



Country Chronicles December 2025

Cannon River and
Cross of Christ Lutheran
Parish, ELCA

The season of Advent is upon us. It marks the beginning of the church year. It is a time of joy and hope. We remember again that God has come to dwell with us in the person of Jesus. We read again the story of the shepherds and the angels, of the innkeeper and the wise men, of Mary and Joseph and the child whose blood will save us, whose wounds will heal us, and through whom God's kingdom will come. We rejoice because God has remembered his promise to redeem all the world and has come in the flesh to make good on that promise.

Yet as we all gear up for another holiday season, it's hard not to wonder where that promise of redemption has wandered off to. We know that God came to us in Jesus but we long for his second coming, when he will once again be Emmanuel, God with us, and will finally put an end to suffering once and for all time. Advent is a time of hope and of joy. Yet, it is also a time of yearning and longing for an end to darkness and death.

On Sunday December 21st we will be holding our annual Longest Night service at Cross of Christ. The service is in stark contrast to the mirth and joy of the holiday season. As the nights become longer and the darkness grows, the service creates a space to acknowledge the darkness in our own lives. It is a time to

express the feelings of loss, pain and hopelessness that can be felt acutely this time of year but often have no outlet. Ultimately though, it is a service of hope. We are reminded that Jesus Christ, the light of the world, shines in our deep darkness and is not overcome. We remember that God has not abandoned us, and that though we struggle we need not despair, that amid our pain God is bringing healing and new life.

So as we make our way through Advent, I invite you to delve deeply into the meaning of this season. Take time to experience once again the joy and hope found in the birth of our Savior. Take time also to reflect, to grieve, to acknowledge the lingering darkness still present in this world. In all this though remember that God is with us in our darkness, that in Jesus we have the light that is not overcome. Rejoice, that one day our longing for wholeness will be no more and that all of creation will be redeemed and renewed.

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

A close-up photograph of a hand operating a beer tap. The hand is positioned at the top, pulling the tap handle. Below, a stream of beer is being poured into a glass held by another hand. The glass is partially filled with a golden beer topped with a thick head of white foam. The background is blurred, showing other taps and bar equipment.

CANNON RIVER INN

Hops and Harmony

Come Sing Your Favorite
Christmas Hymns!

Sunday, December 21st
3:30 PM

*Sponsored by Cross of Christ and
Cannon River Lutheran Churches*



The Longest Night:

A Service of Healing and Hope

Join us for a time of lament, grief, and light as we acknowledge the loss and pain during the holidays and look to the Light of Christ with renewed hope.

Sunday December 21st 2025

6:30PM

Cross of Christ Lutheran Church

Cannon River News

Faith and Family first, helping others along the way.

Attendance

November 2 nd	10
November 9 th	16
November 16 th	13
November 23 rd	19

Financial Report

	Income	Expenses	Net
Jan	\$2,060	\$3,702	(\$1,642)
Feb	\$2,365	\$4,067	(\$1,702)
Mar	\$2,920	\$5,901	(\$2,981)
Apr	\$3,485	\$3,361	\$123
May	\$2,255	\$3,215	(\$960)
June	\$3,300	\$6,629	(\$3,329)
July	\$1,590	\$3,718	(\$2,128)
Aug	\$2,988	\$3,850	(\$862)
Sept	\$9,635	\$6,307	\$3,327
Oct	\$1,855	\$4,577	(\$2,722)
Year to Date	\$32,353	\$45,267	(\$12,914)



Coffee Church at Cannon River

Join us for Coffee Church on Sunday, December 21st starting at 8:00AM, with service at 9:00AM. Bring an item to share.

Hope to see you there!



Council Rotation-December

December 7th --- Ellen December 14th --- Les
December 21st --- John December 25th --- Barb
December 28th --- David



Poinsettias

There will be a sign-up sheet in the back up church if you would like to buy a poinsettia to decorate our church during this Christmas season. Thank you.

Ruth's Boys

We will be giving Target gift cards again this to Ruth's Boys as a Christmas gift from Cannon River. It's a way for us to financially help these two physically disabled young men. There will be a box in the back of church for your monetary donations. The cards will then be bought and delivered to them before Christmas.



Advent Worship Schedule

Longest Night Service 6:30PM at Cross of Christ-December 21st

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 4:30PM at Cross of Christ-December 24th

Christmas Day Worship Service 10AM at Cannon River-December 25th

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 December 2025

Readers

December 7 th	Dean Dinndorf
December 14 th	Sandy Luhman
December 21 st	Coffee Worship-No Reader needed
December 24 th	OPEN-Reader Needed
December 28 th	Contemporary Service

Greeters

December 7 th	Dean & Dana Dinndorf
December 14 th	OPEN
December 21 st	OPEN
December 24 th	OPEN
December 28 th	Oscar & Janet Daley

Altar Committee

Dec. 7th	Kelley
Dec. 14th	Cathy
Dec. 21st	Joan
Dec. 28th	Millie

Council Person

Ross Nelson

December Ushers

Ann Kulla, Dean Dinndorf

Kitchen Person

Doris Gruber

Cross of Christ Financial Update

Thank you to those who thought deeply and prayerfully about your financial commitment to Cross of Christ and filled out your 2026 commitment card. Your generosity not only heats the building and keeps the lights on but ensures a faithful and solid witness to the grace and love of Christ today and in generations yet to come.

If you have not filled one out yet, you can grab it digitally here <C:\Users\rosed\Downloads\Commitment Form 2026.pdf> or you can pick one up on the back table in the sanctuary. Once you are done filling it out, please send it into the office or drop it into the offering plate.

Any Questions please reach out at crossofchristreasurer@gmail.com

Thank you for your continued support! ~Emily



Kwik Trip Cards Kwik Trip Cards Make Great Christmas Presents/stocking stuffers. Help support our Building Maintenance Fund by buying Kwik Trip scrip cards. GROCERY ONLY CARDS the church makes 15% on the purchase of these cards. The church makes 5% on the purchase of the usual gas and gift cards,

which can be used to purchase anything at Kwik Trip from gas, groceries, and car washes to anything else they sell. Both are available in \$10, \$20, \$25, \$50, and \$100. You pay the amount of the card being purchased. Contact Julie Schreifels to purchase at hjschreif@live.com or 507-990-7024. **The next order will be put in on Tuesday, December 9th and will be available during church on Sunday, December 14th.** Thank you to those who have ordered Kwik Trip Cards.

Coffee Church-December 21st

We will continue with Coffee church on the December 21st. The service will be held in Dahlen Hall and continue each month after that. There will be a sign up sheet on the big wooden table in the back of the church. We have discovered that 3 people can get it set up, serve the food and clean up. Please consider helping and sign up on the paper.

Adopt-A-Family Christmas



The Adopt-A-Family Christmas Project is on its way. The tree is up at the back of the church, grab a

tag or two and return the gifts unwrapped with the tag by **December 21st**. Questions? Contact Lynette Hanson at 651-380-7814. Thank you!



Thank you everyone for the thoughts and prayers and meals after my gallbladder surgery. This Church is my second family. God's Blessings too everyone.

-Kelley Mittelsteadt

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!



Thank you for participating in the M & M Coin collection. If you have not turned in your filled tube yet, please do so.



Christmas Smorgasbord



Mark your calendars for **Sunday, December 7th** for our annual Christmas Smorgasbord. Starting around 4:45pm, meal at 5:10pm. The Sunday school kids will sing, the choir will sing, as well as a few games and

ending the night with the Red Wing Ovation performing around 7pm. Members from both churches are welcome, so invite your friends and bring a dish to share and celebrate the season with us.

Learning & Youth



November brought our Fall-O-Ween-Jesus party. The kids dressed up, played games, felt some gross Halloween-themed items, and squeezed in a snack. We had so much fun that we forgot to take any photos. The kids also sang in church for the first time this Sunday School season.

Schedule

12/07/2025 - Christmas Program Practice

12/14/2025 - Christmas Practice/And Program During Church, Coffee Fellowship to follow.

Sunday School will be off to spend time with family until January 11th.

Thanks,
The Fox's

Performed by the Cross of Christ Sunday School

December



14TH @ 10:30AM

CAMPFIRE CAROLS



A CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

BY JOHN COSPER

Join Us For Coffee Fellowship Following Church



The next WELCA meeting will be on **Wednesday, December 10th 7:00 pm.** **Dahlen Hall.** We will prepare for the January Blood Drive, review the Pie Auction, discuss the Women's Retreat and updates regarding the Spring Event and triennial.

Red Cross Blood Drive: **Our next drive is scheduled for January 2 8:30am -2:30pm.** Schedule your appointment at redcrossblood.org , 800-REDCROSS or use your blood ap. welchmn to schedule an appointment. Thanks to all of our donors and volunteers.



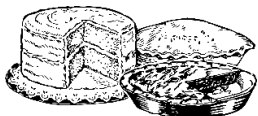
2026 Women's Retreat January 16-18 Dunrovin Christian Brothers Retreat Center near Stillwater.
Theme: Prayer and Praise
Presenter: Theresa Siemers

Come for the weekend or just Saturday (9-3) Weekend, \$230 includes lodging and meals. Saturday, \$65 includes lunch Register at <https://forms.gle/qX8eweesk4AWwmc97>, use a printed form in the back of the sanctuary Or contact Julie Schreifels email julie.schreifels@gmail.com Cell 507-990-7024

2026 Cannon River Spring Event/Salad Luncheon: We will be hosting the spring event and combining it with our annual spring salad luncheon on April 25, 2026. Bruce and Brenda Blair will be presenting the program "Village Partnership for Education" based on their mission in Sierra Leone. The program will also include a singer/musician. In-kind gifts to bring: dry erase markers and erasers, ABC cards, chalk and chalk board erasers, pencils, men's and women's underwear size medium for teachers.

The 13th Triennial Gathering is scheduled for July 16-19, 2026 in Des Moines, Iowa. The theme is "I am Worthy". Registration is now open. Check it out at

<https://www.womenoftheelca.org/new-triennial-event-page> See also the attached Triennial Information sheet. Please let Julie know if you are interested in attending. We will likely travel by charter bus or vans.



PIE AUCTION: *Thank you* to all who brought and bought pies and other items. We will be using the money to help pay the registration fee for those who will be going to the Triennial Gathering

Future Events:

Red Cross Blood Drive: Friday, January 2, 8:30 am–2:30 pm.

Christmas Dinner: December 7, 5:00 pm

Women's Retreat: January 16-18, 2026. Main program on Saturday, Jan. 17, 9:00 am – 3pm

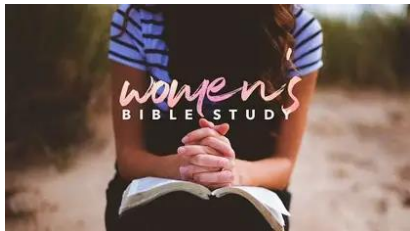
2026 Cannon River Spring Event/Salad Luncheon: April 25, 2026, Cross of Christ

The 13th Triennial Gathering July 16-19, 2026 in Des Moines, Iowa.

***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 meet on **Tuesday, December 9th at 9:00** in Dahlen Hall. We will be starting a new 3 part series on stewardship. Please join us as we explore “what do we treasure” and “how do we tend

our treasure?”. Study guides are provided along with coffee and treats!

Cross of Christ
Council Meeting Minutes
November 11, 2025

Present: Anthony Nemcek, Jim Gustafson, Jeff Meyer, Sherril Bjornson, Kelley Mittelsteadt, Ross Nelson, and Pastor CJ Boettcher. Absent: Oscar Daley

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

The meeting agenda and the October meeting minutes were approved as written.

Unfinished Business:

* Pastor's Report - Pastor CJ's report included information related to the kickoff of the stewardship campaign. Pastor also mentioned a book titled Funding Forward to use as a tool for use in conversations about discernment and revitalization.

*Dahlen Hall Exterior – The Council discussed getting bids for seamless siding from the company that did the garage to ensure an apples to apples comparison. Council also discussed funding for the siding project. A special fund has been designated for donations. Its current balance is just above \$5,000. Council would like to work on fundraising for the project before committing any existing church funds to the project.

New Business:

* December Council person: Ross Nelson.

Duties of the council person of the month were discussed, and information was provided to Council members about what needs to be done before, during, and after service.

*Harvest Festival: Council voted to direct Harvest Festival donations to the Church's operating fund as has been done in prior years.

Committee Reports:

*Finance – The financial secretaries October report was distributed to the Council via email for review.

*Property Management – An issue with the heating system was repaired under warranty.

*Worship & Music – Hops and Harmony will take place at Cannon River Inn. Longest Night Service will occur on December 21st.

*Learning and Youth – Confirmation will be at Cross of Christ on November 12th . There are currently 4 confirmands.

*Service and Witness – A draft was put together of a document to help chairs of the various subcommittees prepare their annual reports. The document provides examples of information to include, such as aspirational reflections, a list of actionable items, suggestions for growth.

*Stewardship – The October 22 event with the representatives of Mahn Funeral Home, ELCA Investment Foundation, and Three Rivers Senior Care was a success. Letters have gone out ahead of the Harvest Festival with information about giving.

*Missions – A drive has kicked off to raise funds for Feed My Starving Children by filling M& M tubes with quarters.

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

The next meeting will be on December 9th at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
James Gustafson
Council Secretary



The Cross of Christ Nominating Committee is seeing individuals looking to serve on the church council. This is a great opportunity to share your time/talent with Cross of Christ.

We are seeking approximately 3 members to serve a term on the church council.

Thank you!

Nominating Committee

Ann Kulla, Deanna Gehloff and Jon Peterson

