

Cross Connection



Growing Together

January
2026

Cross Lutheran

Church & School

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Our mission:

**Bring people to
Christ.**

**Teach Christians
to be disciples.**

**Send disciples to
reach the world.**

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Pr. Kevin Kaiser was born in Bellevue, OH and grew up in Cottage Grove, MN. As a youth, he was very active in school band and church activities. To this day, he serves the church and has a basement full of percussion instruments. He is a graduate of Concordia College in Moorhead, MN (B.A. in Family Studies and Religion) and Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN (Master of Divinity). He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Ministry degree from the Institute of Lutheran Theology in Brookings, SD. He was ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 2008, and was certified to serve in the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) earlier this year.

Pr. Kevin comes to us from Calvary Lutheran Church in Minong, WI, where he has served since 2019. Calvary called Pr. Kevin as they emerged from a significant conflict. Pr. Kevin provided leadership as Calvary refocused on solid preaching and worship, rebuilt trust, and developed a reputation for hospitality and generosity. Prior to Calvary, he served small congregations in the Upper Peninsula. He also served as a student minister in Minnesota, South Dakota and Alaska. He is also a percussionist, cook, and a student of Kung Fu. Some at Cross Lutheran have asked whether or not he hunts. He does not hunt (yet), but has lots of experience cooking for hunters, even helping a few young hunters learn to enjoy the venison they will harvest.

Pr. Kevin is married to Steffany, whom he met while serving her church in Republic, MI. They married in 2014, and their son William was born in 2015. Steffany holds degrees from Suomi College in Hancock, MI and the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point. She most recently worked as a fitness center housekeeper and volunteered as Calvary's Sunday School teacher and Vacation Bible School director. She loves to work and volunteer in ways that are out of the spotlight. She is also the only one in the family who is a devoted fan to a professional sports team. (Go Red Wings!) William will enroll at Cross Lutheran School as a 4th-grader. He enjoys basketball, karate and playing Roblox. Their household has recently grown to include Priscilla Martti (Steffany's mom), and Alex (the family dog). The whole family enjoys cheering on school sports, thrift shopping, BINGO, reading, and trying new restaurants. Their fall seasons are usually spent canning pickles and apples.

The Kaisers send their gratitude for Cross' incredible generosity and hospitality during this transition. January will be here before we know it!



Preparing for Worship

January 4 Second Sunday after Christmas

1R – 1 King 3:4-15, P – Psalm 119:97-104, 2R – Ephesians 1:3-14, G - Luke 2:40-52

January 11 Baptism of Our Lord

1R - Isiah 42:1-9, P – Psalm 29, 2R – Romans , G – Matthew 3:13-17

January 18 Second Sunday after the Epiphany

1R - Isaiah 49:1-7, P - Psalm 40: 1-11, 2R - 1 Corinthians 1:1-9, G - John 1:29-42a

January 25

1R - Isaiah 9:1-4 P - Psalm 27:1-9 (10-14) 2R - Matthew 4:12-25



BIRTHDAYS

1/2 James Laursen
Jeremy Siewert
1/3 Lisa Gray
Philip Schadd
1/4 Paul Schadd
1/5 Shirley Schuett
1/7 Kyle Yackle
1/8 Abigail Walker
1/9 Miranda Hartel
Martin Sturm
1/10 Mary Degg
Kenneth Licht
Dana Young
1/11 Jessica Hass
Michelle Walsh
1/12 LuAnne Sokolowski
1/17 Karen Anklam
Adam Rosenthal
1/19 Dale Schuette
1/20 Denson Smith
1/21 Vickie Forster
1/22 Christopher Papkey
Matthew Papkey
1/23 Eugene Parsell
1/24 Brenda Smith
Cordelia Trost
1/25 Andrew Pionk
Zachary Pionk
Willow Rice
1/26 Lori McKenzie
1/28 Heather Koroleski

1/29 David Elftman
Connie Herford
Tonja Nelson
1/31 Gary Forster
Marjorie King

ANNIVERSARIES

THOSE IN NEED OF CONTINUED PRAYER

Carol Diener, Dawn Hendricks, Bernice Shupe, Connie Eden, Beth Elston, Gene Parsell, Tim Voss, Mike Eden, Terry Sturm, Clark Elftman, Hannah Britt, John Finneren, Tom Shupe, Whitney Peyerl, Joe Stodola, Matt Edler, Larry Adams, Al Collison, Susan Beller, Hope Kittel, Noah Adams, Kay Schuette, Corey Messing, Kevin Faupel, Ezra Sturm, Robert Blunt, Marilyn Blunt, Alan Licht, Richard Baranski, Alan Licht, Richard Baranski.

CROSS CHURCH SHUT INS

Vivian Buschlen, Cordelia Trost, Roberta Danks, Marvin Trost. Please keep them in your prayers.

THOSE IN SERVICE OF OUR COUNTRY

Nicholas Swanson (US Air Force)



Greetings Cross Lutheran Church!

My name is Jenny Turner and I am the art teacher here at Cross Lutheran School. This is my 4th year teaching at Cross, but I have been teaching art in some way or another, off and on, since 2000. Cross students see me on Mondays and Wednesdays either in their classroom or the gym. We explore all kinds of projects, mediums, and art concepts, and if you are a parent, you have seen some of these projects come home with your student. I wanted to share why art is important in the classroom, both academically and spiritually.

Art involves using both sides of the brain. The right brain, which is considered our creative brain, uses skills like visualization, imagination, and emotions. Students can watch their ideas come to life or just "play" with colors and mediums, such as paint, to show how they may be feeling. Our left side of the brain, or our logical brain, also contributes to art education by using skills such as logic and sequencing, which leads to observation, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Students have to make decisions along the way to make their artwork come together, many times by trial and error. Art in education provides academic excellence, leading to fewer discipline problems, higher attendance, graduation rates, and better test scores. It also boosts confidence by giving students a safe space to experiment and take risks. It teaches students to appreciate concepts and ideas from many cultures and people groups, which gives them a sense of empathy and a platform for discussions of differing ideas. Art often encourages collaboration, cooperation, and communication when students have to work together to create a project. Furthermore, art allows for creativity, a vital skill in the workforce and everyday life.

Creativity is what leads me to the spiritual importance of art. The book of Genesis tells us that God created all things. I think Christians can agree that God is the ultimate creative creator. The human body alone shows off his creativity and imagination. The thought he put into how our bodies work—the interconnectedness and many intricacies—display his power and glory. Genesis 1:27 says, "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." This verse tells us that we were made in God's image and because of this, we can conclude that we, too, were made to create. God valued creativity so much that in Exodus 31:1-5, it tells us that the first person given the Holy Spirit was an artist. His name was Bezalel and he was filled "with the spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge, and with all kinds of skills—to make artistic designs" when building the Tent of Meeting and the Ark of the Covenant. Creativity comes in many forms, from fine art, singing, dancing, composing, woodworking, gardening, sewing, baking and many more. I believe that God gives us the ability to create to provide another connection between him and ourselves. It is a connection we can use not only as an act of service to others, but also an act of worship to the Lord. This is why art and creativity are so important to instill in our students at a young age, while they are without inhibitions or the fear of failure. They can feel the power and love of God while they are creating, whether they are conscious of it or not. As an artist, I would also encourage you as a church body to explore your creative side and feel the connection and closeness that you have with your Creator. Think of where your creative strengths lie (and you all have them) and use your creative time as a personal time of worship, just as you would singing or praying. No one even needs to see what you do.

The importance is found in the time spent with the Lord, the ultimate Creator. - Jenny Turner

January Calendar

- 1/5 School Resumes
- 1/9 Robotics (at Ubly)
- 1/10 Basketball Tournament
- 1/16 1/2 day of School
- 1/19 NO SCHOOL
- 1/23 Robotics (at Harbor Beach)
- 1/25 Students Sing in Church



In memory of

Harold Deering:

Shirley A. Deering to the
Church Building

Mr. & Mrs. Stueck:

Shirley A. Deering to the
Church Building

Ed & Viola Schuette:

Dorothy Thummel to
School Tuition

Robert Tate:

Thomas & Bernice Shupe
to General Fund
Sheila Yackle to General
Fund

Mark Your Calendar!!!

The Huron County
Right to Life is once again
sponsoring a FREE Pro-life
Teen Rally at Bad Axe Middle
School.

It will be held on Sunday, March 15, 2026, from 2pm-5pm, with registration at 1:30pm. Lunch, giveaways, and a free t-shirt will be given to every rally attendee.

There will be more information to follow regarding pre-registering. Come learn what being pro-life is all about!!!

SAVE THE DATE- CROSS FISH FRY!

The date is Friday, March 20, 2026 and there are lots of roles to fill! How can you help?

Placing flyers in Pigeon, Bay Port, Caseville, Elkton, Bad Axe, Sebewaing, and surrounding areas and businesses. Text Leanne where you are posting them.

Donations for fish, beans, oil, potatoes, cole-slaw, paper products, and drinks.

We need someone or a few people working together to be in charge of decorating tables. Simple is good!

We need desserts, some packaged for take outs. (We are known for our wonderful selection!) There will be sign-up sheets on the welcome desk in the overflow.

Lots of help is needed with prep the day before, set-up the day of meal, serving and take out stations, gym area, and

clean-up after the event. Sign up sheets will be in the church overflow in February.

Come, bring your family, invite your friends and community, and enjoy the fellowship and meal!

If there are any businesses or persons that would like to donate, we will have a thank you printed as recognition of a donation or you can request to be anonymous.

Call or text Leanne Smith at 989-553-4241.

In the past there have been many hands involved in this project and it has been a joy to see this event come together with so many working together in the Body of Christ. Proceeds for this event have been disbursed to Youth, Building Fund, General Fund, School, Daycare, Scholarship Fund, Hot Lunch, and Capital Improvement Fund.

**Blessings on the Journey,
Leanne Smith**



CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

COUNCIL MINUTES

Tuesday, November 11, 2025

Attending: Kim Sears, Kim Delpiere, Kim Fritz, John Smith, John Trowbridge, Phil Schadd, Kevin Stachowiak, Al Licht, Josh Barry, Peter Shupe

Guests: Kathy Azarovitz, David Faupel, Miki Thick, Norm Nelson

Call to Order: President John Smith called meeting to order with a devotion (Matthew 9:35-38), and prayer.

Approval of Agenda: 1st motion made by Kevin S., 2nd by Al L. Motion approved

Approval of October council minutes: Wrong name put in notes. David Faupel instead of Kevin Faupel. 1st motion to approve by Al L., 2nd by Josh Barry. Motion approved.

Special Meeting Minutes: 1st motion to approve made by Kevin S., 2nd Kim S. Motion approved.

Sunday Congregational Minutes: 1st motion to approve made by Al L., 2nd Josh Barry. Motion approved.

Guest: Kathy A. Call Committee and Council thanked for all the work that they have done to secure a new pastor. Call Committee will move into a Transition Committee. To help Pastor Kaiser, with his adapting to the new church and area, to which they have moved. Installation Sunday and Evaluation of Pastor, was tabled until later date. Motion was made by Al L., to have the Call Committee moved to a Transition Committee. 2nd by John T. Motion approved by council.

Presidents Report: John S.- Saturday, he had a zoom meeting with Pastor Abbott. No shut-in visits, been extremely busy. Plans to begin again soon. Stewardship to have envelopes for the new members in the new year.

School Principal Report: David F.-Recently, the school lost 2 students. The first of the new year will gain the Pastors son. Nov. 11 th , School had a service for the Veterans. John S., it was an awesome program. Nov. 14 th , Thanksgiving Family dinner. Nov. 21., Robotic Tournament. School will be off the whole week of Thanksgiving. Part time custodian has been hired, Noah Young. He's been working 15 hrs. He's doing a great job. Marcine has been covering the rest of the hours. She is doing beyond her contract hours, training of the part time custodian. We will be paying her for the extra hours a week. It should be three weeks' time. Motion made by Kevin S., 2nd Al L. Motion approved.

Early Childhood Center: Miki Thick- No new issues, things going well. Still looking for 2-3 staff members.

Communications Secretary: Kim F.- No New Issues

Treasurer Report: Kim S.- budget report Beginning balance, for Oct. 2025, \$143,059.74. Ending balance \$142,903.11. Motion to approve Kim D., 2 nd Al L. Motion approved.

School Board President: Kevin S.-David F. has stated all news. Kevin would like to form a Task Force to put together a 5yr. plan for the church. Kevin would like to see it started in January of 2026. He asked for some volunteers from the council. Motion made by John T., 2 nd by Kim D. Motion approved. Volunteers from the council are, Kim D., John T., Phil S., Kim S., John S.

Trustees Reports

Properties: Al L. - A group got together to install the door security latches.

Worship/Music: John T.- Advent and Christmas worships-Schedule is as follows:

- Sunday, 12/21 – 9:30am Includes Children's Program during the sermon time.
- Wednesday, 12/24-Christmas Eve Candlelight -6:30 pm.
- Thursday, 12/25-Christmas Day-9:30 am.
- Sunday, 12/28-Christmas Hymn Sing included in service-9:30 am.

Bulletin covers tabled until Jan 2026.

Stewardship: Peter Shupe and Norm Nelson- Norm handed out a sheet explaining Offering by Fund. Which shows how money was distributed through the specifications on the giving envelopes.

Mission/Outreach: Kim D.- the group met last week, paid for bulletin covers. They received a note of Thank You from Marge Hall, at the food pantry, for the collections of goods. Also for the monetary gift, of \$500.00, was given by the Mission Outreach group. Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes were put together on Sunday, 11-9, after church service. Followed by a coffee hour. Lori Smith is busy with card ministry. A motion was made by Krisie J. and seconded by Tonja N. to purchase 35 Advent calendars for the children of the congregation and 150 Christmas cards for members of the congregation. Motion carried. The calendars will be given to the children on November 23 at church. Nancy H. made a motion to donate \$400.00 to Safe Place Women's Shelter of Bad Axe. Seconded by Lorraine L. Motion carried. Garage Sale dates set for 2026. It will be May 30-June 6, 2026. Sale days will be Thursday June 4 through Saturday June 6.

Parish Life: No meeting held

Youth: Josh B.-Youth events 11/30, titled Looking Around the Stable, building relationships, will be held each Sunday at 4:00pm. Dec 14th quilters will be tying quilts. Dec. 7th will be First communion with 5 persons signed up for it. A thank You to all for helping with the Sunday School. There has been 20 children on a regular basis. Budget for 2026 was presented by Phil Schadd. Motion to give staff a 2% wage increase, made by Kevin S. seconded by Kim S. Motion approved.

Old Business: John S.- Electronic sign at same place, getting it to work. Its in need of a CAT5 wire to run yet. Gym door repairs have been completed. New smoke alarms have been placed at the parsonage. Washer/Dryer for parsonage has been approved to be purchased and delivered. Kathy Azarovitz will take care of this. New computer for sound system is needed. About \$500.00 for a new one. Discussion tabled until next month. January 4th, 2026, will be first Sunday for Pastor Kevin Kaiser to preach.

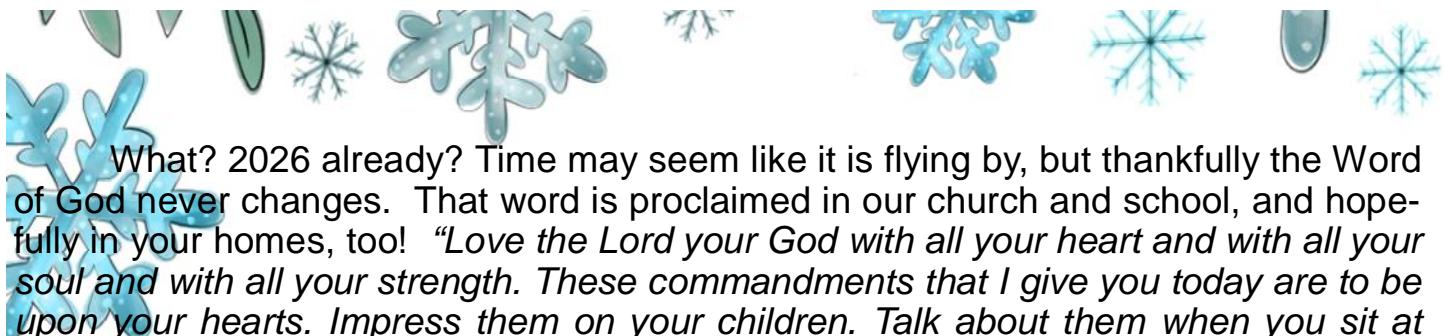
New Business: John S.-A Thank you card received from Pastor Kevin Kaiser, for the great meeting and showing him and his family around the area while visiting. Everyone so kind and friendly. They are excited about the church and school.

Motion to close meeting made by Peter S. Seconded by Al L. Motion approved.

The Lords Prayer was said by all for the closing.

Respectfully submitted by Kim Fritz





What? 2026 already? Time may seem like it is flying by, but thankfully the Word of God never changes. That word is proclaimed in our church and school, and hopefully in your homes, too! *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”* Deuteronomy 6:6-7

We have had great attendance in Sunday School lately. I am so thankful for all who sign up to teach our children to *“love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength”*. Parents and grandparents, **keep bringing them to Sunday School.** It is not just preparation for a Christmas program. Sunday School is learning about God’s love for us and building a foundation in God’s Word. Kids learn about God’s work of salvation through Jesus. We want God’s Word to be impressed upon their hearts.

We want you to talk about God when you sit at home or ride in your car or when you lie down and when you get up. There are so many opportunities for dialog and prayer. Take advantage of those opportunities!

Coming up on Sunday, January 4 will be an opportunity for fellowship, food, and fun with our youth! **All are invited to play and teach our youth how to play Eu-chre.** Please join us on **January 4 from 4:30-6pm** in the gym! You are welcome to bring a treat to share if you’d like. As always, friends are welcome, too!

During the months of January and February, we’d like to try Open Gym on Sundays from 4:30-6ish. This time could include board/card games and the gym would be divided into sections for different ages/activities. It would not be a time when all the equipment is taken out and kids simply run rampant. It’s a time for fellowship, working on skills, laughter, and fun. My vision is to build relationships because people go where they have built relationships. Open Gym would have something to do for all ages and interests. This also presents opportunities for someone to supervise these activities. PLEASE consider helping on one or more Sundays.

As we enter 2026, be engaged in some way at Cross Lutheran Church and School. As we build on our relationship with our Lord, may we also build relationships with each other, our children, and youth. Show them the love of the Lord. Greet them. Pray for them. Speak with them. Love them as the Lord, your God, loves you!

In His Love,
Gwynne Barry
Ministry of Youth and Education

Cross Lutheran School Board Minutes from:

December 4th, 2025

(To be approved at the January Meeting)

Members present: David Faupel, President Kevin Stachowiak, CEA Rep. Katie Wilson, Non-Member Rep. Rita Herford, Secretary Rebecca Yackle, and New Member/ Treasurer Whitney Peyerl. Absent: Vice President Eileen Johnson

The meeting was called to order by Kevin Stachowiak at 5:26pm. David Faupel led us in an opening prayer.

Agenda: A motion was made by Katie Wilson and seconded by Rita Herford to accept the agenda. The motion passed.

Minutes: A motion was made by Rita Herford and seconded by Katie Wilson to approve the minutes from October 30th, 2025. The motion passed.

Guest Presentations: None

Treasurers' Report:

School Balance: \$48,770.41

CEA/PTO: \$25,031.96

Hot Lunch: \$3,354.09

CEA President's Report: The Christmas Fair is on December 12th. We have several donations already but need more. Caroling with the Church, School and Day-care is December 16th. Walsh's Meat sales went good. About half the families designated funds earned towards tuition and half towards the CEA funds. Lindsay and Rita are putting together the donation packets for the Winter Dinner Auction. Planning is well underway. December 13th the finishing of the gym walls will be started. The new sign up sheets for volunteers for CEA events are working well.

Principal's Report:

2025-2026 Enrollment: 60

DK:3 KDG:11 1st:4 2nd:7 3rd:7

4th:7 5th:7 6th:6 7th:4 8th:4

The Robotics Tournament at Cross went well.

Calendar: Dec. 12 - Christmas Fair

Dec. 16 - Caroling

Dec. 18 - Christmas Palooza, 1:00 & 6:30 p.m.

Dec. 19 - ½ Day

Dec. 22 - Jan. 2 - Christmas Break

Old Business: Lunch Visitor Policy - No policy needed at this time.

Water Softener - Discussed different quotes. Rita Herford made a motion to pay for the salt from the annual fund once CEA purchases the softener. Whitney Peyerck seconded.

Motion passed.

Continuous Enrollment - Tuition Increases for 2026-2027: A discussion took place about increases and wording of documents. Rita Herford made a motion to increase tuition by \$50 for the first child and \$100 for each additional child, and Katie Wilson seconded it. Motion passed.

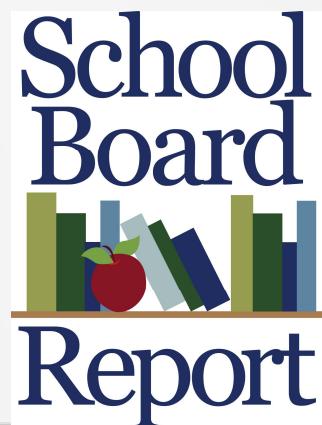
New Business: Safety Grant - A motion was made by Rita Herford and seconded by Katie Wilson to opt into the 31aa Safety Grant. Motion passed.

Other Business: 5 Year Goals/Plans - Discussed how the church is putting a group together to start their 5 year plan which in turn will help the school finalize their 5 year plans. This will help everything be more unified. Will discuss more next month.

Katie Wilson made a motion and was seconded by Rita Herford to adjourn the meeting at 7:21pm. Motion passed.

We ended with the Lord's Prayer.

The next meeting is Thursday January 8th, 2026 at 5:30pm.



Mission Outreach Ministry

December 3, 2025

The meeting of the Mission Outreach Ministry was called to order at 1 p.m. by President Krisie Janke.

Those in attendance were Kim Delpiere, Tonja Nelson, Krisie Janke, Maureen Reibling, Lori Smith, Lorraine LePage, and church council president, John Smith.

A prayer was given by Krisie.

The secretary's report was read. Krisie made a motion to accept the minutes and Kim seconded it.

The treasure report was presented. Krisie made a motion to pay Lori for the Advent calendars and Christmas cards she purchased. The motion was seconded by Kim. Motion passed. A motion was made in October for Mission Outreach to purchase a washer and dryer for the church parsonage. After more discussion on this, the group had a motion by Kim and seconded by Maureen to rescind that motion. Motion carried. A new motion was made by Maureen and seconded by Tonja that our group would donate up to \$1500.00 to the church's general fund to offset the cost of the parsonage washer and dryer. Motion carried.

John stated that someone dropped two used bikes off at Cross Church to be given to anyone who could use a bike. Anyone who would like them should contact John.

The new member packets were put together. Some are being stored on the welcome desk and will be handed out to visitors.

The OCC went well. 247 boxed were packed and shipped.

The food pantry collection went well. The food was packed and delivered. Please continue to donate as there is still a great need. A clothing drive is also taking place so nice, clean clothes may also be dropped off at the food pantry.

Lori sent out 8 cards to the shut-ins for Thanksgiving and several other cards for various reasons.

The outdoor sign is working but does need a wire run to it from the church so it can communicate with the church office. John will be contacting Matt Zimmerman and get an estimate on time and cost to do this. Kim made a motion that we will absorb the cost up to \$1000.00, which will go to the church's general fund. Maureen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Coffee hour for us is December 21. Maureen, Kim, Tonja and Lori are in charge of snacks.

2026 projects:

- Bulletin covers - Kim will ask council if they are willing to pay \$9.99/ per week to continue with the new bulletin covers.**
- New Mission Outreach secretary.**
- New membership directory.**
- NALC collection in Spring.**

Our next meeting will be January 7, 2026.

With no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

**Respectfully submitted,
Tonja Nelson**

January 2026

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--------|---------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------|--|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| ***** NO SCHOOL ***** | | | | | | |
| 4 SS 845am Service 930am Euchre 4:30 - 6 pm | 5 | 6 Worship & Music 5:30 pm | 7 Chapel 8:05am Mission Outreach 6:30 pm Bible Study 6pm | 8 Quilters 1pm School Board 5:30 pm | 9 Robotics @ Ubly | Basketball Tournament Taking Decorations Down |
| 11 SS 845am Service 930am Open Gym 4:30 - 6 pm | 12 | 13 | 14 Chapel 8:05am Bible Study 6pm | 15 Jean Quilts 1pm | 16 1/2 Day of School | 17 |
| 18 SS & Children's Program Service 930am Open Gym 4:30 - 6 pm | 19 | 20 | 21 Chapel 8:05 am Bible Study 6pm | 22 Quilters 1 pm | 23 Robotics @ Harbor Beach | 24 |
| 25 SS 845am Service 930am Students Sing Open Gym 4:30 - 6 pm | 26 | 27 | 28 Chapel 8:05 am Bible Study 6pm | 29 | 30 | 31 |