

# Alamance Lutheran Church

## March 2026

## News Notes



*Our Vision: To be a beacon of Christian faith, love, and compassion where all are welcomed with open hearts.*

*Our Mission: We are called by God's spirit to:*

- *Worship and Praise God*
- *Serve in Faith*
- *Share God's Story*

“A cloudy day, or a little sunshine, have as great an influence on many constitutions as the most

real blessings or misfortunes.” **Joseph Addison**, *The Spectator* (1711-12)

## Prayers

Remember to pray for our trusted servant and brother, Ted Milling, as he undergoes surgery on the 5<sup>th</sup> to help resolve a health issue. Keep Ted and Cindy in your prayers.

## Words from Pastor Aaron

Dear Beloved People of Alamance Lutheran Church,

We find ourselves at the precipice of uncertainty and potential for national conflict. I know many of you might be concerned that I might be deployed, but I currently cannot be deployed as a Chaplain Candidate. With that being said, my heart and spirit mourn the loss of life that any war brings. My prayers are with the members of the United States Armed forces, but they are also with all civilians caught in the crossfire and even the Iranian military. It might feel absurd that I would pray for someone who may want me dead, but this is the call of Christ.

In times where I find myself at the threat of death, I am called back to the gospels of Matthew (26:51-55), Luke (22:49-51), and John (18:10-15). Jesus tells his disciples to not draw their

swords and pursue violence, instead Christ will accept death so that all people might live. It is uncomfortable for us to acknowledge that Christ had every opportunity to exert control and dominance over his enemies but instead chooses grace and mercy. Even going so far as to ask for their forgiveness while on the cross.

Christ does not ask us to seek out death as the goal, but we are called to be followers of Christ's life and teachings. That includes loving our enemies. Even at a time when it feels impossible for us to reconcile with someone who may wish us dead. In times of distress like these, look for the people trying to find peaceful solutions, look for the healers who will soothe wounds, and most importantly keep your eyes fixed on a God who can overcome our division and strife. If you have anxiety, anger, or other difficulties in the coming months as we wait to see what happens, please reach out to me so that we can talk and find Christ amid hardship.

**Pastoral Challenge for the Month:** How can you be a voice of peace and reconciliation during times of division?

## Council

Apologies for not getting "News Notes" out sooner. CJ's funeral pushed the Council meeting back a week until March 1<sup>st</sup>. The Council will be meeting again later in the month, and we have scheduled a Congregational Meeting to cover some highlights from last year gleaned from our 2025 Annual Reports and also provide a financial update. The Congregation Meeting will be held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> immediately following Church, and the Council meeting will be on the 29<sup>th</sup> at 1:30.

Thanks to everyone who helped make the funeral such a significant memorial for CJ. Pastor Aaron, the Hospitality Team, and many others pulled together and served almost 250 guests including a large United States Army contingent from Fort Bragg who served with CJ.

## Finance Team

The weather forced us to cancel two Sundays in January. Our offering income was significantly lower than normal, we believe because of the two cancelled services. Income was only \$7800, while expenses were \$20,700, putting us \$12,900 behind for the month of January. The higher-than-normal expenses were because of timing, not abnormal expenses. Expenses will smooth out as we move further into the year. Hopefully, our faith community will be able to make up some of the lost income we experienced in January because of our weather cancellations.

The Finance Team recommended, and the Council approved, setting aside \$3,000 from the Black and General Endowment Fund for various camp scholarships and workshops in 2027. Our practice has been to fund 50% of the costs although Pastor Aaron has discretion to provide more based on individual needs. We have agreed to fund an instructor for a Handbell Choir workshop that is being proposed. WELCA may also be asking for funds for a retreat that we can provide some funds for. We still have \$160,000 in spendable funds in the Gilmore Endowment fund that will be more than sufficient to resolve the final accessibility challenges.

## Hospitality Team

We are well blessed with our Hospitality Team. The Lenten midweek services are underway. Come and join us on Wednesdays at 5:30. The last midweek meal will be on March 25<sup>th</sup>. The Team made an outstanding, unprecedented effort supporting CJ's funeral.

Pastor Aaron has asked the team to provide some "Standard Operating Procedures" for events. The "SOPs" will be kept in the kitchen to provide guidance for volunteers.

## Staff Support

Pastor Aaron will be announcing a new Mutual Ministry Team to serve as his advisors soon.

## Worship and Music Team

Midweek services continue through Lent. The soup supper is in the Fellowship Hall; the worship service is in the Chapel. Come and experience our guest pastors for the services.

Planning for Holy Week and Easter services is underway. We will be holding Maundy Thursday and Good Friday Services. A sunrise contemplation, Easter breakfast, Easter egg hunt, and Easter Service with special music is planned for Easter morning.

Get ready for some more variety in our Worship Services. Acoustic services will be held once a quarter. These more relaxed services will use more modern music and readings. (A modern translation of the Bible can be used so long as it is not a paraphrased version). A "high" church liturgical service will also be provided once or twice a year. All this will require all of us to be "flexible" and open to change. No one style of music or liturgy appeals to all of us. We need to welcome variety.

The team will also be creating Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for each service role.

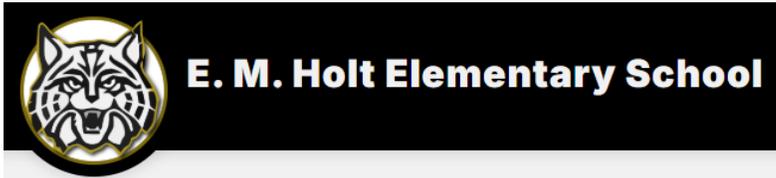
**Open Chapel** continues Thursdays from 10:00-11:00 in the Chapel.

We are blessed with Matt's singing and playing along with the Choir and Handbells. We are well blessed! Thanks also for Ruthie Thompson taking a leadership role with our Handbell Choir. Expect to see more of and from them in the near future.

## Evangelism/Social Ministry Team

Who are we and what do we want to be? We are doing many good things; are there a few things we want to do and be that differentiate us from other faith communities? What is our niche? These are all questions we are grappling with – come join us to share your thoughts.

Thank you for donating food to the **Blessing Box**. We hope to see increased donations for **The Blessing Box**, which continues to see heavy use, as we focus our efforts. Feeding people is an important part of who we are. There is also a move afoot to create a **Pet Blessing Box**. More details will be provided when we get them.



We recognized the efforts of the EM Holt staff on February 16<sup>th</sup> by showering them with notes of appreciation and some sweet treats. Thanks to everyone that

provided treats and completed cards. We are planning to provide supplies for the teachers sometime later in the year.

**Evangelism:** We are looking for members who have a heart for Evangelism. Evangelism is not just outreach to the community; it is in reach to our community of faith. As part of this, we are exploring ways we can build bridges and connections between all of us. We believe we can do more to keep informed about each other as life events occur. There are many kind hearts in the congregation. We want to provide transportation, meals, and visitations for members in need. If you want to be part of this effort, please talk to Sherry Ford.

The **Lunch Bunch** will be meeting at Angelina Cafe. (220 Huffman Mill Road, Burlington) on March 12<sup>th</sup>, at 11:30. Let Katie Whitehead know if you are attending. Come and join us!

The team will be meeting on March 12<sup>th</sup> at 4:30.

## Property Team

The lift is functioning. It is not the same as an elevator, so it does take getting used to. Some minor operating glitches are being resolved. All in all, it is a great addition to our facilities and

is being used regularly. The team continues to explore new concepts for providing a lift/ramp from the Sanctuary to the office/classroom level. The Council considers this next phase of our accessibility efforts to be a priority for the coming year.

The Council approved funds to repair and repaint the Sanctuary. We will also be repainting stripes in the parking lot and expect to see mulch in some critical areas to improve our curb appeal. We are also looking to improve lighting at the two parking lot entrances.

Pastor Aaron and Elizabeth Powell are working on a Facilities Use Policy.

We are blessed to have an active, involved Property Team. Thanks to all of you who keep our facilities looking nice and running smoothly.

## Stewardship Team

Stewardship is about our discipleship and our way of life. Let's ask ourselves, "How adequately does the giving of my time, talents, and finances reflect my gratitude to God for all the blessings I have received?"

A meeting of members interested in the Memorial Fund will be held March 4<sup>th</sup> at 4:00.

As we move into the New Year and we look forward to our ministries in 2026, we pray that our Stewardship Ministry will help each of us to grow in our relationship with Jesus through the use of our time, talents, and finances God has entrusted to us.

## Youth/Christian Education Team

Ten of our youth and four of our adults participated in the Synod wide Lutheran Youth Organization gathering at the Embassy Suites in Greensboro February 27-March 1. The theme of the gathering was *"Keeping Up with the Lutherans: The Church Has Left the Building."* It was a positive experience for all involved. Funds for participating in the gathering were approved by Council.

Three different Sunday School Classes for children and youth continue. Teachers and assistants have been assigned for the new year.

Vacation Bible School is scheduled for July 13-17. A world hunger themed curriculum has been obtained from the Synod.

Pastor Aaron is leading an adult Bible study on Monday evenings from 6:00 to 7:00. The first class is studying “UnClobber” by Colby Martin exploring how scripture has been used against the LGBTQ+ communities in the past. It’s not too late to join the class and Pastor Aaron has copies of the book if you need one.

Adult classes are held in the Parlor every Sunday at 9:00 am. We are currently using Bible Project videos. Each class stands on its own; come and join us.

Women’s Bible study continues Tuesday mornings. Men’s breakfast and Bible Study continue on the first Saturdays. We are always looking for more men to come and join the Men’s Breakfast.

## Cemetery Team

The Cemetery Team met in February. We are working on updating our cemetery policies. A number of updates and changes to our policies and practices are needed. We want to ensure plots are available for members who want them in the future and do not plan on selling plots to nonmembers. Fifty plots are currently available. We also need to clarify our policies and practices for our Memorial Garden. The sense is that spreading or burying cremains in the Memorial Garden would not be limited to current members.

We also need to clarify how the cemetery funds and expenses are accounted for. Are they general expenses? Or should we have a special budget line item for the cemetery?

## Words from the Council Vice President, Kirk Tucker

I am being forced, at this stage of the game, to face my mortality. Until last November, I had not spent a night in a hospital. I spent 3 nights in November just before Thanksgiving, and as many of you know, I just spent another 4 nights in the hospital this past week with gall bladder issues. That said, I continue to be well blessed and lucky too. It’s just forcing me to realize I am not as young as I once was.

Whether you agree or disagree with the recent actions of our President in Iran, let us all pray for **PEACE!** Let us also pray for the peacekeepers and their families, especially for those who find themselves in harm’s way. I believe Christ’s messages on peace are very clear.



- 4<sup>th</sup> – Don Brown
- 5<sup>th</sup> – Lindsey Isley
- 10<sup>th</sup> – Barbara Baulding, Jo Ann Moss
- 14<sup>th</sup> – Kathy Ritchey
- 20<sup>th</sup> – John Weinbach
- 25<sup>th</sup> – Tommy Stokes
- 27<sup>th</sup> – Janet Ritchey-Link
- 28<sup>th</sup> – Jerry Combs

## Schedule

**Questions about when things are happening?** Check the church calendar on our website: [alamancelutheran.org](http://alamancelutheran.org) and the weekly bulletin. To find the calendar on the website, click on the three bars on the upper right-hand corner of the homepage, then click on “Resources.” The Church Calendar is one of the “Resources.”

The information printed in the church bulletin is only as accurate as the information on the calendar. If you have an event or meeting scheduled at church and it is not already on the calendar, please contact Lenise at: [ParishAdmin@alamancelutheran.org](mailto:ParishAdmin@alamancelutheran.org) to add it to the calendar. Thanks for all you do Lenise!

## Serving in March

	Communion Setup	Reader	Assisting Minister	Greeters	Ushers
March 1	Kathy Youngblood	Craven Ford	Holly Mills	Katie Beard Peggy Heffernan	Terry Adams Jerry Combs
March 8	Holly Mills	Kathy Ritchey	Kathy Ritchey	Jerry Combs Kora Dill	Joel Maness Ina Dill
March 15	Marty Adams	Holly Mills	Marty Adams	Elizabeth Powell Jazmin Biscocho	Jerry Combs Ted Milling
March 22	Marty Adams	Pastor Bob Hawkins	Elizabeth Lockley	Kerry Sullivan Joel Maness	Don Eash Kirk Tucker
March 29	Lynn Tucker	Sidney Dill	Pastor Bob Hawkins	Lisa Cates Ina Dill	Elizabeth Powell Hugh Smith

*Please let Kirk know of any Church related events or announcements to be included in future news notes. News notes for each month will be sent to members and friends of Alamance Lutheran Church in the last week of the preceding month.*