

**First Lutheran Church**  
**309 Ninth Street North**  
**Northwood, IA 50459**

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Permit No. 33

# **First Lutheran Focus    March 2026**

Address Service Requested

<u><b>Week</b></u>	<u><b>Counter</b></u>	<u><b>Lay Reader</b></u>	<u><b>Greeter</b></u>	<u><b>Acolyte</b></u>
<b>March 1</b>	David & Sharron Petznick	Tim Knutson	Amundsons	Kellan Stambaugh Ryker Amundson
<b>March 8</b>	Russ & Delores Knudson	Delores Knudson	Johnsons	MaKayla Reyerson Caleb Johnson
<b>March 15</b>	Mike & Judy Stevens	Doug Krull	Janssens	Austin Schutz Tucker Janssen
<b>March 22</b>	Stu & Kim Anderson	Stuart Anderson	Reyersons	Brianna Perkins MaKayla Reyerson
<b>March 29</b>	Randy & Laure Buehrer	Passion Play	Holstads	Graham Holstad Max Rugland

**Share Shoppe**  
**Saturday, March 7th**

# PASTOR'S PAGE

Forty Minutes. I'm sure it took that long for Ramu to find a blue pen to do his homework at least one day. Ramu and Atleghan are typical fourth grade boys and we spent most school days working together on their homework either before or after supper (and sometimes both). I have many, many more stories to share about my three weeks at DaySpring Children's Village. You will hear them on Sunday mornings and in different places that we are together.

This Lent I plan on spending more time reflecting on my experience and dream about a time when I can return and continue my connections with the students and staff at DaySpring.

Lent is an important time in the church year of hearing and living into our connection to the whole story of faith. The forty days of Lent connect us to the **forty days** Noah and his family spent in the Ark with all those animals. It is but a small amount of time compared to the **forty years** that the Hebrews wandered in the wilderness. It also connects us to the **forty days** Jesus spent fasting and praying in the wilderness before he began his public ministry.

We have already gathered for Ash Wednesday where many of us who worshiped left with the smudge of ash in the shape of a cross remembering that we are dust and to dust we will return. We also gathered on Shrove Tuesday for a pancake meal to use up the rich foods such as eggs, milk, and sugar, before the fasting period of the **forty days** of Lent. For some Christian traditions liturgical fasting calls for eating simple food while abstaining from meat, dairy products, or eggs. In the Lutheran tradition we have emphasized focus on self-examination.

I invite you to spend an extra **forty minutes** in worship each week during Lent. Worship on Wednesdays won't be quite 40 minutes but will help give focus and be more intentional in our life of faith. If you are looking at the big picture, this is very do-able and you don't need a blue pen to join us.

## PASTORAL ACTS January & February

### Funerals

Lee Swenson	1-24-2026
Laura Walton	2-21-2026

### Baptisms

Abigail Riley Thirnbeck	2-22-2026
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# YOUTH NEWS

With the Lent season upon us, things for both groups change up quite a bit. Senior High students will be encouraged to attend the Lenten services each Wednesday night, and our group time will be made up of shorter lessons and games. Junior High will split into two teams and also play many different games with lessons on Sunday night. Team building is such an important part of both groups and it's always fun to see the students rely on others to help achieve the goal of a game, while learning to trust others at the same time.

We did have a great month with some awesome lessons. We started out with a lesson called "Speak Life" looking at positivity towards others and how God uses all of us to make impacts on others lives (Matthew 23:17). We didn't have a lesson on Super Bowl Sunday but instead gathered here at the church to hang out. Some played games, others spent a lot of time creating food in the kitchen, and a few actually watched the game. There were over 50 Jr. + Sr. students who showed up that night as well as a few college students.

The month of March is pretty straight forward – both groups will meet on their respective nights, and Sr. High will be invited to join in on a Sunday night to invade Jr. High Youth. At the end of the month, the current 8th graders will be invited to attend Sr. High youth for one week to see what that group is all about.

We are putting plans together for DayCamp this summer. Students are already picking out which classes to lead and our theme this year is going to be Lava Lava Luau. Dates for DayCamp will be announced at the end of next month!

# First Lutheran Church Council

## Regular Meeting

January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026

### We Assemble in God's Name

- Members Present: Kris, Pastor Becky, Hayley, Judy, Gina, Connie, Mariah, Mike, Kevin

### We Celebrate our past

- Presidential Correspondence
  - Reviewing previously asked questions in preparation for annual meeting
- Secretary's Report
  - Mariah Ballantyne will take minutes for today's meeting. Reviewed previous months minutes.
- Treasurer's Report
  - Reviewed end of year summary in preparation for the annual meeting
- Pastor's Report
  - Claire Davidson and Gary Nierlen lined up to cover during pastor sabbatical
    - JoAnn Lower will cover children's sermon
    - Feb 1<sup>st</sup> – Bishop Kevin Jones will preach and preside over communion at both churches
  - Pastor Linda Presthold-Johnson will provide pastoral coverage
  - Pastor sabbatical January 20<sup>th</sup> – Feb 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026
  - Feed My Starving Children
    - We are in need of a Hospitality Coordinator, Fundraising Coordinator, and Promotion Coordinator
    - Packing shifts will start on Monday March 23<sup>rd</sup> 6-8pm, Tuesday March 24<sup>th</sup> 10-12pm and 1-3pm and 4-6pm for the clean up crew.
- **Motion to approve all reports (Connie/Kimberly)**

### We Present Our Offering

- Worship
  - Music is scheduled through February
  - Ash Wednesday will be joint service with DCVL on February 18<sup>th</sup>
  - Readers have been scheduled through January
  - Discussion around old choir robes that are stored in totes downstairs. Committee has reached out to several avenues to see if anyone is interested in them. Council agreed to dispose of robes.
- Inspire
  - Continues to go well each week
- Education
  - 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> have been combined the last couple of weeks due to low attendance
  - Pre-school program is well attended each week

- Attendance is typically lower after the holiday's
- Kids sign in church February 15<sup>th</sup> and Palm Sunday March 29<sup>th</sup>
- Property
  - Property committee has not had an opportunity to meet since last council meeting
    - Will have a mtg within the next month
  - Need to look at stage steps in fellowship hall.
  - Bids are being received for electronic locks for church doors
- Fellowship
  - Will do soup and sandwiches for lent again.
  - Looking at April 19<sup>th</sup> for the Church Celebration
    - Planning mtg forthcoming

**Concerns for the Present** – N/A

**Communion Assignments:**

- January 18<sup>th</sup> (Annual Mtg) – Mariah, Kris, Kimberly
- February 1<sup>st</sup> – Weston, Connie, Kris
- February 18<sup>th</sup> (Ash Wednesday) –
  - Noon – Mike
  - Evening – Mariah and Kevin

We Go Out in God's Name

- **Motion to adjourn (Connie/Hayley)**
- Lord's Prayer

Next Council Meeting: Brief organizational meeting following annual meeting to elect officers

Devotion:

# Financials

## **First Lutheran Financial Update**

### **January 2026**

Income	\$ 11,620.06
Electronic Income	\$ 2,943.35
Expense	\$19,435.55
End of Month	\$(4,772.14)

### **YTD as of January 2026**

Income	\$11,620.06
Electronic Income	\$2,943.35
Other Income	\$0.00
Use of Church	\$0.00
Expense	\$19,435.55
End of Month	\$(4,872.14)

## **Donations**

### **Memorials**

IMO Leland Swenson      \$50.00

## **January General Budget Expenses**

Payroll:	\$ 13,028.90
E-Giving Expense	\$ 46.64
Church Maintenance	\$ 105.68
Utilities	\$ 3,137.84
Telephone	\$ 192.93
Office Expense	\$ 2,305.90
Worship	\$ 242.66
Insurance	\$ 0.00
N. Iowa Synod	\$ 375.00
Total Expenses	\$ 19,435.55
Income	\$ 14,563.41
Net	\$ (4,872.14)

## **First Lutheran Missions**

### **January 2026**

Riverside Bible Camp	\$
Good Samaritan Fund	\$
Lutheran World Relief & World Hunger	\$
Bremwood - LSI	\$
Operation Christmas Child	\$
Education Fund	\$
Youth Fund	\$
Sunday School Fund	\$
Caring Tree	\$
Meals on Wheels	\$
Manna	\$
Heifer International	\$
Campers Fund	\$
Dayspring Children's Village	\$
Northern Lights Shelter	\$
LRH Auxiliary	\$
TOTAL	\$



- 1 Jessica Butler, Sarah Odom
- 2 Kailey Eskildsen, Miranda Hodson
- 3 Piper Brunsvold, Richard Kraft
- 4 Larry Brekken, Jami Tolzmann
- 5 Randy Severson
- 6
- 7 Wanda Love
- 8 Arvin Lande, Keith Olson
- 9 Levi Hanson, Janie Odegaard, Emmet Urbatsch, Paisley Wright
- 10 Jane Bloomingdale, Merle Hanson, Sandy Liljedahl, Sofie Quam, Avarie Skellenger, Ty Moretz
- 11 Mark Johnson, Donna Tyrrell, Karli Watts
- 12
- 13 Andrew Breitsprecher, Emily Christianson, Hannah Rickertson, Dennis Johnson, Hayden Moore, Blake Severson, Marilyn Skellenger, Melissa Thofson, Fredrick King
- 14 Allen Anderson, Mary Willand, Annika Sogge, Opal Walk
- 15 Wesley Ballantyne, Alexis Halbach, Jaxon Tufte
- 16 Megan Ott
- 17 Gerald Hengesteg
- 18 Susan Cowell, Gary Nerlien, Craig Toft, Joan Watts
- 19 Kayla Thirnbeck, Maynard Midtgaard, Jenna O'Neill Weitzel
- 20 Valerie Abrams
- 21 James Bloomingdale, Leila Gangstad, Wyatt Willand,
- 22 Cheryl Gentz, Paul Ubben, Cooper Maher
- 23 Nikkole Koenig, Kellan Stambaugh
- 24 Hannah Severson, Hunter Julson, Samantha Haberman, Chad Trenhaile, Wyatt Turner
- 25 Sam Hengesteg, Jolene Hickle,
- 26 Ethan Adams
- 27 Dani Gentz
- 28 Susan Grundel, Spencer Hulshizer, Molly Hunchis, David Penfold, Mark Tufte, Payton Hertel
- 29 Jay Hopperstad, Bruce Odden
- 30 Marjorie Odden, Jayla Varner, Theresa Van Sabben, Taylor Van Sabben
- 31 Cindy Borcharding, Kollyns Kortan, Rose Marie Kruger, Evelyn Patterson

# News and Announcements

## Job Opening Part-time Position

We are accepting applications/resumes for the position of Building Custodian. This is a part-time position that consists of cleaning, set-up and re-setting of rooms for the church building. Full job description can be found at the church office Monday through Thursday 9:00am to 12:00 noon.



All are welcome to join in worship every Wednesday for our Lenten services. There will be a soup and sandwich meal at 11:00am in the Fireside Room prior to the noon service in the chapel. There will also be a soup and sandwich meal at 5:00pm in the Fireside room prior to the 6:15pm service. We are still in need of volunteers to prepare and serve the meals. Please sign up on the sheet outside the sanctuary by the bulletins. Your help is greatly appreciated!

Our sincere condolences to Nichole Husske and her family and friends. Her mother, Laura Walton, went to be with our Lord on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Laura's funeral was held on February 21<sup>ST</sup> at First Lutheran Church.



We celebrate with Kayla and Parker Thirnbeck as their daughter, Abigail Riley, was baptized February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026 at First Lutheran Church.

# News and Announcements



Parents and students~ now is the time to sign up for Riverside Bible Camp. Information can be found on the poster in the narthex at church or on the Riverside website.

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Hungry, Hungry Helpers Feed My Starving Children packing event is this month. There are many ways you can be involved. You, your family (no age limits), your co-workers or clubs are invited to sign up for a shift. The packing event will be at The Timbers on Monday March 23 6:00 – 8:00pm, Tuesday March 24 10:00 am – 12:00 noon; 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm; and 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm. Financial gifts are welcome and your help is needed.

<https://give.fmsc.org/campaign/2026-095ea-northwood-ia-hungry-hungry-helpers/c743314>

or you can use this QR code:



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# News and Announcements



*Daylight savings time is quickly approaching. It will begin on Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 am. This is a reminder to set your clocks ahead one hour.*



## WEDNESDAY LENTEN SERVICES SCHEDULE: Silent Witnesses

March 4:	The Nail	Noon & 6:15 pm
March 11:	The Spear	Noon & 6:15 pm
March 18:	The Shroud	Noon & 6:15 pm
March 25:	The Stone	Noon & 6:15 pm

Soup and sandwiches will be served an hour prior to both services.



*Save The Date!*  
**First Lutheran Church  
Anniversary Celebration!**



**April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026 - 10:00am**



Special Service  
Special Music  
Luncheon to follow  
Historical Display

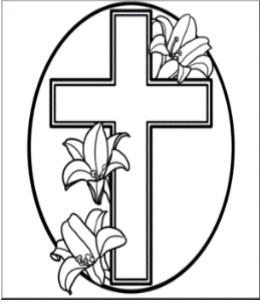


**More info to come!**

All current and former FLC members, along with members of the community, are invited to join us for a fun-filled day. Friends and family are welcome!

ANYONE INTERESTED IN HELPING WITH THIS EVENT,  
PLEASE CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE. 641-324-2984

# News and Announcements



Orders for Easter Lilies can be made in honor of or in memory of loved ones. The price of a Lily is \$15.00 per plant and your payment must be made with your order. Names will be printed in the Easter bulletins.

Please fill out your order completely and turn into the office by Wednesday March 18th.

In honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Given by \_\_\_\_\_

# of plants \_\_\_\_\_ x \$15 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_



Please turn in your Easter Donations by Wednesday, **March 18th**. You may donate to a fund of your choice; suggested funds are on the backside. Donations will be printed in the Easter bulletin.

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

Designated Fund: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

## Easter Memorials and Honorariums

Easter Memorial to remember a loved one who has passed.

And / Or

Easter Honorarium to give thanks for someone living. You may designate your Memorial or Honorarium to any fund of your choice; suggestions listed below.

**General Fund:**

Ongoing budgeted expenses of the congregation

**Worship:**

Music, Special Services

**Property:**

Building updates, Parsonage, General Maintenance

**Education:**

Sunday School, Riverside Bible Camp, Confirmation Students, Summer Day Camp, Adult Education

**Social Ministry:**

Manna of Worth County, Meals on Wheels, Share Shoppe, Good Samaritan Fund, Lutheran World Relief, ELCA World Hunger & Disaster Relief

**Fellowship:**

Events for congregation and community

**Inspire Service:**

General expenses related to each service

# March 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>1</b> 9:00am: Lent 2 Service/ Communion/Baptism 10:10am: Sunday School 10:30am: DCV 6:30pm: J.H Youth	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 1:00pm: Staff Mtg. 6:00pm: Worship Comm 7:00pm: AA–Al-Anon	<b>4</b> 11:00am: Soup/Sandwiches 12:00 noon: Lenten Service 4:00pm: Confirmation 5:00 pm: Soup/Sandwiches 6:15pm: Lenten Service 7:00pm: Choir 7:00pm: SH Youth	<b>5</b> 8:30: Quilting 9:00: Prayer Group 6:30: Cub Scouts	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> 9:00am: Lent 3 Service 10:30am: DCV 6:30pm: JH. Youth  **Daylight Savings Time Starts*	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 7:00pm: AA–Al-Anon	<b>11</b> 11:00am: Soup/Sandwiches 12:00 noon: Lenten Service 5:00 pm: Soup/Sandwiches 6:15pm: Lenten Service 7:00pm: Choir 7:00pm: SH Youth	<b>12</b> 8:30: Quilting 9:00: Prayer Group 6:30: Cub Scouts	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 9:00am: Lent 4 Service/ Communion 10:30am: DCV 3:00pm: LRH 6:30pm: J.H Youth	<b>16</b>  LRH Annual Meeting at First	<b>17</b> 6:00pm: Council Mtg 7:00pm: AA–Al-Anon	<b>18</b> 11:00am: Soup/Sandwiches 12:00 noon: Lenten Service 2:00pm: Maple Crt worship 4:00pm: Confirmation 5:00 pm: Soup/Sandwiches 6:15pm: Lenten Service 7:00pm: Choir 7:00pm: SH Youth	<b>19</b> 8:30: Quilting 9:00: Prayer Group 6:30: Cub Scouts	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 9:00am: Lent 5 Service 10:10am: Sunday School 10:30am: DCV 6:30pm: J.H Youth	<b>23</b>  6 – 8 pm Feed My Starving Children at The Timbers	<b>24</b> 7:00pm: AA–Al-Anon 10am – noon, 1 – 3pm, 4 – 6pm Feed My Starving Children at The Timbers	<b>25</b> 11:00am: Soup/Sandwiches 12:00 noon: Lenten Service 4:00pm: Confirmation 5:00 pm: Soup/Sandwiches 6:15pm: Lenten Service 7:00pm: Choir 7:00pm: SH Youth	<b>26</b> 8:30: Quilting 9:00: Prayer Group 6:30: Cub Scouts	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> 9:00am: Palm Sunday Service 10:10am: Sunday School 10:30am: DCV 6:30pm: J.H Youth	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 7:00pm: AA–Al-Anon				

First Lutheran Office hours are Monday through Thursday from 9:00am until Noon