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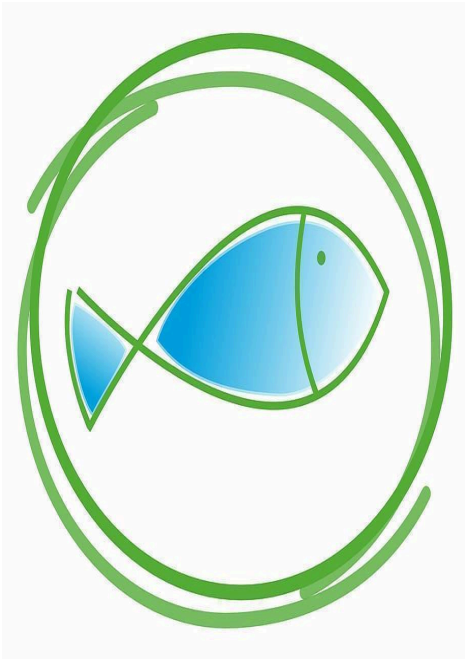
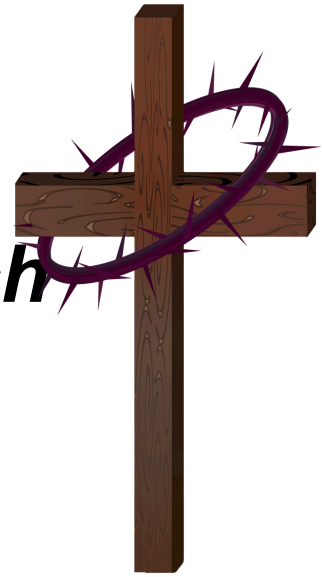


Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church

September Newsletter 2025



August 14, 2025
CHICAGO — ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has issued a letter to President Donald Trump and members of Congress expressing support of "our Jewish-American and Israeli siblings who have suffered because of the Oct. 7 attacks," yet voicing "profound horror regarding the catastrophe in Gaza and the wider crisis in the Holy Land."

"The lives of 2.1 million Palestinians in Gaza depend in part on the decisions you will make in the coming weeks and months," Eaton wrote.

"For the love of God, the sake of our shared humanity and the future of our Palestinian siblings of all faiths, your swift action may be the best and perhaps only way to stop the Israeli government from continuing its war and genocide in Gaza, and to plant seeds of peace and well-being for all in the Holy Land." The letter follows:

August 13, 2025

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue,
NW Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President and esteemed leaders of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives,

As presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), a denomination of 2.7 million members, I write with profound horror regarding the catastrophe in Gaza and the wider crisis in the Holy Land. I also write to you as a Christian whose messiah preached, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9). I urge you to act swiftly and decisively to stop the Israeli government from continuing its war in Gaza. ***The lives of 2.1 million Palestinians in Gaza depend in part on the decisions you will make in the coming weeks and months.***

The current famine and starvation campaign in Gaza, engineered by the government of Israel, should shock the moral conscience of our nation. The people starving in Gaza are teachers, auto mechanics, doctors, store owners, engineers, farmers, students, mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, aunts, uncles, grandparents and grandchildren. In the 22 months since this devastating conflict began, at least 60,000 people in Gaza have been killed, including 18,500 children. UNICEF now calls Gaza the most dangerous place in the world to be a child and estimates that one child has died there for each hour since the war began. The global community determined decades ago that using starvation as a tool of war is a war crime under the Geneva Convention, per Additional Protocol I, Article 54(1).
The close relationship between the United States government and the government of Israel should be used to end the genocide in Gaza. This includes leveraging the financial, military and diplomatic support provided to Israel by the U.S. government.

For 22 months, the situation in the Holy Land has escalated with no apparent solution. We witnessed the horrific acts committed by Hamas on Oct. 7, 2023, against Israeli citizens. The ELCA has been clear in supporting our Jewish-American and Israeli siblings who have suffered because of the Oct. 7 attacks, which directly contravene international law, not to mention human decency and morality. This church has condemned those attacks and prays for all who still suffer, including both the hostages taken by Hamas and those hostages' families.

This church has also lamented and denounced the subsequent military campaign by the Israeli government in Gaza. Collective punishment and forced displacement of an entire civilian population are also war crimes, as stipulated under the Fourth Geneva Convention, Articles 33 and 49.

The ELCA joins the growing condemnation of the continuing catastrophe of violence, starvation and forced displacement in Gaza, which many international voices are now calling genocide.

During the ELCA Churchwide Assembly last month, members spoke passionately about the situation in Gaza. I was struck by one voting member who, supporting a resolution on this issue, stated, "I acknowledge that the language in [the memorial] is sharp-edged and confrontational. Genocide should be as hard a word to say as it is to hear." Our church acknowledges that there is nothing easy about determining either the specifics of a mass atrocity event or when such an event legally

constitutes genocide. However, evidence provided by credible sources over the course of this year — including the words of our own Christian siblings in the Holy Land and of Israeli human rights organizations and scholars — makes it impossible for us to keep silent in this critical hour.

As of this writing, the Israeli security cabinet, under the leadership of Prime Minister Netanyahu, has approved a plan to take control of Gaza City. This includes expanding military operations in the Gaza Strip and forcibly expelling some 700,000 Palestinians currently surviving in the ruins of the city. It would additionally cut off 300,000 Palestinians in North Gaza from any aid access at all. This would mean putting in harm's way almost half of Gaza's population, many of whom are too malnourished, sick, or exhausted to flee the area. Such a forced displacement would undoubtedly lead to the deaths of many Palestinian men, women and children. Among these survivors are 600 of our Christian siblings and the staff at one of the few hospitals still functioning there: the Al-Ahli Hospital, run by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.

For the love of God, the sake of our shared humanity and the future of our Palestinian siblings of all faiths, your swift action may be the best and perhaps only way to stop the Israeli government from continuing its war and genocide in Gaza, and to plant seeds of peace and well-being for all in the Holy Land.
Therefore, I urge that you take all necessary steps to:

1) Suspend all financial and military assistance from the United States to the Israeli state until it meets two critical conditions: agreeing to a permanent ceasefire and allowing, without restriction or hindrance, humanitarian aid to Gaza through credible, longstanding aid mechanisms such as the United Nations and its affiliated international nongovernmental organizations.

2) Initiate an investigation into whether U.S. military aid to Israel has been and is being used in compliance with U.S. and international human rights law.

3) Announce publicly that under no circumstances will the U.S. government endorse an Israeli policy that forcibly displaces Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, including the Israeli government creating conditions on the ground that make Gaza and the West Bank fundamentally uninhabitable for Palestinians to live.

4) In line with U.S. allies, recognize Palestine as a sovereign state that can live in peace side by side with Israel, and support Palestine's full membership in the United Nations.

5) Redouble efforts and pressure on the Israeli government to ensure freedom of religion, worship and movement for people of all faiths, be they Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Druze or Baha'i.

Lutherans honor public service and pray for those in authority. We understand and teach that the work of government is an essential way in which Christians love God and serve their neighbor. I pray fervently that you will use the power of your offices — as you did recently, to negotiate a peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia — to ensure a safe future for all our siblings in the Holy Land.

Yours in Christ,
The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

cc: The Honorable Mike Johnson, Speaker of the House
The Honorable John Thune, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable Charles Schumer, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries, House Minority Leader

Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church Council Minutes

August 5th, 2025

The meeting was called to order by Treasurer Roxie Ulness @ 6:40 p.m.

Pastor Randy Olson opened with a prayer.

Non Agenda Items:
Randy Olson provided an update on the call process. Availability is not any different from before, there are no part-time pastors available. The synod received a grant to create a more robust mentoring program for SAM's. There are about 30 to 40 current SAMS's who can do pulpit supply and pastoral care, some will do confirmation. There are no salary standards for SAM's. Options worth exploring so we have continuity for leadership and member support are:
1. Look for one or more local SAM's or ministers to contract with for Sundays.

2. If we have someone within congregation interested in becoming a SAM, provide support for the program and they could serve before they graduated. They would need a rostered leader for support.
3. Another model is find a couple of people you can depend on for rotation and the Sunday pastor is on call for the rest of the week. The pastors handle the worship schedule.
4. Another possibility is to find an area pastor who will be on call for pastoral care or leadership guidance. We need to think about being flexible and creative. If sharing a pastor, do it as a contract, not by joining churches. Signing a contract would not interfere with the call process with the Synod. All contracts should be one year with a 30-day clause.

Old Business:
A motion from Rhonda, second by Marty to approve the secretary's minutes and the treasurer's report as presented. Motion carried.
Education: Corissa has agreed to teach Sunday School for the 2025-2026 school year.
Worship: August is filled. Dave Sands signed up through November for every other Sunday and Marty is reaching out to fill in the open Sundays.
Property: The well went down to 125 feet, Oium tested with no nitrates, waiting for EC County to test. Need to connect to the building. They are supposed to come with a water truck to clean the road. We will need to do final cleanup.

Unfinished Business:
- Maria Leverton baptismal request is still on hold pending Lyle's health situation.
- Cleghorn Harvest Fest – Fee has been paid for two booths. Marty will ask Teresa to create a sign up sheet.

New Business:
- Fall Bazaar. – Dave said the station has a new bigger tent with sides.
- Baptismal – Jacob Froelich has asked to have his children Alaina & Henry baptized and Hailey would also like to have her children baptized. Rhonda will speak to Pastor Sands to see if he will perform the baptism.
- Cathy Winger – will wait until January to look for a replacement.
- Copy Machine replacement – will wait until we are having more problems with the machine.
- Marianna Gilbertson resignation – held until Council President is in attendance.
- Dave Sands requested mileage for visiting members in the hospital. Roxie will get the mileage form from him to reimburse him.

Mission Offerings:
August: Eleva-Strum Backpack meals/school supplies.
September: Mondovi Backpack meals/school supplies.
October: Agnes' table in Chippewa Falls
November: Mondovi Food Pantry
December: Feed my people.

The next Council meeting has been set for Thursday, September 4th at 6:30. Marty made a motion to adjourn with second by Rhonda at 8:09. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,
Roxie Ulness
Members present: Rhonda Hoverson, Dave Vlcek, Marty Johnson, Roxie Ulness
Others present – John Poore, Randy Olson from NW Synod of WI.

Treasurer's Report:

Summary of Offering and Expenses

	YTD	June	July	August (thru 8/24)
Offering /Misc	$35,180.76	$3,623.50	$3,319.51	$5,985.00
Expenses	$29,442.16	$2,747.83	$2,481.70	$2,178.45

Offering Over Expenses - July - $837.81
Offering Over Expenses - Aug - $3,806.55
Offering Over Expenses – Y-T-D: $5,738.60

Mission Offerings:
June –Community Table - $280.00
July – Kenzie Butchart - $235.00
Aug - Eleva Strum Backpack Lunch Program - $

Memorials:
Building Fund:
In memory of Joann Lehman, from Dale and Sharon Anderson

Interested in online giving - go to the church website and click on **"Give Online Now".

Respectfully submitted:
Roxie Ulness, Treasurer

Praise Team News

The Praise Team will play in worship at Pleasant Valley at 9 am on September 28, and will lead worship that evening at the Chippewa Valley Correctional Treatment Facility (CVCTF) at 6:30 pm. Practices will be held on Wednesdays following worship. Group members were happy to learn this week that Chaplain Hull has returned to work from leave.

Cleghorn Harvest Fest Booth

Pleasant Valley will have a booth at the Cleghorn Harvest Fest on Saturday, September 6, 10 am to 4 pm. Sign up to help staff the booth on the list in the fellowship hall at church.

Sharing the Dream in Guatemala (STDG) News

A booth has been reserved to sell products from STDG at the Downtown Eau Claire Fall Festival on Saturday, September 13. You can visit the booth from 11 am to 5 pm to purchase beautiful items made by the Guatemalan artisans that are part of STDG. If you would like to help staff the booth, or for more information, contact Kim Vlcek.

H3 (Holy, Happy and Healthy)

H3 will begin meeting at 9:30 am on Tuesdays beginning September 9, at Immanuel Lutheran in Eau Claire and on Zoom. The group will be reading the book "Way of Love" by Norman Wirzba. Contact Marianna Gilbertson or Kim Vlcek for more information.

RUTH (Rural Unity Through Hope)

The next meeting is September 15 at 6:30 pm at Peace Lutheran in Pigeon Falls and on Zoom. Kim Vlcek is the contact for the group.

W/ELCA News

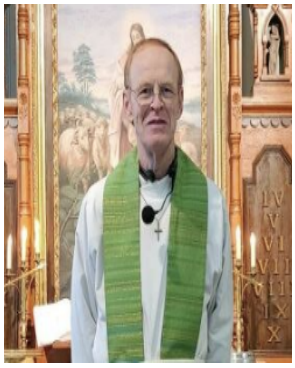
The next Triennial Gathering is scheduled for July 16-19, 2026 in Des Moines, Iowa. Make plans to attend. More information is available at https://www.womenoftheelca.org/new-triennial-event-page

IV Hoodie for You

Are you receiving IV treatments, or do you know of someone who is? Then you or that person can receive an IV Hoodie …free of charge! An IV Hoodie has a zipper in the sleeve or in the chest for a port to help make treatments more comfortable. Monetary donations are welcome. If you'd like more information please call or text Ellen Hauser at 715-797-4354.

Thanks to our visiting Pastors this month.

Pastor David Sands



Jeremiah Segerstrom

Pastor Diane House

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Mark your calendar for **Sunday, Sept. 7**, when congregations of the ELCA will join together for our annual day of service, "God's work. Our hands." Participating in service projects is one way to celebrate who we are as the ELCA — one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor.We are a church that is energized by lively engagement in faith and life. As we continue our tradition of service, we remember the words of Martin Luther, "**Our faith is a living, busy, active, mighty thing**."

With our hands, we do God's work of restoring and reconciling communities in Jesus Christ's name. If your congregation cannot participate on Sept. 7, you are encouraged to pick another date that fits your schedule. **ELCA congregations participate in acts of service every day**. This day of service is an extension of the work you already do to make your community a better place. Be sure to save the date and check ELCA.org/DayOfService for updated resources soon. Go in peace. Serve the Lord. Join us on Sept. 7.

Announcements:

★ Cleghorn Harvest Fest will be on Saturday, September 6 from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M

★ Worship in the Park bring your own coffee for fellowship afterwards

★ Praise Team practice Wednesdays.

★ Let Teresa know if there are any announcements you would like included in the bulletin; Friday before Sunday Worship.

Mission offerings:

★ August: Eleva-Strum Weekend Backpack Meals and school supplies

★ September: Mondovi Weekend Backpack Meals and school supplies

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🎉 We Need Your Help! 🎉

We're looking for volunteers to lend a hand at this year's Cleghorn Harvest Fest! Whether it's setting up, helping at the booth, or keeping things running smoothly—your support makes the magic happen. Come be part of the fun and make a difference. Saturday, September 6 from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M Sign up sheets at worship or let Teresa know your interest. iSign up today! 🙌

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Sunday School Begins September 14

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Read this year's issue of "Thrive" here.

TEXTS FOR SEPTEMBER

September 7:
Jeremiah 18:1-11
Psalm 139:1-5, 12-17
Philemon 1-21
Luke 14:25-33

September 14:
Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28
Psalm 14
1 Timothy 1:12-17
Luke 15:1-10

September 21:
Jeremiah 8:18-9:1
Psalm 79:1-9
1 Timothy 2:1-7
Luke 16:1-13

September 28:
Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15
Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16
1 Timothy 6:6-19
Luke 16:19-31

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From our Mailbox

Lutheran World Relief continues to collect quilts and kits at Fall InGatherings. Below are the gatherings in our synod or close to our synod so that you may determine what works best for you:.

October 4, 2025
8 a.m. to Noon
Wausau, Wisconsin
We continue with drop-off at the Corner of S. 3rd Ave and Bopf St. (1 block south of Thomas St.) Kolbe Window Truck & Trailer Yard, 143 W Thomas St. (just before the railroad tracks)

October 11
8 a.m. to noon
Eau Claire, WI
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Enter the parking lot from Churchill Street

October 11
8 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Rice Lake, WI
Bethany Lutheran Church
35 W Messenger Street

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Hello,

I just wanted to let you know I received the check with the note in the mail. Thank you so much for your generosity and for thinking of us during this time.

Abby Moore

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WE INVITE PRAYERS FOR:

Calling of a new Pastor for our church
Sadie Hoverson Odegard- healing
Sandy Schuh-healing
Sharon Hazen
Barb Anderson (Chad's wife)- Cancer
Nicki Vlcek
Karen Voss
Katie (Lammers) Household
Maria
Lyle
Chris - Kathy Tweets grandson
Sharon Anderson- Healing
Christine Iverson- Pastor Valerian Ahles's wife
Alice-Art's mother-in-law-healing
Barb-Steph's friend
Joy -Kathy T. daughter
Tanner- Hodgkins
Tony- waiting for kidney transplant
Randy Walker- fighting cancer
Joan Timm- healing
Guy Patrow – Tested positive for ALS
Karl Bahr – continued healing
Duane Vlcek and Ayla Hakes and family
Abby and Nick, McKenzie,ask for prayers for strength and healing.
Lisa & Glen-Fostering children

All our service men and women:
Alex Bauer- deployed to Pakistan
Middle East
Guatemala
Ukraine
Shelby Cole and family - missionaries living in France
Keyla & Heber - the Sharing the Dream recipients, students in Guatemala
Men incarcerated at CVCTF and **Chaplain Hull**

All those who are missing a loved one: Joann Lehman's Family
Those on our visiting list: Gary and Sharon Hazen,
Sandy Schuch, Sadie Hoverson Odegard

Opportunities to Serve

Feel free to sign up for a single week or a full month. Expectations of opportunities have been developed. The expectations are placed near the area to be served.

2025	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER
Communion Set-up	9/7 9/14 9/21 9/28	10/5 10/12 10/19 10/26	11/2 11/9 11/16 11/23 11/30
Communion Server	9/7 9/14 9/21 9/28	10/5 10/12 10/19 10/26	11/2 11/9 11/16 11/23 11/30
Usher	9/7 9/14 9/21 9/28	10/5 10/12 10/19 10/26	11/2 11/9 11/16 11/23 11/30
Reader	9/7 9/14 9/21 9/28	10/5 10/12 10/19 10/26	11/2 11/9 11/16 11/23 11/30
Church Cleaning	9/7 9/14 9/21 9/28	10/5 10/12 10/19 10/26	11/2 11/9 11/16 11/23 11/30
Serve refreshments	9/7 9/14 9/21 9/28	10/5 10/12 10/19 10/26	11/2 11/9 11/16 11/23 11/30

Opportunities to Serve our Community

There are many ways to stay connected in our community and extended rural areas: Many organizations need volunteers. Please sign up ONLINE; many will not take drop in help. If you have any interest to help out or ask questions, you can call Marianna at 715-828-2185 (cell), email: Marianna.gilbertson@gmail.com or go online to view the websites.

Agency	Activity/Program	Contact
The Community Table(TCT)	The Community Table has been nourishing hungry bodies and spirits in the Eau Claire Community by serving one meal each day, 365 days a year on a no-questions asked basis. Anyone can join our table during meal time.	TJ Atkins director email at marketing@thecommunitytable.org OR https://communitytable.org/
Feed My People Food Bank (FMPFB) Our volunteers make our mission possible. Because of their dedication, grit, and passion, they're connecting folks to much-needed food through thick and thin	Feed My People rescues nationally and regionally donated food from manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, and growers that might otherwise be thrown away. We welcome individuals and groups to come volunteer at the food bank. Opportunities include packing emergency food bags, repacking bulk products, and picking orders for our food pantry partners.	Learn more and sign up through our volunteer portal. **Did you know we have regular group volunteer opportunities on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays?** Your group of 6-15 people can help us pack food from 9-11 am and 1-3 pm. Email Ken at ken@fmpfoodbank.org to get started.
Inclusive Ministry Church	A church experience where you are welcomed with abilities and disabilities, just as you	See their facebook page for more information.
Beacon House	A group of congregations in Eau Claire County collaborated together to support families in our community who were homeless.	https://www.familypromisecv.org/?utm _source=beacon-house.org
Sleep In Heavenly Peace	A group of volunteers dedicated to building, assembling and delivering single beds or bunk beds to children and families in need.	https://shpbeds.org/chapter/wi-chippewa-valley/
Respite for All	Provides training for congregations to launch this outreach ministry and it offers ongoing support and mentoring.	www.respiteforall.org
Chippewa Valley Habitat For Humanity (CVHFH)	Christian non-denominational organization whose mission is “to put God's love into action by bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope.”	Habitat Affiliate Manager, Elizabeth, elizabeth@cvh4h.org or 715-833-8993 Or Use this ***link*** ***today*** and take a look at the volunteer opportunities!
Neighbor to Neighbor	Is organized by Deacon Lidixe Montoya. church about N2N and how we can help or understand our Latin Speaking neighbors.	https://nwswi.org/neighbor-to-neighbor
American Red Cross	Volunteers Urgently Needed	www.redcross.org/volunteer. Contact: volunteerwisconsin@redcross.org for any questions regarding opportunities.
Volunteer Wisconsin	One-stop site connecting nonprofits in need of help with people who can are interested in volunteering	Click here for a full list of every organization currently looking for volunteers. Then, click on “Filters” at the top to sort the openings by city, interest, agency, age range, or about 20 different factors. After doing so, you’ll be left with a list of opportunities.
Agnes' Table	Monday, Wednesday or Friday from 8am to 12pm. Up to 3-4 volunteers at 1 time, preferably 1 shift. The tasks range from: serving breakfast, helping unload food rescue, restocking our pantry, cleaning jobs or meal prep for the next day.	https://www.agnestable.org/

September2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 H3 meets 9:30 am at Immanuel Lutheran in Eau Claire and on Zoom	3 6:30 Praise Team Practice	4 6:30 Council Meeting	5	6 Booth at Cleghorn Harvest Fest
7 9:00 am Worship Service in park 10:00am Coffee & Fellowship *PASTOR:	8	9 H3 meets 9:30 am at Immanuel Lutheran in Eau Claire and on Zoom	10 6:30 Praise Team Practice	11	12	13 Downtown Eau Claire Fall Festival on 11 am to 5 pm
14 9:00 am Worship 10:00am Coffee & Fellowship Sunday School Begins *PASTOR: Dave Sands	15	16 H3 meets 9:30 am at Immanuel Lutheran in Eau Claire and on Zoom	17 6:30 Praise Team Practice	18	19	20
21 9:00 am Worship 10:00am Coffee & Fellowship *PASTOR: Jeremiah Segerstrom	22	23 H3 meets 9:30 am at Immanuel Lutheran in Eau Claire and on Zoom	24 6:30 Praise Team Practice	25	26	27
28 9:00 am Praise Team Worship Service in Church leads worship at CVCTF at 6:30 pm. 10:00am Coffee & Fellowship 6:30pm Praise Team leads worship at CVCTF PASTOR: Dave Sands	29	30 H3 meets 9:30 am at Immanuel Lutheran in Eau Claire and on Zoom	1 6:30 Praise Team Practice	2	3	4