

First Edition



Thoughts From Pastor Matt!

It sure seems like Lent and Easter snuck up on us real early this year. As I am writing this newsletter article, I am preparing for Ash Wednesday Service and preparing to enter into the Lenten season. What is something I want to give up this year? What is something I want to implement into my daily rhythms to try and get closer to God? It seems like it becomes the same routine year after year. How can I make this year different?

Maybe it is not supposed to be or feel different. I think of my children when it comes to this. Lily, my oldest, is five years old and is completing her first year of preschool. Now if at the end of the school year I asked her, "What did you learn on the first day of school? Or the first week? Or the first month?" she would probably look at me with a blank stare and have no idea. But as her father, I see tremendous growth in her. Even though she might not remember everything she learned at school and can recite it, her behavior and actions sure reveal that she has learned a ton!

There was a story I remember coming across about a gentleman who wrote into a newspaper's opinion section claiming there was no purpose for going to church. He had been attending for many years and could not remember one sermon that was preached. His conclusion was that there was no purpose in attending church. Another reader of the article wrote in to the paper with a response. He said that he could not remember what his wife made him for dinner last night, or the week before, or what they ate their first week of marriage. Just because he could not remember what he ate, he knew that he was being fed. He had not starved to death and his pants did not fit quite the same as in his younger years. The same goes for going to church. Even though you may forget what was preached on the previous Sunday, it is having an effect on you.

Perhaps that is what we need to remember this Easter season. If things seem repetitive and you feel like you are just going through the motions, remember it is making a difference in your life. If you cannot remember what God taught you during last year's Lenten journey, know that you are not the same person as you were a year ago. So my challenge to everyone reading this is to think back. Think back as far as you can. Think about the person you were. How did you handle stressful situations? How did you respond to difficult people? What was your reaction to unexpected events? Think about how your younger self would have answered those questions and how you would answer them today.

Many times we can see how God has changed us from the inside out because of how we answer those questions. So even though we cannot remember things we learned last Lent, or 10 years ago, it is making a difference. If this year seems like the same ol' routine, it does not mean God won't use it to shape you more and more into the image of His Son. That is what I hope and pray for all who are reading this article. May you be blessed abundantly and grow closer and closer to God each day. Happy Easter!

Pastor Matthew

THOSE WHO ARE ILL OR IN THE HOSPITAL

Roxann Kaiser
JoAnn Artmann (Karen Fundine's daughter)
Rex Manchesian (Rita Peterson's brother)
Brenda Hoppe
Dana Robinson (Rita Peterson's daughter-in-law)
Dale Lyon (Sherry Holm's cousin)
Mara Dokukin (Karen Fundine's granddaughter)
Eric Lee (Avis Lee's grandson)
Troy (Linda Converse's son)
Pete Simons (relative of Shirley Smith)
Curt Thering (Wendy Jacobson's dad)

UPDATING

Please contact Connie Vieths at 218-839-3767 or cvieths1@gmail.com if there are any changes or additions to your personal data such as address, phone, or email address. Also if someone needs to be added to the Ill or in Hospital listing, Assisted Living/Nursing Home

ASSISTING LIVING/NURSING HOME

Good Samaritan Ken Kelling,
Riverside: Edith Pietz

Check out our Website at
firstlutheranpillager.net

We also have a Facebook page to check out!!!!
Please free to post anything or post comments!!!
Facebook page search type in First Lutheran
Pillager and this should take you to the page.

Also check our Website for the Newsletter,
Sermons and the Calendar will be updated as
the schedule changes! All of this is under
Resources on the Webpage

Pastor's Schedule

Sunday: Worship Service
Monday: Off
Tuesday: Office Hours 9-3
Wednesday: Midweek Service/Bible
 Study
Thursday & Friday: Office hours/Visitation
Saturday: Off

****Office hours will typically be from 9 am until
3 pm unless I am out making visits.**

PRAYER CHAIN

When you need prayer support, there is a group at our church who will pray diligently for whatever the need is. Please call Marlene Lindeman at 218-232-8699.

Church Council

President: Griff Eisel (952) 239-0878

Vice President:

Secretary: Dan Jacobson (218) 746-4167

Bob Harmson

Don Osowski (763) 286-5405

Don Tichy

Chris Warren

Glen Welters

Thank you to Shirley Smith and Diane Wright for serving on our church council for the past years! Glen Welters and Don Tichy welcome to the council!

If you need a person to talk to about challenges in your life, someone to pray with, or just a visit, please contact Pastor Matt. He would be more than willing to help you or visit you. If you are in the hospital or know of someone in the hospital, please contact him. There are times he has not received word that someone is dying or in the hospital recovering. You can contact Pastor at (320) 260 9100.

First Lutheran Church Pillager Minutes

December 10, 2024

Call to Order: 6:30 p.m. by Interim President Buersken

Present: Pastor Matthew Sundquist, Nicole Buersken, Dan Jacobson, Shirley Smith
Absent: Griff Eisel, Diane Wright, Bob Harmsen (Lynda's Seat), Julie Hofius (NOTE: Meeting was held without a quorum. All decisions were voted on remotely)

I. Opening Prayer: Pastor Matt

II. Treasurer's Report: Lynn reported that the financial year through the end of November was tracking according to budget. Income through 11 months is about \$22,000 greater than expenses overall on the year and we are on track to finish at or under budget. One thing to watch is the copier expense. The Church paid \$300 in addition to our lease fee for November and the council needs to discuss how we will reduce that expense going forward. Motion made by Shirley and seconded by Dan to approve the report. Voted on by email acclamation.

III. Pastor's Report: Pastor Matt reported that holiday decoration workshop is getting good publicity at the school so attendance should be high. We are going to have two new members: Joan and Dean Holmberg. They have officially submitted the form to transfer membership. Pastor met with Edie Pietz after Bible study at Riverside and she is doing well. He also visited Ken Kelling at Bethany and had a good conversation. There were a total of 29 visits since the November council meeting. Pastor did receive another survey response that he would like to discuss with council at the next meeting. Nicole mentioned we should look at something for the youth to participate in during the week. Would like something to start during 2025, depending upon how much interest there is from students and parents.

IV. Secretary's Report: November minutes submitted by secretary. Shirley moved accepted and Dan seconded. Full council approved by email vote.

V. Committee Updates:

1. Worship/Music: December visit from adult and teen challenge, along with the Sunday School Christmas Program and Annual Congregational Meeting on Dec. 22.

2. Congregation and Community Outreach: (Marliss) – Plan to hold the holiday decoration workshop on Dec. 11.

3. Hospitality: Lefse bake sale was a big success, bringing in over \$3,500.

4. Sanctuary: (Shirley) Nothing to report.

5. Facilities / Building: HDMI update. Dan took a look at the monitor connections needed to add a secondary monitor for people sitting in the old sanctuary. Looks like an HDMI splitter could be used. Because of the way the existing sanctuary monitor is mounted, it will require professional help to install.

6. Staffing: (Nicole) – Nicole has not spoken with anyone yet about open council positions. Bob Harmsen and Don Oslowsky do plan to join. The third seat is up for discussion.

7. Missions: Total came back from the mission tree for the school. We raised and donated \$960. The staff in charge of purchasing gifts said they had run out of money before receiving our donation, so we were able to help another family in the school.

Old Business:

New Business: Our financial secretary asked if we are having an audit for 2024. The Council discussed forming a committee to conduct an audit in the first quarter of 2025.

Adjourn & Closing: Shirley made a motion to adjourn, which was second by Dianne and voted by email acclamation.

Meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer

First Lutheran Church Pillager Minutes January 13, 2025

Call to Order: 6:30 p.m. by Vice President Chris Warren

Present:, Matthew Sundquist, Glen Welters, Dan Jacobson, Don Osowski, Don Tichy, Lynn Bushinger Absent: Griff Eisel, Bob Harmsen, Glen Welters

I. Opening Prayer: Pastor Matt

II. Treasurer's Report: Lynn reported that the cash position of the church at the start of 2026 was \$80,269. Funds given toward regular expenses of the church in 2025 were \$115,666, with a total of \$146,400 in revenue from all sources. Total spending was \$156,000, with \$37,200 of that spent on facilities repairs (siding painting and parsonage HVAC updating). Year-end statements have been mailed to members for 2025 giving. Lynn also announced she will be retiring in June Motion made by Dan to accept Treasurer's Report, seconded by Don O. Approved by acclamation.

III. Pastor's Report: Pastor reported the advent season through the Christmas Eve service was well received. Tommy's surgery at the end of December went well. Pastor will be attending Ron Carlson's Funeral in White Bear Lake on January 20. He is considering a sermon series for after lent that tackles the Christian's response to current events.

IV. Secretary's Report: Glen made a motion to dispense with the reading of the December 2025 minutes, seconded by Chris and approved. Don O. made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Chris and approved by acclamation.

V. Committee Updates:

1. Worship/Music: Staples Men's Chorus confirmed they will be performing three musical numbers during the Feb. 8, 2026 service. Pastor received a request related to the all-school reunion for Pillager this summer. The organizers asked if First Lutheran would be willing to participate in a community worship service at the Southern Cass County Fair in July, with a luncheon to follow. Pastor will ask the other churches if they have plans to participate and whether this would be an additional service to the regular Sunday service.

2. Congregation and Community Outreach: (Marliss) – The operation Christmas child shoe boxes were sent to Malawi. The group has been sponsoring a monthly tea party at Riverside for residents there.

3. Hospitality: None

4. Sanctuary: None

5. Facilities / Building: Chris and Robert Buersken installed the new cross on the north side wall of the church prior to the Christmas Eve service. One of the new furnaces at the church stopped working, resulting a temperature drop in the basement. Pastor contacted Horizon Plumbing and Heating as was able to get it repaired.

6. Staffing: Council discussed starting a recruitment campaign for a new Treasurer/Finance Secretary with the announcement of Lynn’s retirement. This will be placed on the February meeting agenda.

Old Business: None.

New Business: Council entertained a motion for nomination of new officers. Glen nominated Griff for president, Chris for vice president and Dan for secretary. Don T. seconded the nomination. Motion was approved by acclamation. The council also discussed providing a thank you card for the gravel that was spread on the parking lot. Chris to follow up.

Adjourn & Closing: Don T. made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Don O.

Meeting was closed with the Lord’s Prayer

thank you

Thank you to Codee Pollock for providing gravel for our very slippery parking lot! He stated that he wanted to do a selfless act of kindness and give something back to the community! Codee did a terrific job in keeping our church parking lot safe!



Thank you to Shelley Lumsden for donating this quilt that she pieced and quilted! She also donated 2 other machine -quilted coverlets and fitted sheets. You are amazing!!!

Thank you to Carol Decker who donated a stack of crazy-quilt tops and some sheets for making the backs of the quilts.

We appreciate the donation!!



National Thank A Mail Carrier Day (also known as Thank a Mailman Day) was on February 4th. This day reminds us that someone makes sure the mail gets through 6 days a week 52 weeks a year. The day reminds us just how important mail carriers are to our daily lives. Take time out to thank the mail carrier responsible for delivering your mail.

Thank you to Roger Gullickson for being a mail carrier for the Pillager area. You are so much appreciated!!!



PANCAKE BREAKFAST
Sunday, March 8 after service. Please stay and have some pancakes an sausages and fellowship!

Ronald “Ron” Carlson

Ronald Edward Carl Carlson, age 90, of Oakdale, MN, passed away on January 3rd, 2026, after complications from dementia. Born March 28, 1935. Ron was the first son of Henry & Ida Carlson. He grew up on a farm north of Pennock, MN with siblings Dennis, Hanley and Joyce. Ron met his wife for life Muriel Clausen. They were married in Mamrelund Church, Pennock, MN March 17, 1956.



He was a devoted husband, father, friend and advocate for hunting, fishing, archery, air rifle, community and business. He was so many things to so many people.

He is survived by his wife Muriel Carlson. Children; Gary (Gail) Carlson, Vicki (Steve) Sumption, Cindy (Randy) Schmidt. 15 grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Ron was preceded in death by his parents Henry and Ida Carlson, brother Hanley Carlson, sister Joyce Pauley, nephew Dale Carlson, niece Julie Knott.

Funeral services will be held at: Community of Grace Lutheran Church 4000 Linden St, White Bear Lake, MN 55110. January 20, 2026. Visitation at 12:00. Funeral at 1:00. Reception with a light lunch to follow.

In lieu of flowers please make a donation to the Dementia Society of America or charity of your choice.



Our thoughts and prayers go to Ann Meyer on the loss of her mother, Linda Midas. Linda's funeral was held on February 2 at St Stephen Catholic Church in St. Stephen, Minnesota.

FIRST LUTHERAN PILLAGER LEADERSHIP 2026 POSITION/COMMITTEE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Matthew Sundquist Home: 218-746-3750 Cell: 320-260-9100 Pastor
Office: 218-746-3775 Email: m.sundquist87@gmail.com

COUNCIL

Griff Eisel Cell: 952-239-0878 Email: griffeisel@gmail.com President
Chris Warren Cell: 320-749-2031 Email: warrens@littlefalls.net Vice President
Dan Jacobson Cell: 612-819-6357 Email: dpj.0101@gmail.com Secretary
Bob Harmsen Cell: 320-493-5991 Email: harmsway@brainerd.net
Cell: 320-493-5992 (Rosie)
Don Osowski Cell: 612-791-2878 Email: bdosowski@gmail.com
Don Tichy Cell: 218-851-9605 Email: RTDT1979@yahoo.com
Glen Welters Cell: 713-882-1944 Email: GMWEL@att.net

PERSONNEL

Open Financial Secretary
Connie Vieths Cell: 218-839-3767 Email: cvieths1@gmail.com Church Secretary
Wendy Jacobson Cell: 218-232-4580 Email: dwian@brainerd.net Worship/Music
Kirstie Sundquist Cell: 218-746-3750 Email: ksundquist90@gmail.com Tech Booth

QUILTERS

Rosie Harmsen Cell: 320-493-5992 Email: harmsway@brainerd.net

PRAYER CHAIN

Marlene Lindeman Cell: 218-232-8699

MISSIONS COMMITTEE

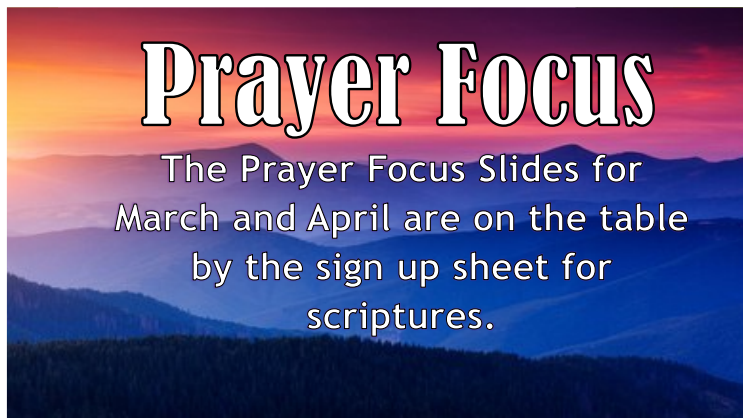
Marliss Eisel Cell: 952-261-9069 Email: marlisseisel@gmail.com

SUNDAY SCHOOL


Julie Warren Cell: 320-360-0648 Email: warrens@littlefalls.net

FELLOWSHIP/HOSPITALITY

Rosie Harmsen Cell: 320-493-5993 Email: harmsway@brainerd.net



Redo



Interested in volunteering for Pillager Breakfast club??

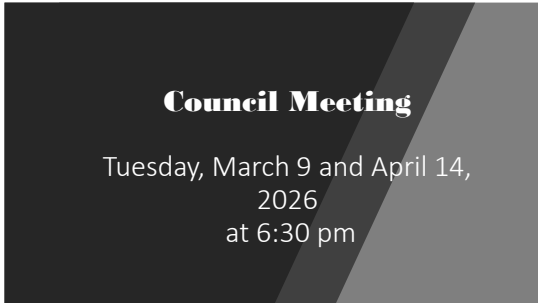
Scan the QR code or text the word "BREAKFAST" to 866-714-2927

CALLING ALL STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS!
WE'RE THRILLED TO ANNOUNCE THAT OUR COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM IS NOW LIVE!



Please join us for a tea party at the Riverside Assisted Living on Thursday, March 12 and April 9 at 1:30 pm! The residents love this event!!!!

Grieving a loss? Find hope and healing after the death of a loved one. Join us at Grief Share a weekly grief support group. This will be held on Tuesdays March 3-May 26, 2026 from 6—8 pm at the Motley Free Methodist Church. (218)352-6888



**Saturday,
March 7!!!!**



Our 35 boxes went to Malawi Africa

GIGGLES AND LAUGHTER!!!

A job applicant asked "Before I accept this offer. I have one question: Are the hours long?" "Well," the boss answered, "we do our best to keep them to 60 minutes!"

During a game, a coach called one of his 7 year-old football players over and asked, "Do you understand what a team is? The boy nodded yes. "Do you understand that what matters is whether we win or lose together as a team?" The boy nodded yes. "So," the coach continued, "I'm sure you know that when a penalty is called; you should not argue, cuss, or attack the referee. Do you understand?" The boy nodded yes. He continued, "And when I take you out of the game so another boy gets a chance to play, it is not good sportsmanship to call your coach a worthless idiot, is it? Again the boy nodded yes. "Good," the coach said. "Now go over there and explain all of this to your parents!"

*****Thank you to Clint Converse for sending the above funnies to me! Stay tuned for more next month!!**

The preacher said, "Everyone who wants to go to Heaven, stand up." Everyone stood except one older lady. The preacher asked, "Don't you want to go to Heaven?" The lady replied, "Oh, sure I do...I just thought you were getting up a group to go right now."

Yesterday I feel asleep in church. Then I heard "Stand Up". So I stood up and people clapped, the pastor said who else will give \$2000!!!

A Minister Said To His Congregation,"Next Week I'll Be Preaching About The Sin Of Lying.

To Prepare, I'D Like Everyone To Read Mark Chapter 17."

The Next Sunday He Asked, Who Read Mark 17 Like I Asked?"

Every Hand Went Into The Air. The Minister Grinned And Said,

"Mark Only Has 16 Chapters. Let'S Talk About Lying." 😂😂

Join Us for Winter Quilting: 12-3 p.m. on Tuesdays

Our snowbird seamstress kindly left a stash of tops to assemble while she's away 'til Spring. Meanwhile, Facebook posts draw inquiries from folks who want to buy some quilts even before completion. We took in two donations: three beautiful, machine-quilted coverlets with fitted sheets; then, some flat sheets and a bunch of quilt tops in need of creative-finish work. We're also cutting blocks and laying out tops for presentations and donations. Spring will be here in a flash!



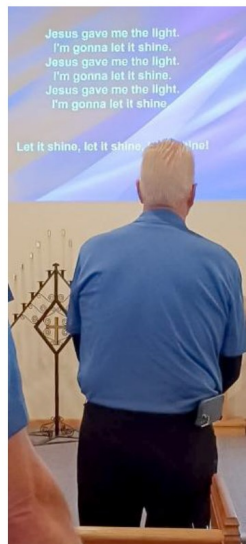
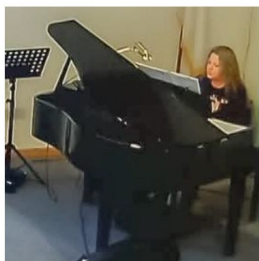
Bee-Mine Valentines from First Lutheran's Sunday School

On February 8th, the Sunday School class made valentines for the church ladies to take to homebound friends plus residents at Riverside Assisted Living in Pillager. Three ladies and seven residents enjoyed an hour tea with goodies from 1:30-2:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 12th. Afterwards the ladies gave valentines to 20 residents plus the staff. Interested in joining this visitation ministry? Or maybe you prefer cribbage to tea? Hello Men! There's an opportunity! Mark your calendar for the second Thursday of each month and check with Pastor Matthew or Wendy Jacobson for updates.



Staples Area Men's Chorus Visit

The Staples Area Men's Chorus came Sunday, February 8, 2026, for worship and pancakes. They sang three numbers as the prelude, sermon and sending songs, including "River in Judea," "And Can It Be" and "I Am with You." After the meal, they crooned "A Toast" and left for the local assisted-living center to entertain residents as a part of the chorus' outreach to the communities of their members, including Dan Jacobson – who is also First Lutheran Pillager's church-council secretary. With great gratitude to all for sharing the gift of music with us and giving God glory!

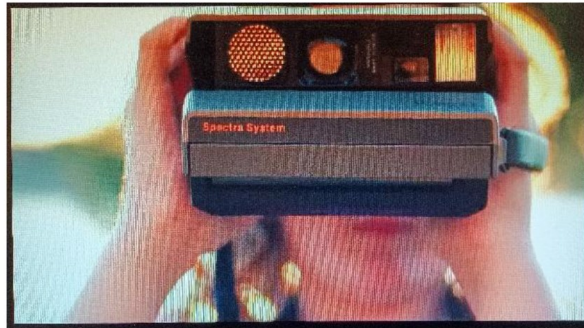


Pancake-and-French-Toast Breakfast Sunday, February 8, 2026

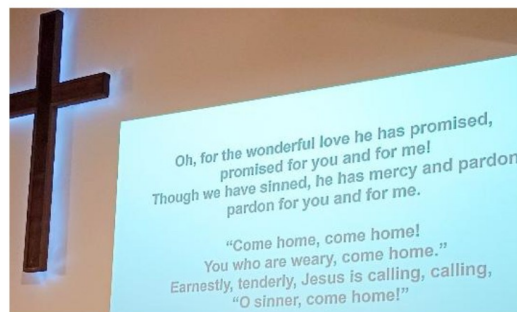


Ash Wednesday Worship

We met at 7 p.m. on February 18th to mark the start of Lent with the ceremonial marking of the cross on our foreheads to remind us Who is making us new!



You make
BEAUTIFUL THINGS
out of the dust



Please plan on joining us for our Lenten Season

Holden Services Wednesdays

February 25, March 4, March 11, March 18, March 25

Suppers at 5:30 pm Services at 6:30 pm

Psalm Sunday Service

Sunday March 29

Community Service

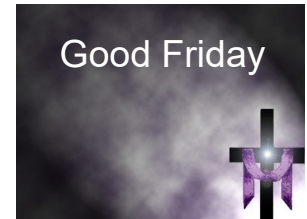
To Be Announced

Good Friday Service

Friday, April 3 at 7 pm

Easter Service

Sunday, April 5 at 10:30 pm



FOOD SHELF MONTH

March is Food Shelf month. Please donate. Basket will be in the entry way. Every little bit helps!

A poster with a green and black plaid border. The text is centered on a white background. The title "Upnorth Spring Tea" is in a large, black, serif font. Below it is a paragraph of text in a green, cursive font. The date and location are in a black, sans-serif font. The ticket information is in a green, sans-serif font. There are illustrations of snowshoes, a mug of tea, and pinecones.

Upnorth Spring Tea

Grab yer bestie. Gussy up in yer fav'rite flannel.
We're holdin' a shindig. Crafts. Bars. Uffdas. Fer sure.
When all is said and done, you'll be glad-ya've come.

2-4 pm, Saturday, April 25, 2026
First Lutheran Church
Pillager, Minnesota

Tickets: \$7 each or 2 for \$10

March 2026

FIRST LUTHERAN PILLAGER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 am Communion Service 10:30 am Fellowship	2	3 12 pm Quilters 8:00 pm AA Mtg	4 5:30 pm Lent Supper 6:30 pm Holden Service	5	6	7
8 9:30 am Service SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30 am Pancake Breakfast	9	10 12 pm Quilters 6:30 pm Church Council 8:00 pm AA Mtg	11 5:30 pm Lent Supper 6:30 pm Holden Service	12 1:30 pm Tea at Riverside	13	14
15 9:30 am Communion Service 10:30 am Fellowship	16	17 12 pm Quilters 8:00 pm AA Mtg	18 5:30 pm Lent Supper 6:30 pm Holden Service	19	20	21
22 9:30 am Service SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30 am Fellowship	23	24 12 pm Quilters 8:00 pm AA Mtg	25 5:30 pm Lent Supper 6:30 pm Holden Service	26	27	28
29 9:30 am Palm Sunday Service SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30 am Fellowship	30	31 12 pm Quilters 8:00 pm AA Mtg	1 5:30 pm Lent Supper 6:30 pm Holden Service	2	3	4

April 2026

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
			Community Service To Be Announced		7 pm Good Friday Service	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9:30 am Easter Communion Service		12 pm Quilters 8:00 pm AA Mtg	6:30 pm Bible Study	1:30 pm Tea at Riverside		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
9:30 am Service SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30 am Pancake Breakfast		12 pm Quilters 6:30 pm Church Council 8:00 pm AA Mtg	6:30 pm Bible Study			
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
9:30 am Communion Service 10:30 am Fellowship		12 pm Quilters 8:00 pm AA Mtg	6:30 pm Bible Study			2 - 4 Spring Tea Party
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
9:30 am Communion Service 10:30 am Fellowship		12 pm Quilters 8:00 pm AA Mtg	6:30 pm Bible Study			