

Alamance Lutheran Church

February 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*

"All thoughts, all passions, all delights, / Whatever stirs this mortal frame, / All are ministers of Love, / And feed this sacred flame." **Samuel Taylor Coleridge**
"Love" (1799)

Words from Pastor Aaron

Dear Beloved People of Alamance Lutheran Church,

God prepares us to grow in all seasons of life, even during these winter storms. In the month of February, I am excited to be leading more Bible study opportunities for growth and engagement. I have several topics that I hope to cover with you; ranging from a Christian perspective on life and death to a study on the Psalms and its relation to Hip Hop. But first we will be taking a look at the church's long held stance on the LGBTQ+ community.

For many of us, me included, we have always been taught that the church condemns not just the lifestyle but the very people who are part of this community. Using scripture itself, the book **UnClobber** challenges these long held perspectives and invites us to welcome and affirm the fully divine image God created in in these outcast people. This class is a place for us to learn, grow, and have spirit-led conversations on our shared life together. I want to personally invite everyone, those who fully agree already with the premise but also those who disagree, to participate as we discern God's calling for all of us, as there is always room for us to grow in faith and into God's promise for the kingdom come near.

- Pastoral Challenge for the Month: Let God guide us in our comfortability into a new life in the kingdom of God.

Prayers

Our church family has learned that our former interim pastor, Pastor Rooney, is facing serious health challenges. We ask that you lift him and his family in your prayers during this difficult time.

Council

Although Pastor Aaron was not at the meeting, he shared a detailed Pastor's report that included hopes and dreams for our future at ALC. We will host a number of guest pastors for our midweek Lenten services starting later in February and is looking for volunteers to serve as point people to welcome the visiting pastors when they are here – just another way of being known as a “welcoming community.” He is also starting Monday evening classes that will cover a number of topics. More detail on the classes is in Pastor Aaron's message this month. We will be looking for volunteer drivers willing to transport participants who are not comfortable driving at night.

Pastor Aaron is working with Sharon Ward to create “take home” baskets for our homebound members. He is also looking to create an official team leading lay pastoral care effort. This will expand our ability to demonstrate care for each other. How do we bridge gaps where they exist in our faith community? We have a number of successful groups in the Congregation. How do we in some cases expand the groups, and in other cases create new groups?

The special Christmas services were successful. Thanks to everyone, decorators, musicians, servers, who all made them a success.

Finance Team

The numbers are in for 2025 and our expenses have exceeded our income by \$37,144. Receipts in December were \$16,008, an increase over November, albeit still lower than spending. The Council approved balancing our spending and income by transferring funds from the “Tower” fund to the general fund. The “Tower” fund will have \$80K after the transfer. Council asked the Finance Team to clean up some of the accounts on the Miscellaneous Reserve Funds, many of which go back a number of years and to simplify our financial reports. Some training in understanding financial reports may also be required.

The approved 2026 budget asks for an additional \$10,000 in annual receipts. While we ended the year in a decent financial position, unless we find ways to increase our revenue, this will no longer be the case in the future. The Finance and Stewardship Teams will collaborate on how to address our shortfalls.

As we plan for the year ahead, we're grateful for the generosity that sustains our church. We invite you to prayerfully consider increasing your annual giving. Every gift, offered in faith, strengthens our ministries and our shared mission.

The Finance Team will provide Council with updates on the Endowment Funds at least quarterly. Our two endowment funds are in good shape even after funding our accessibility improvements along with other expenditures funding Youth programs and increasing our Synod support.

Elizabeth Powell has asked to join the Finance Team. Welcome Elizabeth!

Hospitality Team

After a busy December, the team supported the baptism of Elliott Spangler on January 18th. Pastor Aaron has asked the team to provide some "Standard Operating Procedures" for events. The "SOP's" will be kept in the kitchen to provide guidance for volunteers.

A Blood Drive is scheduled for February 6th. Volunteers are needed to help set up in the morning. Donna Eash is ready to pass on responsibility for coordinating the blood drives to someone else. This is a pretty easy task, with most of the work done via computer from home. Please consider stepping into the role.

Midweek services will commence with an Ash Wednesday Service on February 18th. The first midweek soup supper will be on February 25th.

Staff Support

Annual performance reviews will be held with Pastor Aaron, Matt, and Lenise in February. All in all, we are blessed to have excellent staff, and the Council acknowledged their efforts with gift cards at Christmas. Pastor Aaron is developing a new Mutual Ministry Team to serve as his advisors.

Worship and Music Team

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 the variety.

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

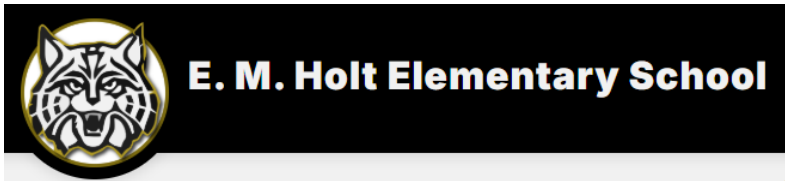
Open Chapel continues Thursdays from 10:00-11:00 in the Chapel.

We are blessed with Matt's singing and playing along with the Choir and Hand Bells. We are well blessed!

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 effort. Feeding people is an important part of who we are.



We plan to recognize the efforts of the EM Holt staff in February by showering them with notes of appreciation and

some sweet treats. Joanna Spangler has

created cards, and the **Girl Scouts** have created a mailbox for the cards. We will be asking the Congregation to complete cards recognizing the efforts of the school staff and place them in the "mail" box. We will deliver them to the school the week of February 16th with some treats.

We are also planning to provide supplies for the teachers sometime later in the year.

Evangelism: The Council approved a recommendation to split the Evangelism/ Social Ministry team into two teams. This will provide more concentrated focus on both Social Ministry and 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 are concerned that we are not keeping informed about each other when 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 are interested in exploring these aspects of Evangelism, please talk to Sherry Ford.

The **Lunch Bunch** will be meeting at Ferrara's Pizza, Taps, and Apps. (3243 South Church Street, Burlington) on February 12th, at 11:30. Let Katie Whitehead know if you are attending. Come and join us!

The team will be meeting on February 12th at 4:30.

Property Team

The lift project is done! Pastor Aaron is planning a special blessing now that it is complete and approved for use. Elizabeth Powell is providing the finishing touches on the lift vestibules. Many thanks to John Ritchey for all he has done on the lift project. The team is exploring 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 up to \$10,000 for Property to make improvements to the Scout Hut. Thanks to the dedication of many individuals, we were fortunate to receive generous vendor donations that significantly expanded the project. A new roof and carpentry repairs have already been donated and completed, and additional contributions—including new windows, updated wiring, and a mini-split HVAC unit—are currently in progress. Once finished, the refreshed and better-than-ever Scout Hut will serve as a vibrant home for the Girl Scout Troop beginning this spring.

Pastor Aaron and Elizabeth Powell are working on a Facilities Use Policy. We are also looking to improve lighting at the two parking lot entrances.

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?"

Thanks to everyone who has completed a **Time and Talent Form**. There is always time to complete a form so we know where your interests lie. Talk to Sherry Ford if you need a form.

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

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.

The Council approved funding youth and adults to attend the Synod Youth Organization event in Greensboro from February 27th through March 1st.

As mentioned previously, Pastor Aaron will lead an adult Bible study on Monday evenings starting February 9th.

Adult classes are held in the Parlor every Sunday at 9:00 am. A new adult study has started using Bible Project videos.

Women's Bible study continues Tuesday mornings. Men's breakfast and Bible Study continue on the first Saturdays.

The Team will meet again on February 15th following our Church service.

Cemetery Team

We are working on updating our cemetery policies. The Cemetery team is beginning the work after many years of inattention. A number of 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.

The fallen gravestone has been raised and resealed.

Words from the Council Vice President, Kirk Tucker

Several years ago, I met a Chilean biologist, Humberto Maturana. His work focused on human cognition. Most of it was way above my head! I remember him saying "Love" was the most powerful emotion in the world. With loving conversations, human beings can change the world. Humans are unique in having the ability to have loving conversations with each other. A Loving conversation is open and trusting, therefore more honest. Let us reflect on how we can change the world with our ability to have loving conversations with each other. We can make the world a better place.



6th – Debbie Steele, Melanie Thomas, Chris Turner

9th – Jazmin Biscocho

8th – Alan Graham

21st – Claudia Ellis, Diane Gural

22nd – David Baulding, Katie Whitehead

25th – Tony Lewis

28th – Aaliyah Dill, Ward Patterson

Serving in February

	Communion Setup	Reader	Assisting Minister	Greeters	Ushers
February 1	Holly Mills	Kathy Ritchey	Kathy Ritchey	Don and Donna Eash	Terry Adams Joel Maness
February 8	Marty Adams & Amy Crawford	Sidney Dill	Pastor Bob Hawkins	Kirk and Lynn Tucker	Jerry Combs Ted Milling
February 15	Lynn Tucker	Terry Adams	Marty Adams	Sidney Dill Sandy Kirkpatrick	Don Eash Hugh Smith
February 22	Sandy Kirkpatrick	Lynn Tucker	Kirk Tucker	Roy and Katie Whitehead	Elizabeth Powell Roy Whitehead

Schedule

Questions about when things are happening? Check the church calendar on our website: 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 to add it to the calendar. Thanks for all you do Lenise!

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.