

Following the Cross of Christ

"I came, I saw, I conquered." Words attributed to Julius Caesar. A human god. But did he? Conquer?

What does that even mean? To corrode what is good? To eliminate an enemy? To take what is not yours to take? To kill without empathy? To kill the spirit for gain?

This month we journey with Jesus to the cross, where Jesus faces death and dies. Taking with him the sins of humanity. A living God and a living sacrifice. For the good of all people. The Good. A free will offering for our sake.

Humanity cries out in pain and God responds with hope. Not the eradication of human suffering or the end of bad players, but resurrection hope. The hope of a new day where peace prevails.

This is why we follow. No, we pursue, persevere, diligently and fervently follow the cross of Christ. He who is the true King. He who has conquered death. He who has given all of himself so that we may live fully, with love. Even through our sorrows and worries. Even when we are beside ourselves with fear. When we are in pain, sickness and sadness, Jesus is there with us, leading, alongside and behind us, shepherding in the midst of the world's wolves.

Now, I'm not going all gloomy on you. Just driving it home. Jesus lives. And because he lives, we too live. And will live. That is our strength and it is our Holy Spirit urging, to not only follow Jesus to the cross, but to cross over the boundaries of fear so that we can spread the gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ, in word and deed, to a world that desperately needs love and hope. We know where Jesus is headed . . . where Jesus is. Let us continue on this journey with hope in our hearts and faith in our bones, following the One who knows us and who loves us with completeness.

*May the peace of Christ reign in our hearts,
Pastor Sue*

**PRESIDENT**

Rita Gustafson

VICE PRESIDENT

David Long

TREASURER

Nancy Patterson

SECRETARY

Becky Potenberg

LEARNING

Miranda Luder

PROPERTY

Mark Staes

WORSHIP

Becky VanErstvelde

SERVICE

Kim Luder

YOUTH

Ruby Clark

WITNESS

Jessica Clark

STEWARDSHIP

Allison Senkbeil

PASTOR

Sue Hoff

**Wednesday Lenten Dinner (6:00PM) / Service (7:00PM) Schedule:**

Feb 25	San Jose (at Trinity)	1330 13th St Moline
Mar 4	First (Moline)	1230 5th Ave Moline
Mar 11	Salem	1724 15th St Moline
Mar 18	Calvary / St James	3145 31st Ave Rock Island
Mar 25	First (Rock Island)	1600 20th St Rock Island

Holy Week at Salem

Maundy Thursday

April 2 6:00PM

Good Friday

April 3 6:00PM

Easter Sunday

April 5 10:00AM

Annual Congregational Financial Meeting 2/8/2026

Meeting Opening

Meeting called to order at 11:11 AM with an opening prayer

Quorum confirmed with at least 30 people in attendance

Minutes from June 2025 meeting approved by vote

Motioned by Allison Senkbil, 2nd by Brett Menard, unanimously approved

Nominating Committee

Positions for church council are open; members encouraged to consider taking roles

Interested members should contact the chair

Mutual Ministry Update

Committee provides guidance and serves as a listening ear for congregation members

Supports both the pastor and congregation

Linda Ontiveros, Chris Castle, Jim Kernan, and Pastor Sue

Reconciling in Christ (RIC) status

Congregation has been accepted as a Reconciling in Christ congregation

Will begin utilizing educational and support resources provided

Discussion about where to display the welcome statement (not in constitution)

Constitution is being revised to include RIC status but not the welcome statement

Suggestion made to put stickers on doors

Pastor Sue's Call Vote

Vote to continue to utilize ballot despite incorrect date

Rita Gustafson motioned, Bob Castle 2nd, unanimously approved

Vote taken to extend Pastor Sue's call to permanent (currently in beginning of year 3 of original 3-year term)

Vote results: 47 yes, 1 no - motion carried

Rock Island and Moline ELCA Churches (RIM) and Pathways update

President acknowledged concerns about the process being worrisome/scary

Emphasized Salem is not in danger of closing: "Only way an ELCA congregation closes is a vote at a meeting like this - two-thirds voting to close at two separate meetings weeks apart"

Reality check: 8 congregations within 3.5 mile radius, all dipping into endowments

RIM Churches (Salem, Trinity, Iglesia San Jose Obrero, Calvary, St. James, St. Johns, 1st Lutheran Moline and 1st Lutheran Rock Island)

Not all 8 churches will remain open in 5-10 years

Congregation voted on two questions regarding RIM participation:

Willingness to participate in joint worship and social activities

Willingness to work with other churches in cohort toward mission

Both questions received 42 yes votes and 6 no votes

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Budget Report and Financial Matters

2025 Budget Performance:

Income: \$215,174 (budgeted \$203,000)

Major expenses included repairs to AC units, boiler, and kitchen

Deficit of \$83,616 (budgeted deficit was \$75,180)

Deficit covered by Edward Jones account and mission savings

Borrowed \$40,000 for repairs

Voted

David Long motioned, John Whitcomb 2nd, unanimously approved

2026 Proposed Budget:

Projected income: \$213,000

Property and liability insurance increased to \$18,840

3% salary increases approved for pastor, administrative assistant, pianist, and director of family/children's ministries

Added bell choir director position

Total projected expenses: \$298,000

Projected deficit: \$85,163

Budget approved by vote

Natalie Hoff motioned, Mark Staes 2nd, unanimously approved

Building Issues

Ongoing concerns about elevator, roof, and boiler

Current elevator breakdown mentioned, cost unknown

Discussion about endowment fund usage

Constitution being revised to provide more flexibility in spending endowment income

Caution expressed about relying on endowment as long-term solution

Clarification that only income from endowment is being used, not principal

Other Financial Reports

Financial Secretary Report showing detailed breakdown of offerings

Auditor's report confirming cash flow

Report on committee funds and their specific purposes

Various designated funds reviewed including scholarships, memorials, and building repair funds

John Whitcomb motioned, Kathy Hotchkiss 2nd, unanimously approved

Constitution Update

Constitution is being revised

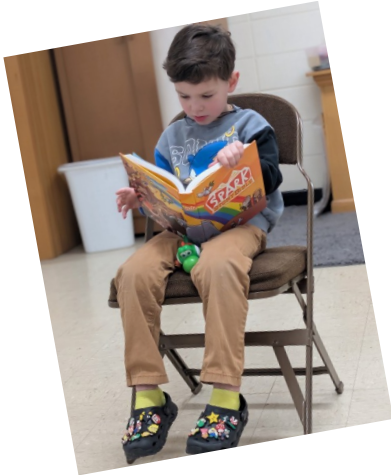
Changes will be highlighted in yellow for easy identification

Will require council approval and then congregation approval

Adjourned at 12:20 PM

Dick motioned, Brett 2nd, unanimously approved

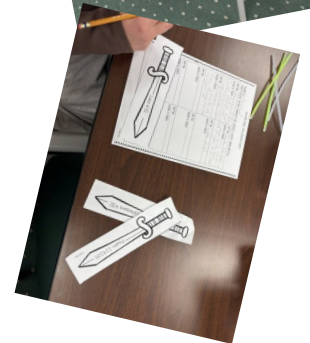
Youth News



Sunday School



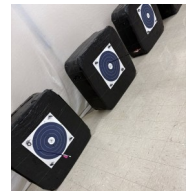
Confirmation



Did someone say OVERNIGHT?!



Thanks
Sally, Emily,
Monika and Miranda





Stewardship Corner:

Our June Congregational meeting is coming up fast! Are you wondering what it is like to be on church council or on a church committee? Well look no further! Being on church council allows you to focus your talents and gifts to progress toward Salem's long term goal and mission.

Church council meets once a month for approximately one hour to discuss what is going on at church, yearly finances, building maintenance, and other smaller committee needs. Church committees, while different than church council, are still very important for our congregation.

Committees have a little more flexibility than church council, meeting less frequently (or as needed). We have a wide variety of committees including (but not limited to) Property, Outreach, and Finance. If you are ever interested in sharing your talents, please see myself, Pastor Sue, or someone on council!

Allison Senkbeil
Stewardship

Memorials Received - February 2026

In Loving Memory of Tom Tagtmeier

Given by: Dick and Margaret Castle

Jim and Marti Kernan

Cathy Bigelow

Bob and Nadyne Stockhecke

Bonnie Pokrajac

Barb Borden

Louise Getz

Gary and Tina Lear

Mary Lindgren

Beth Tagtmeier



At the February
Congregational Meeting,
Pastor Sue was elected
as our permanent pastor!

YAY!!

Thank you to the BEST Crew around!

Recently, Susan Froeschle and Debb Thompson surprised the Thursday morning crew with donuts and T-shirts in honor of Wayne's 80th birthday! **Thank you and we appreciate you.**



Thursday Morning Crew is "updating" the wainscoting - the narthex landing, the bench in the narthex are done. Next up - by the old elevator door.



Before and After -
It looks great!

Celebrating Dick and Margaret Castle's Birthdays



Shelly Wood	3/1
Camiel VanErstvelde	3/6
Bob Prusator	3/9
Rene Robinson-Morford	3/10
Macy McCurdy	3/11
Karen Ege	3/12
Bob Castle	3/13
Karen Staes	3/16
Stephanie Prince	3/19
Darla Smith	3/24
Todd McCurdy	3/25
Jase Maertens	3/26
Mark Staes	3/27
Emily Flippo	3/28
Chris Beierlein	3/31



Thank you for all who celebrated with us - in person or via mail. You all mean so much to us.

Dick and Margaret



all anew
WOMEN OF THE ELCA

SERENITY CIRCLE

**Please join us
Monday, March 2**

In the Library 12:30 PM

All the women of Salem are welcome!

Stewardship Statistics

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

	Jan Actual	Jan Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Income	\$12,951.15	\$13,491.00	#12,951.15	\$13,491.00
Expenses	\$27,800.89	\$23,3056.37	\$27,800.89	\$23,306.37
Net Income	(\$14,849.74)	(\$9,815.37)	(\$14,849.74)	(\$9,815.37)

A T T E N D A N C E

Date	Sunday	Public	Private	YouTube	Total
Jan 4	55	72	31	2	160
Jan 11	58	65	32	4	159
Jan 18	55	61	31	2	149
Jan 25	53	71	30	5	132

Altar Flower Sponsor Schedule

March 2026

Mar 1	Karin Martin
Mar 8	Karin Martin
Mar 15	Steve & Renee' Morford
Mar 22	Deb Kronfeld
Mar 29	Palms (no flowers)

Altar Guild / Worship March 2026

Paraments - Allison Senkbeil
Communion Set up - Sunday School

Greeters

Mar 1	Rita Gustafson
Mar 8	Natalie Hoff
Mar 15	Becky VanErstvelde
Mar 22	Deb Kronfeld
Mar 29	Darlene Hann

Assisting Ministers - March 2026

Sunday

Assistant

Mar 1	Dick Fislar
Mar 8	Jon Gustafson
Mar 15	Lizzie Dail
Mar 22	David Long
Mar 29	Allison Senkbeil

Salem Lutheran Church

1724 15th Street
Moline, IL 61265
309-764-5614

www.salemmoline.org

Worship:

Sunday

Fellowship: 9:00AM

Sunday School: 9:00AM

Worship: 10:00AM

Office Hours:

Monday thru Friday
8:00AM to 12:00PM

Last, But Not Least....

Missions in Tanzania

Dr. Dennis and Paula Lofstrom and International Health Partners-TZ have been building hospitals in Tanzania since at least 2004 when the Hartmans traveled there. The Lofstroms were in charge of converting the leprosarium at Iambi in the old Augustana Mission field to a general hospital. St. James began support by contributing mattresses and pillows for the project. We met their builder son David West there. They next rebuilt a clinic into a hospital at Nyakato, Mwansa near Lake Victoria. The main emphasis later was the development of the Children's Hospital at Zinga near Bagamoyo, north of Dar es Salaam. IHP-TZ and Mary Ellen Kitundu also began a school of nursing at Dodoma. To answer the need another completely new medical center is to be opened on March 1 at Chihoni near Dodoma. Paula and David will visit St. James to share information about the progress of construction of the campus, opportunities for volunteers and contributions for this project at a chicken and potluck dinner at St. James March 28 at 5 pm and the service and fellowship on March 29, 2026 at 8:30 am. You are invited to attend if you want.



David, Miriam, Dr. Powell, Paula, Dr. Bon, and Sele



Chihoni Outpatient Building

Reservations for the potluck contact

Bethany Weipert (309)235-9279 or

Ruth Anne Hartman (309)738-4663