



Augustana News

February 2026

Last month when we marked Epiphany, we remembered the magi's journey, following the star to the young Jesus. The word epiphany means a realization or a revelation! God was revealed to those foreign travelers in an unexpected way in the humble baby Jesus of Bethlehem.

Since Epiphany, we have had many readings in church meant to reveal to us who Jesus is: At his baptism in the Jordan we were told he is God's beloved Son (Matthew 3:17), as he began his ministry we saw that Jesus values relationship (John 1:39) and goes to places of darkness to meet people (Matthew 4:16-17), we learned that Jesus' call comes to ordinary folks (Matthew 4:18-22), and in the Beatitudes we got a glimpse of what Jesus' kingdom is like (Matthew 5:5-11). Many epiphanies straight from scripture about who Jesus is and what he came to do.

Where has Jesus been revealed in your life recently? In the waters of Baptism or bread and cup of Holy Communion? In the Word of scripture or preached in worship? In the community of our church, or in your community beyond church walls? In moments of peace or joy?

In just a couple of weeks we will enter the season of Lent on Ash Wednesday (February 18), a time of preparation before Holy Week and Easter. In the Holy Week story epiphanies of God come to us in ways we might not anticipate: in the humanity of Jesus, in betrayal and denial, in death.

It is easy for me to recognize God in the face of my children or the kids of our church and community, and harder for me to recognize God at the graveside of someone who died too soon. It is easy for me to recognize God in the cooperation and service of our congregations, and harder for me to recognize God in times of conflict or disagreement. It is easy for me to recognize God in a quiet moment of peace when the day's work is done, and harder for me to recognize God in the trying times our country faces.

But our God is never far away. Our God is one who promises to show up, often in places where we least expect it. Perhaps if now in these weeks after Epiphany, we practice looking for revelations of God each day, we will be better prepared to recognize when God shows up in places we least expect. As people who worship the God of surprise appearances and everyday epiphanies, those difficult spaces are just the spaces where we are called to testify most clearly to the love and promise of God.

As we continue to journey together in the coming Lenten season, let us boldly share our faith as God continues to light the way.

Peace and blessings,
Pastor Emily



| February 1- Epiphany 4 | February 8 - Epiphany 5 | February 15 - Transfiguration | February 22- Lent 1 |
|---|--|---|--|
| Michah 6:1-8 Psalm 15 1 Cor 1:18-31 Matthew 5:1-12 | Isaiah 58:1-9a-12 Psalm 112:1-10 1 Cor 2:1-16 Matthew 5:13-20 | Exodus 24:12-18 Psalm 2 2 Peter 1:16-21 Matthew 17:1-0 | Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7 Psalm 32 Romans 5:12-19 Matthew 4:1-11 |

**February 15-
Ash Wednesday**

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17
or
Isaiah 58:1-12

Psalm 51:1-17
2 Cor 5:20b-6:10
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21



PRAYER LIST

*Please contact us with updates,
praises, & requests.*

Health Concerns

Ken Davis
Sister Nora Frost
Barbara Hillyer
Joel –Barbar's son-in-law

Other concerns

Military Service Members

**Save the date for the next Prayer Vigil for the Immigrant Community
Monday, February 23, 6 PM at Southside Christian Church in Kokomo.**

Faith leaders continue to be deeply concerned about the state of Miami Correctional Facility being used to detain immigrants. This public prayer witness calls our elected leaders to pursue transparency, accountability, and policies rooted in compassion and justice. The gathering will include scripture readings, candle lighting, and prayer calling for compassion, dignity, and justice for immigrants and refugees. Those in attendance will stand in prayerful solidarity with the immigrant communities and call attention to the urgent need for humane treatment of all people.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 18! Join us for our Lent series *All In!*

Have you ever decided to go all in on something? Maybe it was when you chose your profession or decided to get married. Perhaps you made the exciting but terrifying decision to become a homeowner. If you came to faith later in life, maybe it was when you decided to be baptized.

When it comes to our faith, Jesus shows what it is like to be all in for the reign of God. It means being fully invested, deeply committed. There are no backup options. Everything is on the line.

Before we can go all in, though, God shows us the way. God knows that going all in for this beautiful broken world is a challenge, so God goes all in on our behalf first, revealing what it is like to bet it all on love.

God is all in for us. Let's go all in for God's love, too.

Here's a peek at our weekly themes. Each week, in addition to exploring scripture, we'll look at how one part of our worship prepares us to go all in for God's work in the world.

February 18, Ash Wednesday *All In for Repentance*

Going all in on the culturally unpopular idea of repentance brings us back to God.

Worship connection: Imposition of Ashes

February 22, First Sunday in Lent *All In for Creation*

Being all in for creation begins with acknowledging that we are part of it.

Worship connection: Confession and Forgiveness

March 1, Second Sunday in Lent *All In for the Unknown*

Answering any call from God involves entering whole-heartedly into the unknown.

Worship connection: The Creeds

March 8, Third Sunday in Lent *All In for Wonder*

Relationship with God draws out our questions, wonder, and a true sense of awe.

Worship connection: The Eucharistic Prayer

March 15, Fourth Sunday in Lent *All In for Relationship*

God doesn't hesitate to enter into the messiness of human relationships, and calls us to do the same.

Worship connection: Passing of the Peace

March 22, Fifth Sunday in Lent *All In for Letting Go*

Letting go of expectations allows us to make way for God to do something wondrous and new, taking flight on a leap of faith.

Worship connection: Prayers of the People

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(Save the Dates—Continued from Page 3)

March 29, Palm and Passion Sunday All In for the Highs and Lows

Balancing Palm Procession and Passion on this day practices entering into all the highs and lows of human life with our congregations and with Christ.

Worship connection: Blessing of the Palms

April 5, Easter Sunday All In for Resurrection

Embracing resurrection as a key part of our faith frees us to embrace the good news that no part of life or death is out of God's life-giving reach.

Worship connection: Thanksgiving for Baptism

Pick up your copy of our *All In* Lenten Devotional beginning February 8!

A hardcopy of the *All In* daily devotional will be available for pick up at the back of the sanctuary. The devotional begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18, the first day of Lent. If you can't make it to worship, just contact the church office and we will mail you a copy.

Join us for Lent Prayer—two ways!--beginning February 25.

Think of it as worship-lite, a devotional moment, informal prayer. This Lent we will gather in two different ways for a brief time of prayer and reflection on Wednesdays. If you prefer a daytime or in person gathering, join us at Augustana in the fellowship hall at noon. If you work during the day or like to pray in your PJs at home, join us on Grace's Facebook page for livestreamed prayer at 6:30 PM. However you pray, set aside some extra time to dwell in God's presence this Lenten season!

Teachers needed for local ESL classes:

Churches in Elkhart are organizing English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for adults. This is a way to show love for our neighbors as they strive to be a part of the community. Volunteer teachers are needed for the next session of classes, March 1 through May 26 at Prairie Street Mennonite Church. Sessions are on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, from 6:30 to 8:00 PM. Volunteering once or twice a week is your choice. Materials are provided. You do not need to be a trained teacher.

If desired, you may start as an assistant-in-training working with a veteran teacher. You do not need to be able to speak Spanish. Substitutes are available for illness and vacations. There will be an informational meeting on Monday, February 16, 6:30 at Prairie Street Mennonite Church to hear about the program and ask questions. Please contact Sueann VonGuten, vonalter2@gmail.com or 574-612-3108 with your interest or questions.

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(Save the Dates—Continued from Page 5)



**Pathways Retreat in Goshen is a space for rest, reflection, and renewal!
Plan a visit to set aside some time for spiritual refreshment.
One easy way is to take a reflection walk.**

Reflection Walks at Pathways Retreat are located along the 0.6 mile main trail loop through the woods. These are self-paced, free, and require no reservation. Simply stop by anytime during daylight hours to enjoy a time of reflection in creation. After you've completed the walk, take time to enjoy more of our two-miles of trails through woods and prairies. All are welcome!

Stations of the Cross Walk — March 29-April 4

Stations of the Resurrection Walk — April 5-30

Stations of the Trees Walk — May 1-June 30

Hidden Creature Trail — June 1-30



This is an opportunity to enjoy the fellowship of our individuals in service, meet new staff members and leaders, and simply have a wonderful time celebrating the friendship we have with you!

This is a free even and we hope that you will consider stopping by, even if it isn't for the entire time frame. We would love to say hello!

February Fellowship Opportunities

FIRST WEDNESDAY BREAKFAST CLUB

Wednesday, February 4 ~ 9 AM

Meet at Perkins on Cassopolis Street.
Call Deb Rowland for reservations.

*** Join us each
Sunday morning
for Fellowship in
the Narthex before
& after worship.**

LAST THURSDAY LUNCH BUNCH

**Thursday, February 26 ~
Noon**

Come and join your Augustana
friends for lunch at:

**Baker's Nook Café
127 Easy Shopping Place,
Elkhart**

Bring a friend or neighbor with
you. *Phone your reservation and
the number coming to the church
office by Monday, February 23.*

*** God's Gifts Pantry
2nd & 4th Thursdays ~
10-11 AM**

February HAPPENINGS

Sunday, February 1 -

1st Meal-a-Month after service

Wednesday, February 4 -

Breakfast Club at Perkins

Tuesday, February 10 -

Augustana Church Council Meeting

Thursday, February 12 -

God's Gifts Pantry

Wednesday, February 18 -

Ash Wednesday

12 PM service at Grace

6:30 PM service at Augustana

Newsletter Deadline

Thursday, February 26-

God's Gifts Pantry

Lunch Brunch @ Baker's Nook Cafe

FEBRUARY 2026 SERVER SCHEDULE

February 1 – Epiphany 4

Assisting Minister: Ed Williams
Lector: Ed Williams
Server: Leah Moyer
Technology Server: Cayden Abner
Ushers: Gunnar & Diane Erickson

February 8 – Epiphany 5

Assisting Minister: Mark Moyer
Lector: Diane Erickson
Server: Cayden Abner
Technology Server: Randy Tinder
Ushers: Dave & Janet Ermis

February 15 – Transfiguration

Assisting Minister: Nancy Tinder
Lector: Nancy Tinder
Server: George Scupham
Technology Server: Mark Moyer
Ushers: Deb Rowland

February 18 – Ash Wednesday

Assisting Minister:
Lector:
Server:
Technology Server: Randy Tinder
Ushers: Deb Rowland

February 22 – Lent 1

Assisting Minister: Mark Moyer
Lector: Mark Moyer
Server: Leah Moyer
Technology Server: Randy Tinder
Ushers: Deb Rowland & Janet Moyer

February Altar Guild

Emily Moyer & Heidi Scupham

Please let the office know of any changes.



Pick up your *free* copy of
The Word in Season devotional booklets!

February Altar Flowers



February 1– Mary Lou Cassell
 In memory of Richard Cassell

February 8 – Available

February 15– Nancy and Randy Tinder
 To celebrate God's love

February 22– Available

If the Altar Flowers are not sponsored, there will be no flowers. Two floral bouquets total \$25. That's a real deal! Many slots are available for sponsorship throughout the year. The easel is at the back of the pews. Choose your date, sign your name, and whether the flowers are in honor or memory of someone special. You may pay when you sign up or later. Either way, please use the envelope provided for your \$25. Thank you.

Financial and Attendance Report

| [Fiscal Year Runs Jan. 1 thru Dec. 31] **Information thru January 28, 2026 | |
|---|--|
| Fiscal Year-to-Date Budget Requirement | Fiscal Year-to-Date Actual Funds in General Fund |
| \$ 11,781.25 | \$4,185.70 |
| January Monthly Budget Requirement | January Actual Offering to General Fund |
| \$ 11,730.00 | \$4,185.70 |
| FEBRUARY Monthly Amount Needed to meet Budget Requirement | Noisy Offering Fiscal Year-to-Date |
| \$ 11,730.00 | \$ - |
| January Average Sunday In-Person Attendance | January Average Sunday Facebook Attendance |
| 33 | 4 |

**Approved Augustana Lutheran Church Council Minutes Highlights
Of January 13, 2026**

Present: Diane Erickson, Gunnar Erickson, Mark Moyer, Nancy Tinder,
Randy Tinder, Doris Koontz, Pastor Emily

Minutes from the December Council meeting were presented & unanimously approved.

***Financial reports** December report was presented & unanimously approved.

***Pastor Emily's reports** were presented.

We discussed considering dropping the 10:30 p.m. Christmas Eve service.

We discussed a need for more office volunteer support.

Maralee set up the musician supply through February.

A member from Grace possibly interested in leading joint choir.

We will continue to look for leads and tweak the job description.

We discussed the Lenten Bible/Book Study and will put out a survey.

***Old Business:**

We discussed giving away and tagging bread loaves left over from bread sale.

Brian fixed the sanctuary fans.

We discussed possibly learning more about Mosaic.

We discussed Pastor's discretionary fund and will discuss policy next month.

***New Business:**

We discussed the Paul Fisbaugh and Parsonage Funds.

Discussed a need for a finance committee.

Randy suggested keeping paper copies of year-end reports.

Discussed sacristy electrical concerns.

(See full minutes on the Bulletin Board outside of the Fellowship Hall.)





Take-Along Page

220 People
Served in January

Take this page with you to the grocery store to help Augustana serve those in need.

God's Gifts Pantry Needs Your Help

Thursday, February 12 and **Thursday, February 26** will be our next sack distributions. Thank you to all who have brought items! We continue to serve more people each week, so your contributions are very much needed and appreciated! Please bring items to the church Sunday mornings or any time during the week during office hours, placing them in the barrels by the office.

The following items are needed:

Canned chicken or tuna
Canned fruits & vegetables
Cereal & Oatmeal
Ritz or other crackers in sleeves
Pork and Beans
Boxes or bags of rice
Boxed potatoes
Peanut Butter & Jelly
Spaghetti or other pasta
Canned spaghetti sauce (red) - no glass jars
Cake mixes and frosting
Pudding - Jello
Cookies (individually wrapped)
Juice - no glass jars
Shelf stable milk
Cooking oil - butter

Toothpaste & toothbrushes
Shampoo
Toilet Paper & Kleenex
Dish Soap & Laundry Detergent (not pods)
Cleaning supplies

*The following items are found at Dollar Tree:

*Mac & Cheese with foil pack
*Boxed cereals (any size or kind)
*Spaghetti-O's – pull top
*Pork n' Beans & Dogs – pull top
*Canned kid meals
*Bags or boxes of rice
*Dinty Moore Stew
*Bags of beans
*Tuna

Cans with pop-tops are preferred
though we know many cans do not come that way.
NO EXPIRED FOOD

February 2026

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | |
|---|---|---|--|---|-----------|-----------|--|
| 1 11 AM-Worship First Meal-a-Month after worship | 2 5 PM Confirmation Class @ St. John's | 3 | 4 9 AM- Breakfast Club @ Perkins | 5 4 PM-Holy Communion at Grace | 6 | 7 | |
| 8 11 AM-Worship | 9 6 PM Confirmation Class @ St. John's | 10 6:30 PM- Augustana Council Meeting | 11 | 12 10-11 AM-God's Gifts Pantry 4 PM-Holy Communion at Grace | 13 | 14 | |
| 15 11 AM-Worship | 16 6 PM Confirmation Class @ St. John's | 17 | 18 12 PM- Ash Wednesday service at Grace 6:30 PM- Ash Wednesday service at Augustana | 19 4 PM-Holy Communion at Grace | 20 | 21 | |
| 22 11 AM-Worship | 23 * Newsletter Deadline 6 PM Confirmation Class @ St. John's | 24 | 25 | 26 10-11 AM-God's Gifts Pantry 4 PM-Holy Communion at Grace Noon- Lunch Brunch @ Baker's Nook Café | 27 | 28 | |
| | | | | | | | |

COMMUNICATION SKILLS UNDER PRESSURE

Whether it's a domestic dispute spilling into the church lobby or a visitor in emotional distress, verbal de-escalation is one of the most powerful tools ministries can use to keep people safe...

Jason Russell knows this first-hand...As a retired U.S. Secret Service agent and former police officer, he's trained in this skill. "De-escalation is the result of a good communication or strategy when you're dealing with someone who either might be angry, having a mental health issue, or is experiencing some type of crisis situation," said Russell. In general terms, it's the practice of using verbal and nonverbal communication to diffuse tense situations.

De-escalation isn't about being passive. It's about being prepared – equipping your team to respond with wisdom, compassion, and clarity when tensions boil over...

Six Professional Verbal De-Escalation Tips for Ministry Activities

De-escalation isn't just for security teams. It's for greeters, ushers, pastors, and volunteers—anyone who interacts with people. It's about recognizing when someone is agitated, anxious, or even potentially dangerous, and knowing how to respond with calm, clear communication. Russell's insights bring practical, actionable advice to ministries. He offers several techniques individuals can use to establish good communication.

* **Stay calm even when someone else isn't.**

Don't take it personally. Use tactical breathing to slow your heart rate. "This helps you control your emotions, avoiding the less logical fight or flight area of your brain from taking over", offered Russell. The technique is simple: *breathe in for four counts, hold for four, exhale for four.*

Repeat several times to help gain control of your emotions.

* **Use non-threatening body language to show that you're not a threat.**

This includes open hands, relaxed posture, facing the person, and using neutral facial expressions.

"You really have to be conscious of your face to avoid scowling or furrowing the brow.

And the other thing you want to try to avoid is a smile under the wrong context, which can be perceived as condescending", said Russell.

* **Employ positive gestures to connect the other person with you.**

"Think of it as drawing a line between the other person and yourself", explained Russell.

This shows the other person that you're listening and want to work with them. And when discussing the problem or issue, point away from the person.

"This signals that what you need to deal with is separate from both of you."

Avoid threatening gestures like pointing at the person or making quick hand movements.

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(De-Escalation Tips—Continued from Page 12)

*** Listen actively and validate the person’s feelings without agreeing with harmful words.**

This includes moderating eye contact and nodding your head to indicate that you’re hearing what they say.

*** Avoid words that can inflame the situation.**

Russell provides three examples of especially triggering phrases:

- “You need to calm down.”
- “That’s not my problem.”
- “You need to do what I say.”

***Use “connected language” to show that you want to work together to resolve the situation.**

Using words like “we” and “us” helps the other person feel like you’re working together. For example, you’d say something like, “We need to figure this out.”

Also, it’s important to know the person’s name and for them to know yours. Use their name throughout the interaction.

“There’s a level of comfort when we feel connected to another person”, said Russell.

Calming the Storm From the risk management magazine, Resilient Ministry.

In ministry, as we talk about grace, truth, and love, we also need to talk about verbal de-escalation—because how we communicate in tense moments can make the difference between calm and crisis. Violence against churches is rising at an alarming rate.

According to a recent report published by the Family Research Council, there were 415 hostile incidents against churches in 2024—up from just 55 in 2020. The trend is clear: churches are increasingly vulnerable. And while not every incident is violent, many involve emotionally charged situations where de-escalation could prevent harm.

Augustana Lutheran Church

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Website: www.augustanaelkhart.org

Augustana Mission Statement:

As the Body of Christ,
we are called to Love All, Serve All, Welcome All.

Pastoral Information

Rev. Emily Trubey-Weller

Pastor Emily's Office Hours

9 AM– 3 PM

*Monday, Wednesday at **Augustana***

*Tuesday, Thursday at **Grace***

* Please call for an appointment.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday ~ 9 AM–3 PM

Tuesday & Wednesday

1 PM–4 PM