren*

Julie Schreifels cell phone: 507-990-7024 email
hjschreif@live.com

WELCA Bible Study



WELCA Bible study will resume in September. We will meet in Dahlen Hall on **Tuesday October 13th, 9:00 - 11:00.** Our study will be “*Bold Faith on an unexpected journey.*” In this 3-session

series we will journey with Hagar, Ruth, and Mary Magdalene - women whose bold faith transformed their stories. Study guides will be provided. Please join us for this morning of learning, sharing, and laughing together.

2027 SWO CONVENTION

"Anticipating God's Abundance"

The Southeastern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization has chosen the following Lutheran Social Service in Minnesota Programs for 2026 - 2027.
Project goal \$9,000 or more!

SAFE HARBOR - focuses on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking

BASIC CENTER - supports 16 - 17 year old youth who are homeless and at risk of homelessness

STAY IN COMMUNITY - serves 18 years aging out of the Foster Care Network and provides support and guidance so they may remain in healthy communities

These programs all serve the SEMN Synod areas and support the WELCA's Memorial "Calling for the Safety and Protection of Our Children."

All funds will be equally distributed to these programs at the 2027 Southeastern Minnesota Synodical Women's Convention (September 18, 2027 Mount Olive Lutheran Church Rochester).

Please make checks out to SEMN SWO with "Abundance Project" in memo line.
Send to: Diane Linbo, 402 15th Ave NW; Kasson MN 55944

**"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."
John 10:10**

Women of the **ELCA** 



35th Annual Taste of Welch Bake Sale Lunch



Homemade Chicken Wild Rice Soup
Homemade Vegetable Soup
Roast Beef Sandwiches
Coleslaw
Assorted Desserts
Hot and Cold Beverages

Raffle

Beautiful Hand Tied Quilt 92"x 84"
Many other items including:
Handmade wooden kid's table & bench
Gift Cards and Gift Certificates
Sign up for FREE drawings! Some Crafts available

Cross of Christ Lutheran Church

24036 Co. Rd. 7 Blvd., Welch, MN
Saturday, October 10th, 2026
9:00 am – 2:00 pm



Cannon River and Cross of Christ
Joint Council Meeting Minutes-September 10, 2026

Members Present from Cross of Christ: Anthony Nemcek, Jim Gustafson, Sherril Bjornson, Ross Nelson, Hans Schreifels, Barb Peiffer, Darwin Fox, Pastor CJ Boetcher. Absent: Jeff Meyer

Members Present from Cannon River: Ellen Hartman, David Fremouw, Barbara Flynn. Absent Les Anderson, John Niebur, Robert Klahr

Meeting was called to order by Cannon River President, Ellen Hartman.

Anthony Nemcek was appointed secretary for this meeting. The agenda was approved with no additions.

Secretary's report for the Joint Council Meeting held on April 14, 2026 was reviewed and approved.

Pastor's Report: Items from Pastor's report relevant to both congregations was highlighted. The parts of the report that related to each congregation would be reviewed at each church's individual Council meeting.

New Business:

Memorandum of Understanding – A memorandum of understanding that formally acknowledges each congregation's responsibilities as they relate to the parsonage and parsonage-related expenses was reviewed and approved by the Joint Council. No changes to the existing division of costs was proposed by the MOU.

***Harvest Festival** – The date for the Harvest Festivals for both churches will be November 15. Cannon River gathers before church while Cross of Christ's festival is after service. Therefore, no conflicts should arise by having them on the same day.

The next joint council meeting will be on April 13, 2027 at 6:30 p.m. held at Cross of Christ.

Respectfully submitted,
Anthony Nemcek

Cross of Christ
Council Meeting Minutes
September 10, 2026

Present: Anthony Nemcek, Jim Gustafson, Sherril Bjornson, Ross Nelson, Hans Schreifels, Barb Peiffer, Darwin Fox, Pastor CJ Boetcher *Absent:* Jeff Meyer

Meeting was called to order by Anthony Nemcek, and the mission statement was read.

The meeting agenda was approved, and the June meeting minutes were approved as written.

Unfinished Business

* **Pastor's Report** Pastor's report included information related to the upcoming Sunday School year and that there are two confirmation students. Confirmation will be held jointly with United Lutheran in Red Wing. Pastor's computer has reached the end of its usable life, and a refurbished unit was acquired from Computers on the Go. In October, Pastor will be attending the Fall Theological Retreat in La Crosse, WI. He will not need coverage for worship or visitations.

* **Accessibility Task Force** – No updates since the last meeting.

New Business

* **October Council person** – Sherril Bjornson

* **Harvest Festival** – The date for the Harvest Festival will be November 15.

Committee Reports

* **Finance** – Council reviewed and approved the financial reports received from Clergy Financial Resources. If the funds that were paid for the remainder of the siding (except for the windows, which are on order) the month would be a net positive.

*Property Management – Concrete holes were patched on the exterior of Dahlen Hall.

*Worship & Music – Council would like to move forward with utilizing the funds given for an upgraded A/V system. The Committee is discussing ways to improve the contemporary worship service.

*Learning & Youth – Confirmation will be done collaboratively with United Lutheran again this year. There are two students, one of whom will be confirmed in the spring. Sunday School is kicking off on 9/27 with a Sunday Funday celebration and there will be a blessing of backpacks.

*Service & Witness – The Vision and Vitality task force interviewed community leaders and met to report back what they found. Trends and common themes were identified. These will be shared with the congregation during a gathering after church on 9/27 where conversations will be facilitated to identify strengths and opportunities for Cross of Christ to remain relevant and of service to the community.

*Missions – Breakfast foods are being collected in August.

*Stewardship – The committee is meeting this month to discuss the fall drive for 2027 giving. Simply Giving is no longer active and all automatic giving and tracking has migrated to Tithely. Deanna remains available to help people set up their profiles within that system. Deanna is also using Tithely to track giving, so any funds received are being allocated appropriately by her.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. - Motion Passed.

The next meeting will be on October 13 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James Gustafson
Council Secretary

A Prayer Team for Our Young People

Our children, youth, and young adults face many pressures that can confuse, discourage, and isolate them. As Rev. Al Erickson shared at the July Triennial Gathering, “our young people are being attacked in many ways”—yet the church is not helpless. One of our strongest gifts is prayer. We invite the congregation to join a simple, self-directed prayer team focused on lifting up young people, families, schools, and church leaders.

Why This Matters

Prayer invites God’s guidance, protection, and strength. It also shapes us into compassionate people who notice needs and respond with care. A prayer team allows the whole congregation—not just parents or staff—to surround young people with spiritual support.

How It Works

Participants pray on their own schedule: at home, during walks, before meals, or as part of daily devotions. Occasional prayer prompts or themes may be shared in the bulletin or newsletter.

Focus areas include:

- ☐ Children, youth, and young adults
- ☐ Parents, grandparents, and caregivers
- ☐ Teachers, coaches, mentors, and youth leaders
- ☐ Young people facing loneliness, anxiety, bullying, or confusion
- ☐ Our congregation’s readiness to welcome and support families

Who Can Join?

Everyone—children, teens, adults, longtime members, and newcomers. A multigenerational team becomes a powerful witness of care and unity. A Small Commitment, A Deep Purpose You might pray once a week, once a day, or whenever a prompt appears. The structure stays light; the impact grows deep.

If this stirs something in you, pray about joining. Let church leaders know you’re interested by signing the clipboard at the back of church or leaving a voice message at the church office, 651-388-3464.

Our young people deserve our attention, courage, and prayers. Let’s begin.

-Janet