



VINJE

witness

APRIL | 2022

LIFE WINS!

The snow and ice are disappearing. The smell of mud hangs in the air as grass turns green and trees bud. Spring is here - the long, cold, dark days of winter are behind us. The changing of seasons brings up favorite memories of the past and a return to beloved activities that winter kept us from. What are your cherished spring activities? At my house, the kids are splashing in puddles and returning to playing outside. I'm excited about Twins baseball (an excitement that usually only lasts for the spring before all hope is lost).

There are signs of new life sprouting up all around us these days. This is happening at Vinje too. It's not just the green grass that is returning, but many of you. The pandemic certainly changed how we worship and how we engage with each other, but in the last few weeks it has been invigorating to see so many Vinje members returning to worship in the sanctuary. Over the last year or so, I've been comparing our average monthly attendance with those numbers from 2019. And in February something happened that had never happened before, and I honestly didn't think would ever happen - our 2022 February attendance was higher than our 2019 attendance! That was even before the start of Lent and even larger number of people coming to Wednesday night worship. Thanks to everyone for being such an important part of Vinje's ministry, these last weeks have shown once again that we are better together.

Sometimes our experiences in life teach us to look forward to these signs of new life. Spring comes around every year. But other times, experience tells us it is impossible. Experience teaches that death wins, that death is final, and that no matter how strong or smart or talented you are, you will eventually succumb to it. The Easter message challenges our experiences. It questions our belief in the ultimate power of death and calls us to believe in new life. And not just a cycle of seasons, but a radical new creation in which the dead live.

As you see signs of new life all around you and as you prepare for Easter, remember that God is still at work in our world. And the focus of God's work hasn't changed. Since the beginning of creation, God has been at work for life - abundant and everlasting life. For God who creates life, who nurtures life, who acts always in service to life, for God, life had to go on. Life couldn't really be life if it only was found in memories after death. It wouldn't be enough for Jesus to only live on through his teachings or in the memories of those who followed him.

It wouldn't be enough for our loved ones to live on only in our memories. God needed more. As Easter proves, a metaphorical or spiritual resurrection isn't enough for God. As Jesus walked out of the tomb that first Easter morning it proved forever that death does not have the final word, but that life wins! And this victory is not for Jesus alone; God shares the triumph of life over death with all of us.

Pastor Justin

Anyone who belongs to
Christ is a new person.
The past is forgotten,
and everything is new."

2 Corinthians 5:17



Remember in Prayer

We would like to check in on you or your loved ones when ill or hospitalized. If you or someone you know is in need of prayer, please let one of the pastors or the church office know.

RECENTLY ILL OR HOSPITALIZED

Mary Nelson, Sonja Westre, Andrew Schriener, Nora Ander, Lane Leedahl, Jeanette Fauchald, Bob Hieronimus, Julene Bredeson, Randy Patton, Kerry Selseth, Lavonne Schow, Darleen Manthey, Dianne Christenson, Cole Woltjer, Merle Berkeland, Shirley Brandt

BEREAVED

Family and friends of Barb Knight Englund following her death on March 3.

Family and friends of Harriet Peterson following her death on March 19.

NEWLY BAPTIZED

Serenity Elizabeth Anne Erbst, daughter of Ryan Erbst and Mary Slinden was baptized on March 13th. Serenity's baptismal sponsors are Jennifer Jensen, Tanner Jensen and Erin Koval.

NEW ARRIVAL

Edyn Saulsbury welcomed a son, Jordan Michael on March 3rd.

VINJE COLUMBARIUM UPDATE

The Church Council approved moving forward with the installation of an above ground columbarium at its January meeting. The columbarium, a receptacle for cremated remains, will be located at the south entrance of the Church in the circular area that is now a shrub garden. The next step is receiving a conditional use permit from the City of Willmar. This is the first columbarium installation in Willmar outside of a cemetery, so the City is researching how to proceed. Once the permit has been granted, more information will be made available to the Church Council and congregation. Project workgroup members are Jan Dahl, Cheryl Schmidt and Tim Ostby.

TACO-IN-A-BAG FUNDRAISER MEAL!

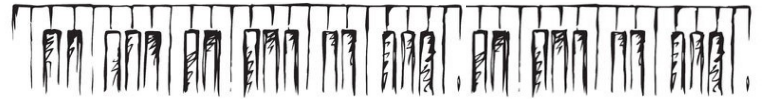
APRIL 6 @ 5PM: TACO IN A BAG

Youth attending summer 2022 mission trips will be serving taco-in-a-bag and treats on Wednesday, April 6th! We look forward to seeing you there!



LOVING ARMS UPDATE

April 4-8th, we will be celebrating the week of the young child! This means lots of fun activities and field trips for our friends! Bowling, movies, The Village and more will keep these kids very busy!



MUSIC NOTES

Karen Wojahn,
Director of Music

PALM SUNDAY REMINDER TO PARENTS

Students in Sunday School and Wednesday Live! will be singing for worship on Palm Sunday, April 10. Their anthem includes six names for Jesus. This has provided great information for discussion during music time. See if you can catch those six names!

GOOD FRIDAY MUSIC FOR MEDITATION & PRAYER

On Good Friday, April 15, there will be twenty minutes of organ music centered on the crucifixion before the 7PM worship service. Plan to come to worship early that evening and meditate on Christ's sacrifice for us through tunes such as "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded," "Ah, Holy Jesus," and "O Lamb of God Most Holy."

EASTER BRASS NEEDED

Do you know someone who plays the trumpet or trombone? We are looking for brass instrumentalists to play for the Easter morning worship services. Contact Karen with your suggestions!

PASTOR DANE TO TAKE A SABBATICAL

As with any profession, time for rest is encouraged and essential. I am pleased to announce that the 2021 Council had previously approved a well-deserved sabbatical for Pastor Dane to begin in May 2022. What is a "sabbatical," you may ask? It is a time of renewal – a chance to step away from day-to-day responsibilities and focus on self-care, spiritual renewal, and family life. It is recommended that pastors be granted a sabbatical every 5-7 years, depending on length of call. It should be noted that neither Pastor Dane nor Pastor Justin have had a sabbatical in each of their 13 years of ministry. The Council has granted Pastor Dane a 3-month sabbatical as he nears completing 5 years of ministry at Vinje (to note – Pastor Justin will be having sabbatical leave the summer of 2023; Pastor Erika recently completed a sabbatical leave in her previous call).

Pastor Dane will be on Sabbatical leave from May 16th – August 15th. He plans to connect with family, spend time in nature, connect with God's creation and do some writing. The Council was excited that with the calling of Pastor Erika, we felt confident in approving this request for Pastor Dane as a way for him to recharge and renew!

Please join me in praying for Pastor Dane's time of renewal as he steps away during the summer of 2022!

EXPLORING VINJE'S HISTORY

This month pastor Andrés asked Marilyn Tiede to share her memories from her and Jim's son Mark's ordination at Vinje 25 years ago. Photo provided by Char Kingstrom.

Vinje Lutheran Church has a wonderful tradition of supporting its youth who go on to post-secondary education. Every year several students at Lutheran colleges receive some scholarship money to help them with their tuition and fees. This gift is also there for seminary students at the ELCA seminaries. In fact, Vinje has provided 100% of the tuition for those from Vinje who go on to prepare for a "called" life as a pastor. It is an affirmation of their call from God to become a minister of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. I know about some of the sons and daughters of Vinje who answered God's call: John Mikkelsen, Brian Fragodt, Peter Nordby, Ryan Habbena, Kerry Selseth, Amy Juel, and our son Mark Tiede.

As a child Mark was energetic, compassionate and fun-loving and no one would have thought he would become an ordained pastor. He did love going to church and sit by his pal Al Hauge who helped him at age 3 press the button to ring the church bell before worship. He was a handful, occasionally, during release time. He and his friends were known to fly paper airplanes from the balcony toward the pulpit dome. When he was ordained at Vinje, after the benediction at the end of the very meaningful service, the choir reminded him of his mischief by throwing paper airplanes at him.

Mark's ordination service was held at Vinje 25 years ago this coming June. Mark asked Pastor Glenn Taibl to be the Ordinator for him here in his home congregation. It was a wonderful festive and devout service, full of red paraments and stoles, heartfelt singing, and a large choir. Many visiting pastors, the bishop of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod, seminary professors, friends and family were present.

Three weeks later, Mark's wife Connie was ordained in her home congregation in New Ulm, MN. They began their work serving the Vining MN parish, followed by Zion Lutheran in Anoka, MN, where Connie still is. Mark is now serving St. John's Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, MN, at the corner of 49th St. and Nicollet Ave. Go hear him preach and greet him from Vinje—he would love that!

"Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go, Lord, where you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart."

TIME, TALENT & GIVING UPDATE

We are grateful for your time, talents and giving. Your generosity helps Vinje to grow and maintain all of its important ministries as we continue to work together to share God's word.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

Vinje is a church who cares about our neighbors, both near and far! Did you know that because of direct gifts from our members, this last month we were able to give away \$2,775 to support the people of Ukraine through Lutheran Disaster Response? We also gave away \$1,500 to the Kandiyohi County Food Shelf to help feed hungry families in our local community. All of these recent gifts support people in need in addition to the almost \$60,000 we plan on giving away every year. Thank you for your generosity in supporting not only our congregation, but those around us! Together, we make a difference!

CREATION CARE CORNER

EARTH DAY IS APRIL 22, 2022

The first Earth Day was celebrated on April 22, 1970, to provide a voice to an emerging environmental consciousness, and putting environmental concerns on the front page.

The Creation Care committee will be giving out free bare root trees, along with instructions for their planting and care, after church on Sunday, April 24. They will also be available to pick up in the parking lot between 11 am and 12 pm that day. The variety of trees offered are Hackberry, Meyers's Spruce, Radiant Crab and Burr Oak.

COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Your Vinje Council has been busy over the last couple of months. Here is what they've been up to.

- 2022 Officers: President Scott Hovland, Vice-President Brad Schmitt, Secretary Lynn Stier, and Treasurer Christina Boike. Angie Hoppe was elected to serve as an at-large member of our Executive Committee.
- In continuing their visioning conversations about the future of Vinje the council has started to focus on worship, outreach ministries, and being a more welcoming and inclusive congregation.
- Work continues on the plan for a columbarium.
- Council toured Vinje's Praise and Play Childcare Center in Spicer and checked out the renovations. Classroom updates are also underway at Loving Arms at Vinje.
- Council discussed the possibility of continuing Wednesday worship service throughout the summer.



PALM SUNDAY BAKE SALE!

Vinje youth will be hosting a bake sale after worship on Palm Sunday! Bring goodies to donate (wrapped and ready for sale) or buy goodies to enjoy! Your free will donations support youth mission trips! Donated cookies, bars, breads, cupcakes or pies would be greatly appreciated and can be dropped off before worship on Sunday.



QUILTING DATES FOR APRIL

Vinje Quilters will meet on April 7th & 21st at 9am.



	FEBRUARY	YTD
Budgeted Expenses	\$69,646	\$139,292
Actual Expenses	\$71,673	\$134,037
	\$1,988	(\$5,255)
Anticipated Income	\$69,646	\$139,292
Actual Income	\$73,922	\$145,204
	\$4,276	\$5,912

VINJE LUTHERAN CHURCH
1101 WILLMAR AVENUE SW
WILLMAR MN 56201

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{ bible studies }

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

EVERY TUESDAY | 10 AM | VINJE

NAOMI/SARAH CIRCLE

TUESDAY, APRIL 5 | 2 PM | VINJE

VINJE ON TAP

MONDAY, APRIL 11 | 7 PM | RUFF'S

ELIZABETH CIRCLE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13 | 8:30 AM | CAROL PARKER'S HOME

WOMEN, WINE & THE WORD

MONDAY, APRIL 18 | 6:30 PM | CRYSTAL LENZ'S HOME-7008 S. ELKHORN DRIVE, SPICER, MN

Pastor Justin Ask pastorjustin@vinjechurch.com

Pastor Dane Skilbred pastordane@vinjechurch.com

Pastor Erika Buller pastorerika@vinjechurch.com

Visitation Pastor Andres Albertsen andresa@vinjechurch.com

Vicar Hope Johnson hopej@vinjechurch.com

Director of Music Karen Wojahn karenw@vinjechurch.com

Office Manager Tanya Schunk tanyas@vinjechurch.com

Ministry Associate Melissa Hansen melissah@vinjechurch.com

Communications Director Sara Bos sarab@vinjechurch.com

Custodian Ron Nordby

Loving Arms Child Care Center Director Chris Cortez chrisc@vinjechurch.com

CHURCH ON THE GO!

RADIO Listen on Sundays at 9:30 am on KWLM, 1340 AM.

INTERNET Watch anytime! (go to youtube.com and search Vinje Willmar).

TV Watch local access channel, WRAC 8/180, Sundays at 2:30 pm and 8:30 pm, Tuesdays at 8 am and 5 pm or Saturdays at 6 pm.