



VINJE

witness

DECEMBER | 2021

As a kid, I looked forward to Christmas every year. Every Christmas Eve we would gather at my grandparents' home with all the cousins and would eat large amounts of Christmas goodies (chocolate covered coconut balls were the best) before we were all required to put together some kind of "Christmas pageant." After that someone would read the Christmas story from Luke's Gospel. Then everyone would sing Christmas songs, in which we had to end on "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." Then came what I could barely wait for... presents! The rest of the holiday barely mattered. Christmas Day had a traditional brunch and dinner, but who cared! -- I still had my toys.

So much has changed in those traditions as time has passed. When Christmas Eve moved to my cousin's house in the Twin

Cities and was no longer at Grandma and Grandpa's, my immediate family started our own celebration on the 23rd of December. When I moved to Georgia things changed even more as I wasn't attending any of those traditional gatherings. Seyward and I started our own tradition of going to IHOP for Christmas Day brunch since we were two tired pastors without family in the area. Since we've moved back to Minnesota, our house has become a gathering place for my family, and because of worship schedules on Christmas Eve we have been forced to do the unthinkable: we now open presents on Christmas Day (for the record, Seyward's family has always done this, and they are wrong. Gifts should be opened on Christmas Eve). Thankfully there are still chocolate covered coconut balls, but so much of what seemed necessary about Christmas has changed over time. Last year, Christmas was significantly different for many of us as Covid changed how we celebrated the holiday – but the promise of God with us was not changed. Nor will that promise be any different this year.

How about you? What traditions do you value as part of Christmas celebrations? How have those traditions changed over time? Do they matter more now? Has the meaning behind the traditions changed over time? With Christmas now on the

horizon, we will be spending time in worship exploring our many traditions with our worship theme, "All I Want for Christmas." It can be hard to imagine Christmas without certain things: decorations, gifts, music, food, and family. However, the first celebration of Christmas in the manger of Bethlehem was vastly different from our current gatherings. Join us for worship as we connect these important holiday traditions with our celebration of Jesus' birth. Join us as we ask questions like: how can lefse or an antique ornament help us recognize God's presence in our lives?

As you prepare for Christmas, I hope your celebration is filled with meaningful traditions that remind you that no matter what changes take place in our lives, God's faithfulness to us is as real today as it was in Bethlehem on the first Christmas.

-Pastor Justin



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, Merle Berkeland, Ernie Carlson, Andrew Schriener, Kathy Reishus, Nora Ander, Lynn Peterson

BEREAVED

Jonathan, Teresa and Nicholas Runke following the death of Teresa's father.

Marlyn and Lorna Bahl and family following the death of Lorna's brother-in-law, Don on November 3rd.

Family and friends of Phyllis Kamstra following her death on November 11.

Reta James and family following the death of Rick James and November 15.

NEWLY BAPTIZED

William Irvin Boone, son of Josh and Erika Boone was baptized November 14, 2021. William's sponsors are Karl Olson III, Matt Deering, Jennifer Rasansen and Maira Olson.

Nolan Jerome Paulson, son of Joseph & Renee Paulson was baptized November 21, 2021. Nolan's sponsors are Christopher and Celyst Braaten and Thomas and Jennifer Paulson.

USHERS NEEDED. CAN YOU HELP?

We are in dire need of Sunday ushers. If you attend Sunday worship regularly (or even occasionally), we'd love for you to sign up to help usher! Please call the church office at 320.235.1441 and ask for Melissa Hansen or email her at melissash@vinjchurch.com to learn more or to find a date or two on which you can help! Thank you!

COLUMBARIUM INFO MEETING

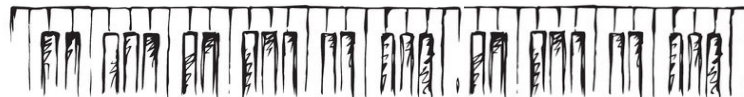
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12 FOLLOWING WORSHIP
FELLOWSHIP HALL (ZOOM OPTION AVAILABLE)**

If you'd like to learn more about the potential of a Vinje columbarium, please join Tim Ostby and a representative from Eickhof Columbaria Inc. for an informational meeting after worship. The Zoom meeting link will be sent in the weekly email on December 7.



LOVING ARMS UPDATE

November was all things turkeys...cute turkey hats for our friends, turkey painting, feathers, and even turkeys in disguise!



MUSIC NOTES

Karen Wojahn,
Director of Music

What does your Director of Music do during the week? Make music with Vinje's youngest!

Every Tuesday morning, one of the Pastors and I meet with the children from Loving Arms to have a weekly Chapel time. A Bible story is told, prayers are raised and songs are sung together in a mini-worship service appropriate for 3-5 year olds. For many of those children, hearing Bible stories during Chapel time may be the only time they learn about God's care for His people through the Old Testament and the life and love of Jesus. On Tuesdays, I also go to the Toddler classroom to sing songs of faith with those little ones.

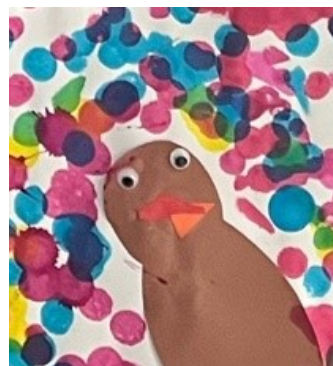
On Wednesday morning, the Loving Arms children meet with me again to do more singing and learn about our faith. Music is a wonderful vehicle for teaching the faith and giving messages that will hopefully take root in their souls. It is my hope that some day ahead, when these children are faced with challenges or uncertainties, the message that "God loves and cares for you" will echo in their minds from the songs we are singing now. These music sessions end with a rousing arrangement of "Be strong and courageous and bold...Away with your fears, for God will be near...He's with you wherever you go!"

Later on Wednesdays, the music room is filled with students attending Wednesday Live! Besides learning songs to share in worship, the third - fifth graders have been experimenting with rhythm instruments and hand chimes. For the first few weeks this fall, we practiced a chant about Creation using different rhythms for drums, egg shakers, finger cymbals, tambourines and triangles. We are currently working with hand chimes to play the melodies of familiar Christmas carols and chords that will accompany a Christmas song.

If you would ever like to observe one of these sessions, let me know. Music ministry is alive and well at Vinje!

GOOD THINGS HAPPENING HERE...

Naomi Sarah Circle purchased supplies, packed, and delivered Lutheran World Relief Personal Care Kits to be used in times of disaster such as hurricanes and tornadoes last week! Hats off to them for their hard work and generosity!



EXPLORING VINJE'S HISTORY

This month pastor Andrés reached out to Susan (Sue) Olson Draheim, daughter of Gerald and Deloris Olson. He asked her to share her memories from the Vinje church in uptown Willmar.

I can remember, with love, the former Vinje Lutheran Church, in uptown Willmar, across from the courthouse and the old library. I remember climbing the steps on Sunday morning, with Mom, Dad, and my two brothers, all of us invariably dressed in our Sunday finery, and following Mom and Dad into a pew. They always sat between us kids, so no tomfoolery went on during worship.

I remember the dark wood altar area, with the huge painting of Jesus behind the altar that became almost alive when the seven candles on each side of the altar rail were lit, and the soft carpet on the floor. We were not able to go up by the altar unless we were there for a Sunday School program.

During worship, we were not able to issue a sound, unless we were singing. When my youngest brother was old enough, he sat between Mom and Dad, and ate Cheerios to keep him quiet. There was a large, dark balcony area used by the choir, up in the back of the pews. We, as a family, sat there once, as we got to church late, and all else was full.

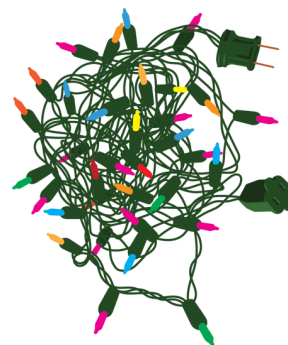
After church, we kids went to Sunday School in the building just east of the church. I can remember having Fern Hauge for an early teacher. Sunday School attendance was always expected of us, without any exceptions! Or complaining!

Christmas at "Old Vinje" was lovely. As a first grader, having Fern Hauge for a teacher, we had to memorize a Bible verse for our Christmas program. As it would happen, someone forgot theirs! Good thing that I had memorized two, at my mother's request! The church was so lovely, decorated with greenery and candles, but we had to watch young children, so they didn't get burned.

Vinje in uptown Willmar was a beautiful church and it held a large amount of people. We have had a lot of wonderful pastors, and I missed Vinje the years I was away from Willmar. I'm glad to be back!



CREATION CARE CORNER



We will once again be providing a bin in the entry way in which you can leave Christmas lights to be recycled. Lights will be collected through the end of January.

Holiday Recycle Tips:

- Wrap gifts in non-metallic paper so it can be recycled.
- Make recycling bins accessible during gatherings.
- Consider looking beyond "goods" as gifts....concert tickets, charity donations or a girls day out, for example.
- Shop locally whenever possible to use less cardboard and emissions.

COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

At the November 22 meeting the Vinje Council:

- Engaged in the first round of strategic planning for Vinje's future.
- Entered into a new three-year agreement with Saint John's in Raymond. The agreement is amended to reflect that no pastor will live in the St John's parsonage.
- Discussed building projects including the possibility of a columbarium.
- Reviewed updates on the stewardship campaign, budgeting process, and Covid.

NO WORSHIP ON DECEMBER 22ND

Just a reminder that on Wednesday, December 22nd we will NOT have a meal, worship, choirs, confirmation or youth group. We WILL have Wednesday Live!



DECEMBER QUILTING DATES

Vinje Quilters will meet once in December on the 9th at 9 am. We will not meet in January or February. We will meet again in March on the 10th and 24th. All are welcome! No experience is needed.

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.

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Thank you for supporting the mission and ministry of Vinje Lutheran Church! We are wrapping up our Fall financial stewardship campaign as we speak and appreciate all of you who have already filled out a pledge card or who have signed up for electronic giving. Doing so allows for our church leadership to make prayerful and informed decisions about how we will focus our ministries moving forward. If you haven't filled out a pledge card, it's not too late! We'd love to hear from you. Thank you for all the ways you give of yourself within our congregation and beyond. We are so grateful for you and for the many ways we get to partner together in doing God's work!!



	OCTOBER	YTD
Budgeted Expenses	\$62,615	\$626,150
Actual Expenses	\$63,482	\$616,386
	(\$867)	\$9,764
Anticipated Income	\$62,615	\$626,150
Actual Income	\$50,648	\$572,231
	(\$11,967)	(\$53,919)

VINJE LUTHERAN CHURCH
1101 WILLMAR AVENUE SW
WILLMAR MN 56201

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LIGHT OF CHRISTMAS

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, we want to share the joys of the season with others in the community. This year contributions to the Light of Christmas funds will once again be used to assemble gifts and food baskets for families in our community. In the past we have also collected donations for poinsettias, trees, wreaths, and other Christmas decorations. Contributions can be placed in the offering plate or mailed or delivered to the church office by December 9th. Also, if you know of someone with specific needs in our community please contact Melissa Hansen at melissah@vinjchurch.com.



{ bible studies }

NAOMI/SARAH CIRCLE

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7 | 2 PM | McMILLIAN'S

ELIZABETH CIRCLE

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

VINJE ON TAP

NOT MEETING THIS MONTH.
JOIN US IN JANUARY!

WOMEN, WINE & THE WORD

NOT MEETING THIS MONTH.
JOIN US IN JANUARY!


Pastor Justin Ask pastorjustin@vinjchurch.com
Pastor Dane Skilbred pastordane@vinjchurch.com
Visitation Pastor Andres Albertsen andresa@vinjchurch.com
Vicar Hope Johnson hopej@vinjchurch.com
Director of Music Karen Wojahn karenw@vinjchurch.com
Office Manager Tanya Schunk tanyas@vinjchurch.com
Ministry Associate Melissa Hansen melissah@vinjchurch.com
Communications Director Sara Bos sarab@vinjchurch.com
Custodian Ron Nordby
Loving Arms Child Care Center Director Chris Cortez chrisc@vinjchurch.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.

 (320) 235-1441

 vinjchurch.com

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