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Dodge Center Fire Department Breakfast and Silent Auction



Dodge Center Fire Department hosted breakfast and silent auction Sunday, October 4th at the Fire Hall. They served pancakes, sausages, scrambled eggs, biscuits and gravy.

Three Dodge County Commissioner Seats Will Be Determined in November Election



Tim Tjosaas



Troy Stafford



Jim Checkel



Rhonda Toquam



Ashley Martin

Dodge County District 2 candidates Tim Tjosaas

I have lived in Dodge County for almost my entire life - I grew up on a dairy farm east of Kasson. From there I spent one year in Sioux Falls, SD at Augustana College (now Univer-

sity) and then three years at the University of MN - St. Paul Campus while attending college.

My wife and I returned to the area following college and have lived in Kasson since 2001.

My wife, Christina, and I have two adult children - Abbie and Brayden. Abbie is married to Jonathan Root and they have two wonderful children - Ella and Connor, and currently live in Kasson.

(continued on page 6)

Announcements

- GriefShare support group for anyone experiencing loss of a loved one, friend, or other significant person in their lives, meets Thursdays, 6:30 - 8:30 pm, at Anchor Of Hope Church, 203 E. Main St., Dodge Center, MN. Contact Dale E. Rood, pastor emeritus, at 507-633-2772, or go to the GriefShare website.
- The United Methodist Church of Dodge Center at 20 First Street NE offers a dine in and carry out meal from 5:00-6:00pm the third Wednesday of each month.

Do you have an announcement?

Email:

hometownmessenger@gmail.com

Indoor Golf at Mantorville Saloon



The indoor golf season has started in Mantorville this fall. A golf simulator allows you to use your own clubs and real golf balls to experience the effect of an outdoor course. A golf simulator works by using a launch monitor to capture critical swing and ball data (like speed, spin, and launch angle) the instant you hit the ball. This data is immediately sent to the simulation software, which calculates the realistic ball flight based on physics algorithms and projects the visual outcome of your shot onto an impact screen or monitor. You can tee off and play as well as putt.

The Mantorville Saloon has converted the old VFW into a golf simulator room. The facility has a full bar and can serve pizza, burger baskets and cheese bread for events. They are planning winter golf leagues and currently will be scheduling golf on Wednesday and Thursday from 3pm to close. Call 507-635-5257 for a tee time. Byron Snow Drifters Bingo is the second and fourth Thursday of each month starting at 6:30pm at the Mantorville Saloon.

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A New Thing

By Pastor Colleen Hoeft

I like new things- the smell of a new car or wearing new clothes, (that used to be the highlight of the school year- wearing the new school clothes that my mom had bought for me. It was always kind of frustrating that the first days of school were often very warm and the new clothes were more for the fall. I'd have to wait until it got cooler or looked really silly. But it is fun to get new things.

And who doesn't like a new start? When you have messed up and desire a start over. When you are young and mess up you are reminded that you can do a re-do. Practice makes perfect, it's ok to try, try again. You and I appreciate it that we can get re-do's in our career, in our personal lives, in our faith journey. When we sin, when we make mistakes, when we find ourselves in the throes of addiction- we can find forgiveness and a second chance. God is doing a new thing.

God is great at doing "new things. Just look at creation- look at the very beginning of time: He made a world out of nothing- he made lakes, rivers, plants, animals, birds, fish- human beings- all were new, all were unique, all began at His command. And ever since He created this world and you and me; He continues to create new things.

Isaiah was a preacher and prophet to the smaller kingdom of Judah. Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah (Isaiah 1:1). This period was marked by political instability, social injustice, and spiritual decline. Amidst these challenges, Isaiah's message of deliverance offered hope and a call to return to God.

The message of hope and a call to return to God remain applicable to us today. "I am the Lord, your Holy One, Israel's Creator and King. 16 I am the Lord, who opened a way through the waters, making a dry path through the sea. 17 I called forth the mighty army of Egypt with all its chariots and horses. I drew them beneath the waves, and they drowned, their lives snuffed out like a smoldering candlewick. "But forget all that— it is nothing compared to what I am going to do. 19 For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do

you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland." Isaiah 43:15-19.

God desires to bring you and I through the waters and out of our lives of sin and shame to a marvelous 'new life' in Christ. God has brought me and countless others out of the waters of sin and addiction to be renewed- to have Him create a 'new thing.' God wants to do a new thing in you. The 1st step to embracing the new thing what God wants to do in your life is to:

1. Change your focus -- quit looking behind start looking ahead v.18 I love how the verse says, "But forget all that— it is nothing compared to what I am going to do." Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. If you are continually looking behind you cannot see where you are going. If you are going to move on to new things that Christ has for you, you must learn that:

- You Cannot Depend Upon Past Victories to Sustain You forget the former things. The question isn't what has God done —the question must be:

- What is God doing in your life right now?
- What is it that you want Him to do in your life right now?

B. You Cannot Allow Your Past Failures to Possess You: do not dwell on the past. In the beginning you made a commitment to follow Jesus- stuff was going good- then you got tired, you find things to criticize about His church, about the Pastor, about His people. You quit going to church- too busy, you choose to put other things before your com-

mitment to Him. You may not sacrifice a calf to Baal, but you turn in your walk with Christ, for a cheap imitation that promises far less in returns in the end.

God says, through the words of Isaiah- leave the past in the past- leave it all behind- you are to stay new. Begin fresh and go forward- don't look back. Turning back to your old life, romanticizing your old life will leave you back in the same pit you were in before. God wants to do a New Thing in you- don't settle for a cheap imitation.

For the people of Israel God was not condemning them for their past.

They could do nothing to change it. Instead, God was holding out the hand of hope. If you are going to get anywhere in your spiritual life you must understand:

- You Cannot Live on Yesterday's Faith. You and I cannot continue to live as a baby Christian. We are to mature in our faith and in our testimony. Our testimony of what God has done and what He is doing in our lives should continue to change as we do.

Lastly you need to embrace the new thing what God wants to do in your life. For that to happen you need to:

2. Clarify your focus -- discover what God wants for you. "Forget all that— it is nothing compared to what I am going to do. 19 For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?"

What do you see when you view your life? Do you see possibilities or problems? You can view your past and focus on your problems, or you can focus on God and what He wants

to do in your life. You can focus on the way forward or the desert behind. You can find the streams or stay stuck in the desert. How do you want to live your life?

God is able to transform the desert areas of your life into fields of blessing and abundance. God can take a dried-up useless life and transform it into a life of purpose and grace.

3. Commit yourself to God's plan. God has set into motion a new direction and a new purpose for your life -- will you follow Him?

Will you trust Him? Become that new thing in His Hands- He's got you!



SENIOR FESTIVAL
Hymn Sing
Praising Jesus together!
Featuring "The Concord 5"
15 October 2026
2:00 p.m.
Faith Community Church
305 State Street N (Hwy 56), West Concord, Minnesota
All are welcome to join us and sing the beloved hymns of the church.
Our church is handicap accessible.
Fellowship, Coffee and Cookies (and other scrumptious goodies) follow.

DODGE CENTER

Faith Lutheran Church

308 2nd St. NW, Dodge Center
507-374-2174
Traditional Worship 9 a.m.; Fellowship 10 a.m.

Grace Lutheran Church

404 Central Avenue N, Dodge Center
Rev. Elliott Malm • 507-633-2253
<https://gracede.church>
Worship 9 a.m.; Sunday School 10:30 a.m.

Praise Fellowship Church

602 Central Avenue S, Dodge Center
507-374-6400
Kids Church 9:15 a.m.; Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m.

Dodge Center Methodist Church

201 1st St. NE, Dodge Center
507-374-6885
Sunday Morning Worship at 8:30 a.m.,
Fellowship Time Following

St. John Baptist De La Salle

20 2nd St. NE, Dodge Center • 507-374-6830
Mass Saturday 5 p.m.

Living Water Assembly Church

104 1st St. NW, Dodge Center
Roy Andrews • 507-374-6561
Sunday 10 a.m.

Dodge Center SDA Church

410 3rd Ave. SW
Dodge Center • 507-374-6895
Sabbath School 9:15 a.m.; Saturday Worship 11 a.m.

Anchor of Hope Church, a 7th Day Baptist Congregation

203 E. Main St., Dodge Center • 507-374-6755
Saturday 10 a.m. Worship; 11:45 a.m. Sabbath School

Bible Lutheran Church

(American Assoc. of Lutheran Churches)
11 1st Ave. N.E., Dodge Center
www.biblelc.org • 612-803-1212
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.; Worship 10:30 a.m.
(weekly sermons available on YouTube and on website)

First Congregational Church

12 Second Street NW
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www.congregationalchurchdodge.com
Mark Martig, Pastor

Area Church Directory

Jesus, Name Above All Names

God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. . . . — Philippians 2:9-10

There are a lot of big names out there: Zuckerberg, Apple, Xi, Trump, Oprah, AI. Does our world rise or fall with these names?

Or how about some names closer to home: Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, ALS, Down Syndrome? Or what about labels that society might apply to us: divorced, disabled, addicted, infertile, fired, foreclosed, forgotten, paroled? Do any of these have the power to make or break us?

No. Our reading today proclaims that no name, whether it carries princely power or brings us problems or roadblocks, is greater than Jesus— not even light years close.

None of those names went down low, "taking the very nature of a servant" and "becoming obedient to death" to raise us up. None of those died on a cross to give us new life.

Jesus is the only One whom God gave the name greater than any other name. He is the only One we should bow to. We can take him more seriously than any other name or label, for he himself is God, and he rules over all things.

This month, let's reflect on the various names of Jesus and what they show us about him. Each one reveals something marvelous and matchless about Jesus Christ, our Lord, to whom every knee and power and threat will bow, "to the glory of God the Father." We are in his hands, and he puts all things in their place.

Thank you, Jesus, for all you have done to give us new life and faith in the power of your name. May we honor your name above every name. Amen.

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Carolyn May McDonald

Carolyn May McDonald, 93, of Hayfield, MN passed away on Tuesday, September 22, 2026, at Fieldcrest Care Center in Hayfield, MN.

Carolyn was born on December 15, 1932, at home in Westfield Township, Hayfield, Minnesota, to Arthur William Schmeling and Alvina Bertha (Kording) Schmeling. She came

into the world surrounded by the strength of a farming family and throughout her long life she carried forward an inheritance of resilience and the independence of a long line of Kording women. She became the matriarch of her own family, carrying on the legacy of her mother, Alvina.

Carolyn had an unmistakable strength of spirit, made richer by an enduring interest in the world around her. She read widely, explored as many cultural and social events with friends and family as she could, followed world events closely, and maintained an interest in an extraordinary range of subjects. Learning was never something she considered finished. Later in life, she returned to school and completed a master's degree in counseling. For Carolyn, there was always more to understand about the world and about the complicated, beautiful people who inhabited it.

Carolyn actively pursued a professional life; working as a medical technologist in Colorado Springs and at the Swedish Hospital in Minneapolis, and ultimately began what would become a long career with Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. She took great pride in meaningful work of service and in being a capable, educated woman.

In 1960, she married Harry "Mike" McDonald. Together they eventually moved their family to an acreage in the country, creating the setting for a childhood her children would remember with great affection. There were food and flower gardens along with pets and farm animals to care for. It was a home shaped by work, imagination, independence, and the simple abundance of country life.

She loved to travel with close friends and relatives and ventured to far-reaching places around the globe including Europe, Africa and the Middle East. She traced family history and connected with distant cousins in Germany. She wanted to see things for herself, to encounter other landscapes, cultures, histories, and ways of living. That same attentiveness followed her home through the lens of her camera. She was an avid photographer, and among the family's most cherished childhood memories are evenings gathered in the living room as her photographs appeared one after another in family slideshows; places visited, Zumbro River gullies hiked, people loved, moments preserved because she had noticed them.

She was, at heart, a resourceful artist, imaginative cook, and extraordinary seamstress. Her hands were rarely far from some form of creative expression. She loved to try every form of art and craft-making; transforming color, texture, and imagination into things of beauty. She had a knack for design and her aesthetic sensibilities balanced elegance and play.

She was a poet and had many of her poems published over the years. Poetry gave voice to the part of her that was always observing. Perhaps that is one of the finest ways to understand her life, she paid attention. She paid attention to ideas, to beauty, to the wider world, and to the family whose story she helped shape across generations.

Carolyn leaves behind not simply memories, but a legacy expressed by the profound strength of the Kording women who came before her, the keen curiosity she carried

throughout her life, the art she created, the words she wrote, the travel and adventure she embraced, and the family she nurtured and treasured.

She is survived by her children, Elise (David) Fluegel of Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Paul (Peggy) McDonald of Rochester, Minnesota; her grandchildren, Briana (Nate) Moen of Grygla, Minnesota, and Laurel Bergsten of Colorado Springs, Colorado; great-granddaughter Adeline; and her siblings, Arlys Filley of Blooming Prairie, Minnesota, Arlene Draeger of Hayfield, Minnesota, and Lynn (Brenda) Schmeling of Hayfield, Minnesota.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Arthur and Alvina Schmeling; her brother, Dicky; and her daughter, Marie.

Carolyn's life cannot be contained by the dates that marked its beginning and end. It remains in the hearts of those who loved her, in photographs and poems, in beautiful things made by hand, in stories of faraway places, in gardens and family traditions, and in the generations who carry her spirited legacy forward.

A celebration of her life will be held at 10:00 a.m. Saturday, November 28, 2026, in the Timothy Chapel at Autumn Ridge Church 3611 Salem Rd SW in Rochester, MN.

To share a special memory or condolence please, visit www.czaplewskifuneralhomes.com, Czaplewski Family Funeral Homes, 501 2nd Street NW, Hayfield, Minnesota, 507-477-2259. Blessed be her memory.

(obituaries continued on page 4)

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Faith In Action

Fall Soup and Pie Dinner

October 12, 2026 from 4:30-7:00 p.m.

Grace Methodist Church - 801 5th Ave. NW, Kasson

Menu:
**Choice of Soup (Chicken Wild Rice, Vegetable Beef or Chicken Noodle),
Bread and Crackers, Assorted Pies**



Faith In Action is a non-profit, interfaith organization that provides volunteer services that assist senior citizens in maintaining their independence in the home environment of their choice.

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Darrell Stephen Schuster

Darrell Stephen Schuster, 83, of Maiden Rock Wis., died Tuesday, September 15, 2026 at his home with his family by his side. He was born in Detroit Lakes MN to Hilton and Marjorie (Peterson). The family moved to Dodge Center MN when Darrell was young. He attended Dodge Center school, where he was a star athlete, achieving 18 letters in football, basketball, baseball and track.

Darrell had a daughter with Shirley Helland of West Concord Minn. and 4 children from his marriage with Connie (Scripture) of Dodge Center.

Darrell received his bachelor degree in Criminal Justice from Winona State, and following his graduation, he went to work for the Minn. Department of Corrections as a Group Leader, Case Manager and Intake Coordinator. At MCF/Red Wing and MCF/Faribault, he worked with both juvenile and adult male offenders. He was highly respected by his peers and many of the offenders he worked with remained in contact with him after their release due to the positive impact he had on their lives.

On March 2, 1991, he married Carla Smith (Hoffman) from Maiden Rock and helped raise her 4 children. They enjoyed their hobby farm in Maiden Rock, raising beef cattle, chickens, pigs and horses and all that goes along with that. The family was involved in 4-H and Darrell spent several years coaching the Maiden Rock Rockets softball team to championships, with his leadership skills.

After retirement from Corrections in 1998, Darrell joined the Ellsworth School District as a bus driver for another 20 years.

Throughout his life, Darrell continued to enjoy all sports, whether it was driving students to games or events, throwing a ball or helping with a batting swing, and watching his children and grandchildren as they participated in a variety of sports. He loved watching all levels, both at home and at the stadiums and fields.

Darrell loved to travel with his family throughout the United States and abroad, especially when it involved the whole family. Darrell was fiercely proud of his children and

grandchildren and their accomplishments, and life for Darrell was at its best when he was with them.

He will be missed by many, including his wife, Carla; children, Kelli (Jeff) Anderson; Donald (Carolyn) Schuster; James (Brenda) Schuster; Darrell Jr (Miranda) Schuster; Joseph (Amanda) Smith, Michael (Jessica) Smith; Andrew (Anna) Smith and Lindsay (Glendon) Rowe; Son in law Ronald Price. 24 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren; 2 sisters, Marilyn (Loren) Otterbein; Kathie (Norman) Otterbein, sister-in-law Betty Schuster. Bonus children: Sara Stinson; Sita Hoffman, Jesse Hoffman, Louie Larsen and John Risteau; many nieces and nephews and other family.

He is preceded in death by his parents, brothers-Larry and Philip Schuster, sister Bonnie Garness and daughter Tammy Price.

A memorial service will be at 11:00am, Friday, November 27, 2026 at Eidsvold Lutheran Church at W6111 Cty Rd EE, Bay City, WI, with visitation one hour prior to the service at church. Online condolences may be left for the family at www.mahnfamilfuneralhome.com

Colleen Carol Rasmussen

Colleen Carol Rasmussen, 89, of Kasson, MN passed away peacefully surrounded by her loving family on Tuesday, September 29, 2026, at Fairview Care Center in Dodge Center, MN.

Colleen was born on October 2, 1936, at home in Sleepy Eye, MN to Harold and Gladys (Sprandel) Walden. She was raised in Sleepy Eye and attended St. John's Lutheran school through 8th grade. She graduated in 1954, from the Sleepy Eye High School and continued her education at the Mankato Business School. On September 17, 1955, she was united in marriage to Lyle Robert Rasmussen of Prairieville Township, MN. Colleen worked at the Kasson State Bank for 25 years until her retirement in 1999.

Colleen is survived by her four sons, Danny (Audrey) of Onalaska, Wisconsin, Michael (Pam Sparks) of Mazeppa, MN, Thomas (Pamela) of Kasson, MN, and Brett Ras-

mussen of Plymouth, MN; seven grandchildren, Amelia, Jacob, Kirsten, Tara, Dana, Kelle, and Levi; and eight great-grandchildren, Payton, Nathan, Ryan, Logan, Winston, Dawson, Josey, and Elizabeth; and her brother, Franklin Walden.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Harold and Gladys Walden; her loving husband, Lyle Rasmussen; infant sister, Carol Walden; in-laws, Arnold and Bessie Rasmussen and John Maxson; sister-in-law, Mae Walden; nephew, Mark Walden; brother and sister-in-law, Boyd and Betty Rasmussen.

A memorial service will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 8, 2026, at St. John's Lutheran Church, 301 8th Ave NW, Kasson, MN with Pastor John Weisenberger and Pastor Kristen Schlauderaff officiating. Visitation will be held one hour prior to her service at the church. A private family burial will be in Maple Grove Cemetery in Kasson, MN.

In lieu of flowers, the family prefers memorials to the donor's choice.

To share a special memory or condolence please visit www.czaplewskifuneralhomes.com, Czaplewski Family Funeral Homes, 801 7th St SE Kasson, MN 55944 (507)634-6510. Blessed be her memory.

Delmer Paulson

Delmer Paulson, 89, of West Concord, died on Sunday, October 4, 2026, at home surrounded by his family.

He was born in Olmsted County on March 18th, 1937, to Elmer and Alice (Blanchard) Paulson. Delmer attended rural school through 8th grade and then continued high school, graduating from Pine Island in 1955. He worked various jobs until entering the U.S. Navy in March of 1956, where he served duty aboard the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Lake Champlain. Upon his discharge, Delmer went to work for Westinghouse elevator division.

In September 1958, he met Joanne Rhodes, and they later married on January 25, 1959, in Rochester. The couple were given the opportunity to start farming on Joanne's par-

ents' farm, so they decided to make the move. There on the farm, they raised four children, Michael, Del Marie, Kenneth, and Anthony.

As a family, they participated in 4-H, FFA, school sports, and church activities as members of West Concord Methodist Church, where they served on various boards. Delmer was furthermore a member of three different farm organizations, served on several farm commodity boards, and a member of the American Legion Post 295. While farming, Delmer was a dairy farmer for 27 years, beef farmer for 24 years, and did custom hire work for 43 years which included baling, seeding, chopping, combining, etc. When not busy on the farm, Delmer and Joanne were on seven cruise trips, plus several coach trips together.

Delmer is survived by his wife Joanne of 67 years; their children, Michael of West Concord, Del Marie (and Greg) of Kasson, Kenneth (and Sheryl) of West Concord, and Anthony (and Shannon) of Kasson; 11 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; siblings, Haven, David (and Lois), Delores, and Patricia; and sister-in-law, Cori Paulson.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Lyle; and great-granddaughter, Faith.

A visitation will be held on Thursday, October 8, 2026, at Michaelson Funeral Home in West Concord from 4-7 PM. A memorial service will be on Friday, October 9, 2026, at the Bell Tower Center in West Concord at 11 AM with a visitation one hour before. Interment will take place at Concord Cemetery. Following the burial, there is a reception at the American Legion Post 295 in West Concord.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Salvation Army, American Legion Post 295, or the West Concord Historical Society.

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Cheers to 10 Years!

10 Year Anniversary Celebration
Saturday, October 10th

Open House 3:00-6:00 PM

Live Band! Pete Meyer & Bill Finke 6:00-9:00 PM
(2026 Winners in the Road to Memphis Contest)

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Obituary

October 8, 2026

- DODGE CENTER, CLAREMONT, WEST CONCORD, KASSON, MANTORVILLE, HAYFIELD MESSENGER -

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Michael Richard Hudson

Michael Richard Hudson, 72, of Dodge Center, MN passed away peacefully on Thursday, October 1, 2026, at his home surrounded by his family.

Michael was born on June 17, 1954, in Oklahoma City, OK to Richard and Veronica (Sampson) Hudson. During his childhood, Michael's family crisscrossed the country, moving 9 times, from Andrews Air Force Base, CA, to Binghamton, NY. Settling for a time in Rochester, MN, he graduated from Lourdes high school in 1973.

Following in his father's footsteps in 1974,

Michael began his career at IBM soldering circuit boards. From humble beginnings in disc manufacturing, his last role of his 40-year career was in 2014 as manager of e-config, IBM's global sales configurator. In the same capacity, with most of his trusted team at his side, he worked 3 more years for Lenovo until he officially retired.

On November 2, 1974, he married Doris Hart and they settled in Dodge Center in 1978. Together they had two sons, Michael and Timothy. He was a member of St. John's Baptiste de la Salle Catholic church in Dodge Center, MN, where he had also served as church trustee. He loved to learn and he was self-taught on many things. He enjoyed carpentry, mechanicing and handy work. He looked forward to fishing and spending time

at their cabin on Lake Shetek near Marshall, MN. Most of all he loved spending time with his family, especially his grandchildren after he retired.

Michael is survived by his wife, Doris Hudson; children, Michael Hudson Jr. and Timothy Hudson; grandchildren, Greyson and Isabelle Hudson; sister, Christine Randall; and many extended family.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

A funeral mass will be held at 11:00 a.m. Friday, October 9, 2026, at St. John Baptiste de la Salle Catholic Church, 20 2nd St NE in Dodge Center, MN. Visitation will be held from 5:00-8:00 p.m. Thursday, October 8, 2026, at Czaplowski Family Funeral Homes, 25 South Street SW in Dodge Center, MN,

with a Rosary at 7:30 p.m. and also one hour prior to his service at the church. Interment will be Riverside cemetery in Dodge Center, MN.

To share a special memory or condolence please visit www.czaplowskifuneralhomes.com, Czaplowski Family Funeral Homes, 25 South Street SW Dodge Center, MN 55927 (507) 374-2155. Blessed be his memory.



FOOD SHELF MANAGER

Semcac is currently accepting applications for a Food Shelf Manager, 24 hours per week, at the Kasson Contact Center. Must be able to multi-task, complete paperwork, lift and stock items, do food rescue and provide support to clients. A positive attitude, networking with community organizations and groups, working with volunteers, and computer skills required.

Applications and more information available at www.semcac.org, or by contacting Robyn Steffens at robyn.steffens@semcac.org or 507-864-8272. EOE

Pumpkin Giveaway

Claremont First Presbyterian Church is giving away pumpkins, campfire bags and goodie bags while supplies last along with having Trunk or Treat on

October 10th at 10-11am

Trunk or Treating will be held behind the church.

If you are interested in participating in the Trunk or Treat you can set up behind the church at 9:30.

Event sponsored by Presbyterian Women and Claremont Chamber of Commerce

Location: 121 East St N Claremont, MN

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West Concord Fire Department Annual Pancake Breakfast

Sunday, October 11th from 7:00 am to 1:00 pm
at the West Concord Fire Department

Serving: Pancakes, Scrambled Eggs & Sausage

Cost: \$10.00 suggested donation for adults;
\$6.00 for kids ages 6-12
(children 5 & under free)

A fundraiser for the West Concord Fire Department Relief Association

Three Dodge County Commissioner Seats Will Be Determined in November Election

(continued from page 1)

Our son, Brayden, currently lives in Alexandria, Minnesota.

For the last almost 30 years, I have worked for Compeer Financial (and its predecessor organizations). Currently, I am the Managing Director of Agri-Access where I lead a business unit which provides secondary market financing to Ag lenders across the U.S.

Prior to this role, I led the Compeer Home team that focused on financing homes and recreational land. I have also led the Compeer Home Underwriting and Servicing Teams.

My public service started in 2002 when I ran for the Kasson City Council. I was elected for a four-year term and then ran for Mayor at the end of that term. I then was elected to four two-year terms as Mayor. In 2013 my father, Lyle, was the County Commissioner and unfortunately passed away during his final term. In 2014, I ran for his seat in a special election in February and have

since ran for re-election and won in three different election cycles (Fall of 2014, 2018 and 2022). With this experience, I have also served on many boards and commissions such as: Kasson Public Library, Kasson Planning and Zoning, Kasson Parks & Recreation, Kasson EDA, K-M Joint Ventures, South East MN League of Municipalities (served on the Exec Board and as President), SEMCAC (currently on the board and have been on the Executive Committee), MN Prairie (current Chairperson), Spero, Dodge & Olmsted Community Corrections, the Drug Court Task Force, Public Health committee, SEMREX and the EDA.

I believe in public service and providing leadership to the county. I want to serve the residents of Dodge County to the best of my abilities. I continue to look for ways to provide quality services while trying to maintain or lower our tax rate. Over the next couple years, we have a lot of potential funding shifts coming from the State and Federal levels of government so the challenge will be on us as commissioners to find ways to provide quality services and trying to keep our tax rate low. With MN Prairie I want to finish working through the withdrawal of Steele County and the set-up of the new organization with Dodge and Waseca counties. As its current chairperson, I want to make sure that we are able to navigate the final challenges in 2026 and then see the new organization be successful in the early stages after January first.

Finally, one other item I'd love to accomplish is to bring more awareness and understanding to how county government works.

We're limited in flexibility with the multitude of unfunded mandates to how some programs are funded. There are the grant funds that can only be used per very specific guidelines (ex. opioid funding) or require time studies to determine how much time is spent on a program and then the requisite funding received. What should seem simple and straight-forward when it comes to budgeting becomes very convoluted and difficult because of the strings attached or stringent guidelines to be met. In summary, my goal is to always look at options on how to keep our tax rate in line and levy increases minimized. However, the mechanics behind that work can be very difficult and I'd love to help people better understand the process and inner workings.

My goal is that Dodge County continues to be a great place to live. At the county level we do view ourselves as rural and agriculturally focused first and we need to keep that in mind as each of our communities grow. Balancing city growth with our agricultural roots can bring difficulties, however, I always want to keep an open mind and leave open the doors for communication that can help all of us be successful.

Troy Stafford

As a lifelong resident of Dodge County, I

have deep roots in our community and a strong commitment to the public. My boys were raised here and are proud graduates to the KM School District and I gratefully serve as an officer and leader of Mantorville Fire and Rescue, President of the Mantorville Fire Department Relief, Co-Treasurer of Dodge County Faith in Action and an active Commissioner of the Mantorville EDA.

I currently live in Kasson with my wife, where we have a blended family of four children; two each. Our children have pursued rewarding careers as a dentist, software engineer, surgical technician, and embryologist, and we patiently await the day we can complement our family with the addition of grandchildren to our welcoming family!

We enjoy traveling to Indianapolis to spend time with our two children who live there, while also making the most of the time we have with our two who live locally.

Family is extremely important to us, and we are grateful for the opportunity to stay connected and support each of our children in their careers and lives.

We enjoy being active in our faith community and believe strongly in giving our time, talents, and support to the communities we are fortunate to be a part of.

(continued on page 7)

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Three Dodge County Commissioner Seats Will Be Determined in November Election

(continued from page 6)

I am a very active MFD and find it very gratifying helping others in some of their greatest times of need. Serving others and giving back has always been something that is important to our family.

I grew up in and graduated from Dodge Center High School where I subsequently went to Winona State for a BS in Accounting started my career at the CPA firm of McGladrey & Pullen and passed the Uniform CPA exam. After 7 years in public accounting, I worked in various private industries in both Controller and CFP capacities then in 2020 when into real estate; specifically row crop land and rural properties. I thoroughly enjoy helping clients achieve their end goals whether that is in the sale of or purchase as-

pect in quite often, the largest transaction of their lifetime.

I understand how financial decisions affect families, businesses, and community growth. By combining sound financial judgment, analytical thinking, and a commitment to public accountability, I will make thoughtful, data-driven decisions that serve the best interests of Dodge County and its residents.

I proudly serve as an officer and leader of Mantorville Fire and Rescue, President of the Mantorville Fire Department Relief, Co-Treasurer of Dodge County Faith in Action and Mantorville EDA. Past role I have been active in include Faith Lutheran Church Dodge Center church counsel and the Kasson Planning Commissions along with Habitat for Humanity board member. These leadership roles have equipped me with the experience and skills to make meaningful contributions as a public servant.

As a CPA with professional experience in public accounting and several CFO/Controller positions, I have developed the financial expertise, accountability, and problem-solving skills needed to serve our community effectively. My background enables me to analyze financial data, identify cost-saving opportunities, and make informed decisions that protect taxpayer resources while ensuring responsible fiscal management.

One of the most important issues facing

Dodge County is keeping property taxes affordable, particularly for seniors and others living on fixed incomes. Many longtime residents have worked hard to pay off their homes, yet rising property taxes can make it increasingly difficult for them to remain in the communities they helped build. When incomes remain relatively stable but taxes continue to increase, homeowners face financial strain that can force difficult decisions about housing, healthcare, and other essential expenses.

Keeping property taxes in-check also benefits working families, veterans, and individuals with disabilities who often face similar financial constraints is near and dear to my heart. Affordability contributes to stable neighborhoods, encourage homeownership, and strengthen the local economy.

By balancing responsible government with sound financial management, Dodge County can remain a place where people of all ages can afford to live, retire, and thrive. Protecting taxpayers, while preserving essential county services, is fundamental to maintaining a strong and sustainable community.

"With all the unfunded mandates being pushed down by the state, it is ever more imperative that local governmental units roll up their sleeves and perform deep dive critical analysis to mitigate unnecessary property tax increases for our local residents. Maintaining fiscal responsibility while continuing to pro-

vide quality public services should be a priority. County leaders must carefully evaluate spending, seek operational efficiencies, and ensure taxpayer dollars are used wisely. Thoughtful budgeting, responsible planning, and pursuing other funding opportunities can help reduce pressure on local property taxes without compromising essential services."

Dodge County District 3 candidate Jim Checkel is running unopposed for the commissioner seat.

I have lived in the district that I am running in for my entire life.

My family consists of my sister, brother in law and niece. They live outside of our community.

I am currently retired. I worked for nearly 42 years doing research at Mayo. I worked in various labs, including Allergy Research for 30 years and 11 years in Neuroimmunology Research, with fill ins in Immunology and Osteoporosis labs.

I also worked on numerous farms doing work on both crops and livestock.

I ran my own farm for over 25 years.

I also have worked parttime jobs at Barlows, Northern Tool and Equipment and at Ashley Furniture. I also have worked at Patterson Motors, Greenway Co-op, and Owatonna Canning Co.

(continued on page 8)



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The Caring & Sharing Tree provides the opportunity to help those in need at Christmas.

This program is available to full time residents of West Concord, MN with children 18 years and younger, living at home and attending school.

Applications are available at Casey's, Heritage Bank and City Hall, West Concord, MN. Return applications to WC City Hall by November 13, 2026



Three Dodge County Commissioner Seats Will Be Determined in November Election

(continued from page 7)

I have served for 6 terms as a Supervisor for Ashland Township Board, and for the Chair of the Dodge County Association of Townships.

I currently serve on the Dodge County Planning Commission.

I also serve on the Agricultural Fertilizer Research and Promotion Council for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. I serve on an Advisory Committee for the Kasson Clinic, and for the Dodge County Community Foundation.

I hope to accomplish a good relationship with the various departments at the county level and a better understanding of their needs. I have worked in the past with personal from several departments and impressed with the dedication that I see from these people. I hope to be able to help they better accomplish their goals and to better be

able to explain to people not serving in public jobs what it is what each department does and how to work together.

“My goal is to serve the people to the best of my ability, and to be able to say clearly why I make decisions on issues that are presented to the Board”.

Dodge County District 4 candidates Rhonda Toquam

I am a lifelong resident of Dodge County. Growing up on a dairy farm in NE Dodge County, and have lived in my current location since 1987.

I am married to Roger. Together we have 3 sons, who all reside in Dodge County with their families and are actively engaged in our family farming operation.

My years of work have been raising our sons, and being involved in our farming operation.

I previously served on the Dodge County Planning and Zoning Board, and have served as District 4 County Commissioner since the 2016 election. As a commissioner, I have served and still do serve on many committees, Joint Powers Boards, and other boards both related to commissioner work, and volunteer community and church boards.

What I would like to accomplish in the future is continuing to maintain Dodge Counties financial stability, while continuing to keep the county budget and levy increase at a minimum. Working with staff to continue excellent services to our residents, meeting with state officials with hopes of making the needs and requests of rural Minnesota known and understood.

“My goal for the community is making sure Dodge County is a place to be proud of. Maintain our rural landscape and agricultural base, while being a place to come for entertainment, scenery, history, and enjoyment.”

Ashley Martin

I have lived in the community for more than four and a half years and am proud to call it home. Hayfield has been a wonderful place to live. I moved to Minnesota more than 11 years ago for a job opportunity, but I didn’t move too far from my home state of Wisconsin. My husband has lived in the Hayfield community for more than 11 years, and he is what originally brought me to the area. After moving to the area, I have been involved with local organizations and businesses that have given me the opportunity to meet and work with others.

I live in the country just outside Hayfield with my husband, our six fur babies, and our chickens. Most of my family lives in Wisconsin, and I also have family members who live in nearby communities.

I have worked in the healthcare industry for more than 18 years across three institutions. During that time, I have held roles in a variety of research areas as well as education. Each experience has helped me strengthen my skills in working with patients and colleagues, collaborating with other institutions, and building partnerships.

While working full time, I earned an associate degree in clinical research, a bachelor’s

degree in healthcare management, and a master’s degree in business administration. These accomplishments have given me opportunities to expand my knowledge and continue building my skills while reinforcing my belief that hard work pays off.

I have never held public office before. Over the years, I have learned more about county government and how it serves our communities. I have wanted the opportunity to run for county commissioner in my district because I believe I can bring a fresh perspective and make a positive difference.

I believe that if you see an opportunity for change, there is no better time than now to take a chance, step up, and get involved.

I would like to accomplish several things as a county commissioner. District 4 covers a large area, including many townships and residents who deserve to have their voices heard and to feel seen and represented.

One area I would like to focus on is county spending. I believe we need to take a closer look at how taxpayer dollars are being spent and make sure we are being responsible and thoughtful with those resources.

I know this is easier said than done, and it can be easy for someone on the outside looking in to criticize decisions. However, when there are areas where improvements can be made, we should be willing to have those conversations.

(continued on page 9)

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Three Dodge County Commissioner Seats Will Be Determined in November Election

(continued from page 8)

“Every resident deserves to be heard and treated equally. I would like to make it easier for residents to address the commissioners at board meetings rather than having to wait and hope they can be placed on the agenda”.

Another important area is our roads and bridges.

I would like to better understand whether we are taking full advantage of available funding opportunities and doing everything we can to improve and maintain our county infrastructure.

Communication and transparency are also important priorities for me. Residents should be informed through multiple channels and know where to find information about their community, county projects, resources, and the work being done by the county.

My goals for the community include developing a better long-term plan for spending and improving communication with residents

so they know what resources and opportunities are available to them, as well as when road and infrastructure projects are expected to take place.

“We all deserve transparency, honesty, and equal treatment. I believe the county should have a longer-term plan of action for spending and projects, rather than focusing prima-

rily on the next one to three years—and should be willing to share that plan with residents. Having a clear, long-term vision can help the county make more informed decisions and allow residents to better understand where their tax dollars are going and what they can expect in the future.”

Farmers Union to host Meet the Candidates event

BYRON, Minn. – The Olmsted and Dodge County Farmers Unions are hosting a Meet the Candidates event at 6 p.m. Oct. 13 at Frank 'N Stein Restaurant and Lounge, 15 Frontage Road, Byron.

The event will focus on agricultural and rural issues. The following candidates have been invited:

Heather Holmes
Rep. Duane Quam
Simon Glaser
Nels Pierson
Rep. Kim Hicks
Brad Trahan
Wes Lund
Rep. Andy Smith
John Michael Ajouri
Rep. Tina Liebling
Sara Bertschinger
Steve Holm
Sen. Liz Boldon
John Howie
Jason Lohmann
Rep. Steven Jacob
Rep. Brad Finstad
Jake Johnson

Questions will be asked by a moderator. The event will end at 8 p.m.

 **Dodge County Cowboy Church**
2ND SUNDAY NIGHT
5:30 - 7:30 P.M.
October 11

Celebrate the Anniversary of Cowboy Church and hear from Charles Schaal, founder of Cowboy Church in our area.
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NOTICE OF HEARING ON CITY OF WEST CONCORD 2027 STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Notice is hereby given that the City Council of West Concord will meet in the council chambers at the Bell Tower Center, 401 Main Street of West Concord at 6:00p.m. on October 15, 2026 to consider making the proposed 2027 Street and Sidewalk Improvements on Main Street (CSAH 36) from Third Street to Front Street, on Front Street (CSAH 36) from Main Street to Concord Street (CSAH 24), on Third Street from Eugene Street to South Street, on First Street from Eugene Street to Southview Street, on Southview Street from First Street to State Street (TH 56), on all of Sterling Court east of First Street, and on all of Todd Court east of First Street, pursuant to Minn. Stat. §§ 429.011 to 429.111. The estimated cost of the improvement is \$716,868. A reasonable estimate of the impact of the assessment will be available at the hearing. Such persons as desire to be heard with reference to the proposed improvement will be heard at this meeting.

NOTICE OF BIDS – GARAGE DOOR

The City of West Concord is accepting sealed bids for the sale of the overhead garage door at the Fire Hall.

- Condition: The door is sold AS IS. The City of West Concord makes no warranties, express or implied, regarding the condition or usability of the door.
- The door is approx. 9x11 and 2 years old.
- Removal: The successful bidder will be responsible for all costs and arrangements associated with moving the door from city property by November 2, 2026.
- Bidding Deadline: All bids must be received by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 13, 2026. Winning bidder will be announced by the October 15, 2025 Council Meeting.
- No Minimum Bid
- Submission Requirements: Bids must be submitted in a sealed envelope clearly marked “GARAGE BID” and delivered to:

City of West Concord
180 Main St.
P.O. Box 435
West Concord, MN 55985

The City reserves the right to reject any and all bids.

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Senator
Carla Nelson
honored by
Minnesota
Fire Chiefs
for
career-long
support of
fire service

Retiring State Senator Carla Nelson (Rochester) has been honored by the Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association

(MSFCA) for her career long advocacy of fire service. “It is an incredible honor,” Sen. Nelson said. “Firefighters dedicate their careers to keeping us safe. On the best days, it is a difficult job. On the hardest days, it is beyond what most of us can imagine. Every day they go to work, they know it could be their last, but they take on the risks willingly to protect us. Supporting first responders has been one of the highlights of my career and I am proud of the progress we have made together.” During her career in the Legislature, Sen. Nelson worked closely with the

MSFCA to strengthen and support local fire departments. She co-authored legislation that allowed multiple cities, townships, and counties to join together to create regional fire-protection districts, enabling communities to share fire and emergency services while saving money

by pooling resources. Sen. Nelson was also the chief author of a 2024 firefighter pension reform that allowed more fire service workers to be eligible for the PERA Police and Fire plan. Sen. Nelson’s bill was included in the final pension bill that year. On Sunday, September 27,

Senator Nelson spoke at the annual Minnesota Fallen Firefighter Memorial Service. The ceremony draws hundreds of Minnesotans including former and active firefighters, and families, to remember Minnesota firefighters who died in the line of duty. MSFCA is a member-dri-

ven organization representing more than 2,000 fire service workers from nearly 500 departments across Minnesota. It provides training, education, and professional development from line officers up to fire chiefs.



Sen. Nelson poses with White Bear Lake Fire Chief Greg Peterson (left) and Edina Fire Chief Andrew Slama (right)

Public Accuracy Testing of Dodge County
Election Equipment

Public Accuracy Testing of Dodge County election equipment for the November 3, 2026 State General Election will be held on Friday, October 16th at 9:00 am. The testing will take place in Conference Room B of the Government Services Building located at 721 N Main St, Mantorville, MN. The public is welcome to attend. Anyone with questions should call Dodge County at 507-635-6239.

**Opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are not necessarily those of The Messenger.*

To the Editor:

It is with deep gratitude that KARE’S officers along with its members wish to thank the many businesses who sponsored the fundraiser event---WINE, BEER, WHISKEY & CHOCOLATE Tasting And Silent Auction held on September 19th. Listing them in alphabetical order they are: BLUFF BROTHERS BREWING, CHOCOLATE SHOPPE, DODGE COUNTY INDEPENDENT, CZAPLEWSKI FAMILY FUNERAL HOME and CREMATORY, HAROLD’S CLUB, HARMONY SPIRITS, HYVEE, KATH FLOORING, K-M TELECOM, MBT BANK, MCKERN FINANCIAL GROUP, INC., SUNSHINE FOODS, TEAM O’MALLEY – COUNSELOR REALTY, THE MESSENGER, THRIVENT and lastly WELSH EQUIPMENT, INC.

These sponsors along with those who attended the event made it possible to continue the care and upkeep of the 1918 Historic School until such time it can be restored. Many thanks to all.
(KARE) KASSON ALLIANCE FOR RESTORATION

Notice to Voters
November 3, 2026
Statewide General Election



Access Your Sample Ballot	Find Your Polling Place	Additional Election Information
- Your official ballot will have the names of all candidates for your precinct. - To see a list of the names of candidates and questions that will be on the ballot for your precinct visit: mnvotes.gov/myballot - You may view a sample ballot online by scanning:  - You may also request to have a free copy of your sample ballot mailed to you.	- Election Day is Tuesday, November 3rd. - You can find your Election Day Polling Place by visiting: mnvotes.gov/pollfinder Voting Before Election Day - You can vote early with an absentee ballot starting Friday, September 18th. - You can vote early by mail, in person, or from the military or abroad. - Learn more by scanning: 	- Election Day Polling Places and Times can be found on the Dodge County website. - Additional hours and information for voting early can also be found on the Dodge County website. www.co.dodge.mn.us - Check to see if you are pre-registered to vote by scanning: 

Contact Your
Local Election Official

Your county election official:

- Can mail you a sample ballot for free
- Keeps your voter registration record
- Handles other parts of the voting process

General Phone: 507-635-6239
Website: www.co.dodge.mn.us
Email: Dodge.Admin@dodgecountymn.gov
Address: Government Services Building
721 N Main St
Mantorville, MN 55955



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