

American Lutheran Church



February 2026

1512 Avenue G Gothenburg, NC 69138 308-537-3433 office@aleg.org

WORD OF LIFE

Sunday Lessons in January for your devotions



February 1

4th Sunday after Epiphany

Micah 6:1-8

Psalms 15

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Matthew 5:1-12

February 8

5th Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 58:1-12

Psalms 112:1-10

1 Corinthians 2:1-16

Matthew 5:13-20

February 18

Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Psalms 51:1-17

2 Corinthians 5:20b--6:10

Matthew 6:1-6. 16-21

February 15

Transfiguration of Our Lord

Exodus 24:12-18

Psalms 2

2 Peter 1:16-21

Matthew 17:1-9

February 22

First Sunday in Lent

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

Psalms 32

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

«Route »

«Last Name», «First Name»

«Street»

«City», «State» «Zip»





Congregational
COUNCIL

Congregation Council
meeting summary
January 13, 2026 at 7:00 pm
Present: **Pastor** Doug
Hjelmstad, **President** – Kara
Kreis, **Vice President** –

Amanda Rossell, **Treasurer** - Madison Rosse,
Secretary – Connie L. Dalrymple, **Property** -
Glen Finke, **Music & Worship** - Ernie Blecha,
Parish Ed – Erica Johnson

Kara opened the meeting with devotions.
It's easy to be thankful when things are going
well, but we sometimes forget to be thankful
for lesser things. Using the story of the
loaves and fishes (feeding the 5000), we're
reminded God's people gave thanks even
when it 'wasn't enough', only to find out that
it was just right. There are many such
instances in scripture and in our own lives.

Open comments: Lori Kitzing informed
Council that she has decided to retire her
pre-school after 15 years.

Minutes – December 9 minutes were
approved as presented.

Treasurer's Report – December approved as
presented.

Pastor's Report: Advent and Christmas ac-
tivities were wonderful and spirit filled, as
was the Cantata.

- The Marcy Slack funeral service will be
held at ALC on Saturday.

Bishop Johnson and the Synod staff will
be here from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Febr
7 for their *Road Show*. The event is
open to area congregations. Topics to
be discussed include networking and

the challenges of being church these
days. More information is available on
the Synod website. Council members
were encouraged attend as they can.

Music & Worship: Christmas décor has been
removed.

As full as Christmas Eve services were,
there were empty pews up front.
Perhaps next year's ushers can escort
people up and relieve crowding in the
narthex

They'd like to serve sandwiches along
with cookies after the 2026 Cantata.
They discussed having battery candles for
children instead of wax candles.

Ash Wednesday services will include First
Presbyterian and Zion and they will
also invite Cozad Presbyterian and
Zion Lutheran for Good Friday.

Property: Glen, Tom G, and contractor
Alfredo met to discuss remodeling the men's
south hallway restrooms.

The upstairs pews are original and in bad
shape. They need to be replaced.

Julie Hubbard is the new insurance
representative and will be meeting
with us about policy renewal.

Discussion was had on the status of the
south parsonage and available
alternatives. Kara will inform the
congregation this week to give
members time to think about the
situation.

. Detailed information and discussion will be held at Linger Longer in February with a congregational vote in March.

Glen is working on a 3 – 5-year plan for repairs, updates and renovations. The two restrooms in the north hall by the Gathering Place are very small. He would like to combine them into one room, serviceable for adults, or brides, etc.

Parish Ed: Average Children’s Church attendance was seven in 2024. Average in 2025 was 10.

Memorial: Funds have been moved to cover new paraments, using Leroy Cyriacks memorials. Lisa is updating the memorial book.

Katie Alexander’s memorials will be split equally between JAM and Parish Education.

Youth & Family: Seven youth students are going on the Pittsburgh trip this summer.

Discussion Items: The budget amounts for Synod dues will be verified. A motion from Amanda approved the 2026 budget proposal for presentation to the congregation. Erica seconded the motion and all present voted “Yes”. The motion carried.

After review, a motion made by Glen approved the January 25 annual meeting agenda. Madison seconded the motion and all present voted “Yes”. The motion carried.

A motion was made by Glen to approve the slate of candidates for the Parish Planning Council, and to present it for congregation approval on January 25: Vice President – Kevin Boyd, Secretary – Tammy McMichael, Stewardship – Kara Kries, Outreach & Hospitality – Angie Mannel. Madison seconded the motion and all present voted “Yea”. The motion carried.

The meeting closed with the Lord’s Prayer at 8:15 pm.

Connie L Dalrymple, Secretary

Note: Youth & Family will serve Linger Longer in February

Prayer Requests

Remember in Prayer: Members: Gail Block, Elsie Cyriacks, Pam Gage, Jim Gonzales, Judy Hicken, Molly Magana, Dennis McCain, Corey Stull, Lavonne Werkmeister;

Family & Friends of Members: Kristy Connelly, Lori Edwards, Keith Fickenscher, Chad Fuller, Kristy Henn, Rich Hillan, Mairik Holbein, Darcy Lenz, Arlan Ronnekamp, Tip Ronnekamp, Shirley Stombaugh, Chuck Taylor, Reese Tucker;

Service Members: Colton Bebensee, Sam Erb, Johanna Keiser, Brandon Reinke, Maggie Trenkle. *If you or a family member are ill or in the hospital, let us know so Pastor Doug can visit you and include you in our prayers or if a family member is on the prayer list and you feel that they no longer need to be included in them, please call the office at 537-3433.*



Women's Lenten Bible Study

Just a reminder that Bible study will not meet on the first Monday of February, March, or April since we will be meeting every Monday during Lent. As always, people can come when they can, each week has it's own topic. The study we will be doing is called "**The Psalm on the Cross.**" We will meet on February 16!



What should we do with the south parsonage?

We, as a congregation, need to decide what to do with the south parsonage. It is unlikely we have two pastors in the future due to fewer individuals entering the seminary. It is in need of some repairs and upgrades. Should we sell it? Should we do the repairs and upgrades before we sell it or sell it as is? We could upgrade the north parsonage with the sale proceeds. There are thoughts about tearing it down and using the lot for additional parking. What do you think? We will have a meeting during Linger Longer on February 22nd to discuss these issues. The Congregational Council will be in attendance to answer your questions. We plan to have a congregational vote on Sunday, March 1st to decide what to do. **Please plan to attend Linger Longer on February 22nd and the congregational vote on March 1st.**





ON THE ROAD AGAIN

with your Nebraska Synod Staff

AMERICAN, GOTHENBURG

FEBRUARY 7, 2026

SATURDAY 10AM - 3 PM

TRAVELING TOGETHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

DO YOU WONDER ABOUT THE FUTURE OF GOD'S CHURCH?

DO YOU FEEL LIKE WE DON'T MEASURE UP TO
WHAT THE CHURCH USED TO BE?

ARE YOU TROUBLED BY AGING BUILDINGS AND UNUSED FACILITIES?

DOES IT FEEL LIKE ALL THE CHURCH TALKS ABOUT IS
PAYING THE BILLS?

DO YOU WANT TO BE THE HANDS AND FEET OF JESUS IN
YOUR COMMUNITY BUT AREN'T SURE HOW TO GET STARTED?

**If you answered YES to ANY of the above questions,
this event is for YOU!**

"I am because we are." This isn't synod staff coming to you. This is an opportunity for all of us to come together with Jesus. In this time, we will learn about how the church is already changing and what the road ahead might look like for all of us. We will ponder what faithful innovation looks like in your community and how to pack your bags with actionable steps to bring back home. You'll have the opportunity to meet Synod Council members, Cluster Deans, and other local companions who are journeying with you on the way.

**Let us imagine the
adventure that awaits us
as we travel this road as
ONE Church Together!**

Learn More
& Register



“Did You Know?”

...the first in a series...

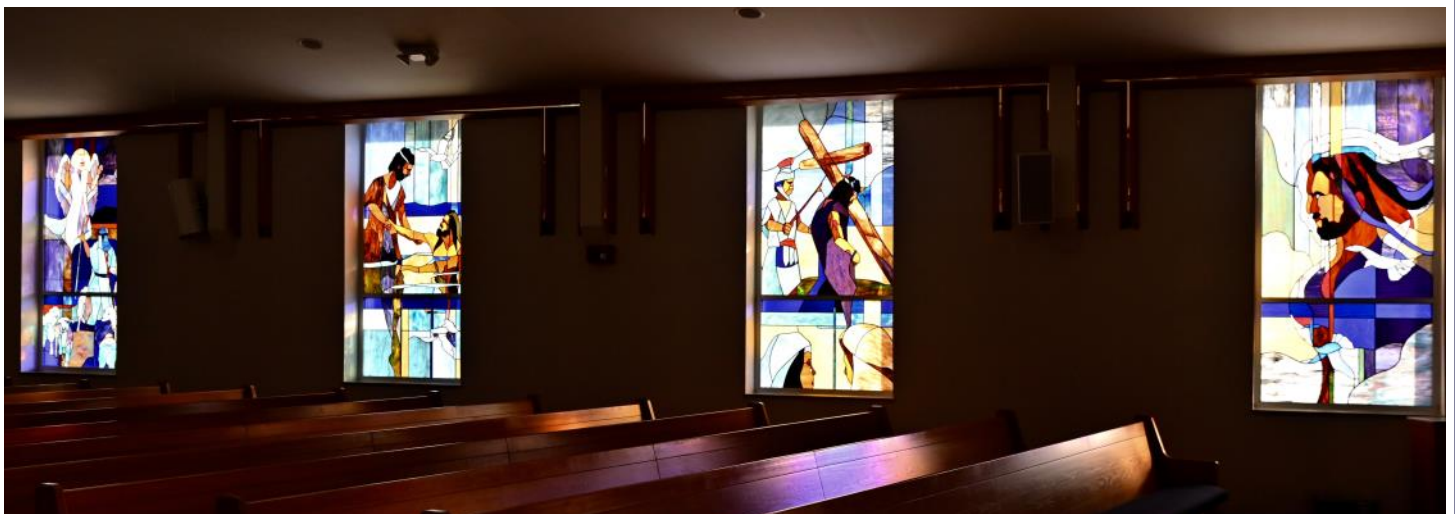
St. John’s Lutheran Church (in town) and Christ Lutheran Church (in the country) combined as a congregation and became American Lutheran Church in 1952. In anticipation of our 50th anniversary in 2002, the people of ALC undertook a large-scale visioning and planning process. One aspect of this process led to the decision to do a major remodel and refresh of the worship space. Soon there was an ambitious list, such as opening up the chancel area and designing new furnishings, moving the choir to the center, restoring and enhancing the organ, obtaining new pews, and doing six new windows on the lower portion of the east side of the sanctuary.

Since I was lead pastor at that time, I want to share some of the background that led up to the themes depicted in these unique art glass windows.

Our pastoral staff at that time included Jeff and Wendy Ruetten, and the three of us were tasked with brainstorming ideas for the window panels. If I remember correctly, it was Pastor Jeff who came up with the idea of six windows portraying the seasons and major cycles of the church worship year. One cycle that we observe annually is Advent-Christmas-Epiphany, and this is followed by Lent-Easter-Pentecost. This gave us six seasons and then we pastors did the “very Lutheran” thing of researching the three-year lectionary (Scripture readings) for the particular passages or stories that would be proclaimed through stained glass.

Over the coming months I will plan to tell the stories and suggest some of the messages portrayed through the six windows on the east aisle of American Lutheran Church.

Steve Berke



ALC friends! Please sign up to deliver Meals on Wheels the week of February 16 -- each day has six routes to cover. **If you are able to deliver to more than one route, please sign up for each route**

separately so that other drivers are aware and the Center knows each route is covered. Plan to be at the Senior Center at 11:15. Any questions? Contact Lori Long. Thank you for serving our community

<https://bit.ly/ALCMealsFeb2026>



Special Offering for February is Lutheran Disaster Response

Lutheran Disaster Response collaborates with other disaster response organizations and religious entities in the United States and around the world. This enables the greatest stewardship of resources and maximum impact of response. We are a welcome partner because we respect the perspectives and strengths of others.

We recognize that every disaster is local. Because of this, we believe every response needs to be rooted in the community; we work to accompany that community from immediate relief through long-term recovery.

In our international work we partner closely with companion churches and other Lutheran and ecumenical relief agencies to make sure local needs are being addressed and met. In the United States, we work through our extensive affiliate network and other partners to address these same concerns.

Some key areas of work include:

- Providing emotional and spiritual care for people who have been affected by a disaster and for leaders who respond to a disaster
- Coordinating volunteers through our local affiliates
- Assisting refugees in a holistic way by meeting the varied needs of the community
- Promoting disaster risk-reduction by helping communities build their assets thereby reducing the effects of likely disasters

Providing long-term recovery efforts by addressing the unmet needs months or even years after a disaster strikes

Beloved People of ALC,

Lent and Advent are known as seasons of poverty in the sense that they call on us to remember the poor and bring us into solidarity with those in need.

Lent is also a baptismal time. In the early church it was the period when candidates for baptism were given their final preparation. Once Lent became the 40-day lead up to the Easter feast, it became a time to call the entire church body to baptismal renewal, to extend an invitation to all of us to walk in the mercy and forgiveness of God poured out over us in baptism.

Ash Wednesday falls on February 18th this year (which also the commemoration of Martin Luther) when we are invited to the Lenten disciplines of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving (charity). The fasting we are called to is not a performative way to demonstrate our own spiritual muscle or our ability to rise above. The Lenten fasting we are called into is recognition and expression of our own poverty, our own deep need, in concert with others who are hungry, bowed down, or forgotten. Our fasting becomes an enacted prayer to God for the sake of others and the world.

Such a discipline might mean fasting from self-righteousness, fasting from over consumption, from injustice, from self-indulgence, which points to Lent as a time of repentance, of turning away from sin and toward the living God. Biblically based fasting is combined with prayers for neighbors, near and far, and with almsgiving – the sharing of food and money we aren't spending on ourselves – as a sign of solidarity with the poverty-stricken whose lives and want are their only prayer.

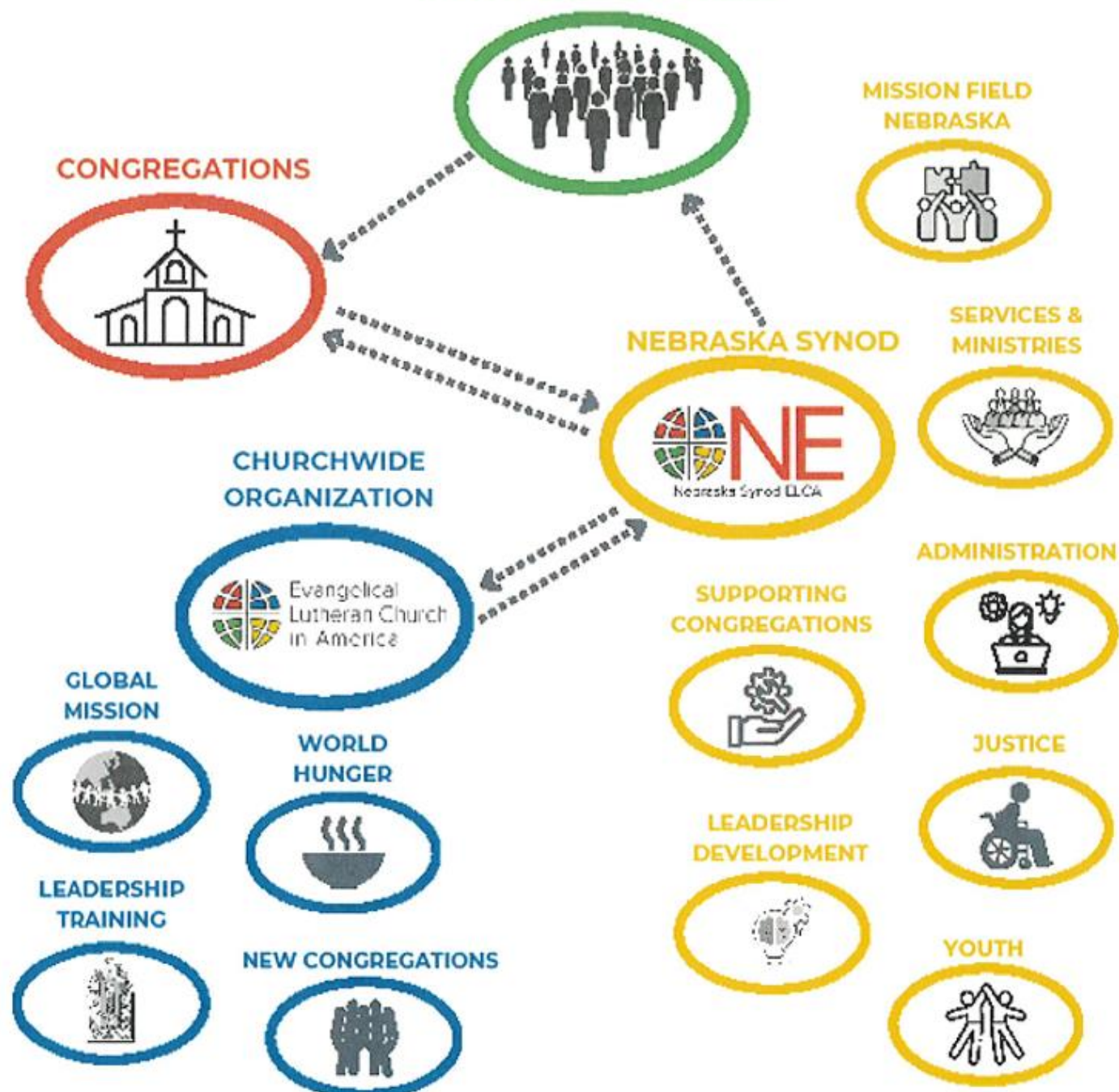
In this cultural moment of fear-mongering and division and hostility Lent is also time of truth-telling and repentance, God's call to turn away from the ways of death and toward the life-giving ways of Christ. Our Lenten disciplines feel even more necessary as a reminder that since we are united with Christ in a baptism like his, we are also united with him in a resurrection like his.

Lenten blessings to you all,
Pastor Doug Hjelmstad

YOUR STEWARDSHIP IN ACTION THROUGH MISSION SHARE

Thank you for all of the ministry that you do and make happen in your congregation and local community. Thank you also for the ministry that you do and make possible through Mission Share. Mission Share is the undesignated offering that you share with the larger Nebraska Synod and ELCA through which you do ministry that spans the globe and changes lives. From your household's discernment and generosity, you support your local congregation. From there, a portion is shared with the larger church through Mission Share that supports the various ministries of the Nebraska Synod including Mission Field Nebraska and supporting congregations; as well as the larger ELCA including Global Mission, World Hunger and more. There is so much that you do by being part of this church together. Thank you for your faithfulness, generosity, and stewardship. You matter and make a difference as together we cultivate love as signs of God's abundant love.

INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES





February Birthdays & Anniversaries

Happy Birthday

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------|----|-------------------|
| 1 | Cindy Garcia | 22 | Donna McConnell |
| 2 | Pat Jobman | | Mark Ostergard |
| | Braden Sabin | 23 | Cody Ostergard |
| 5 | Jo Johnson | 24 | Jed Clark |
| 6 | Xanthia Brian | 25 | Kristin Bartlett |
| 7 | Steve Bihlmaier | | Boyd Hicken |
| 8 | Lori Kitzing | | Amber Wear |
| 9 | Colbie Brown | 26 | Barb Hicken |
| 10 | Kim Kitzing | | Bowe Jorgenson |
| | Logan Koehler | | Lathan Johnson |
| 11 | Kendra Boyd | | Jennie Rodriguez |
| | Marvin Franzen | | Karan Smith |
| | LaMonte Schlake | | Melody Titkemeier |
| 12 | Alora France | 28 | Kathy Graff |
| | Brooks Lauer | | Amy Headley |
| 15 | Vickie Keiser | 29 | Molly Magana |
| 16 | Dirk Kolbo | | |
| 18 | Lindly Anderson | | |
| | Glenn Finke | | |
| | Brian Keiser | | |
| 19 | Chandler Harm | | |
| 20 | Trinity Brian | | |
| | Kiel Holmes | | |
| 21 | Jill Franzen | | |
| | McKinley Harm | | |
| | Dave Keiser | | |

Anniversaries

- | | |
|----|-------------------------|
| 2 | Jerry & Joyce Hudson |
| 4 | Jerry & Enid Macken |
| 7 | Anthony & Erin Finke |
| 10 | Joe & Carol Keiser |
| 14 | Scott & Stephanie Aden |
| 15 | Jay & Sonia Richeson |
| 20 | Jay & Suzanne Holmes |
| 24 | Curtis & Beth Ostendorf |



Sunday Volunteers

Acolytes -

February 1 - Gretta McKim
February 8 - Hadley Ostergard
February 15 - Fletcher Grabenstein
February 22 - Alec Wagner, Lathan Johnson
March 1 - Cooper Roth

Ushers -

February 1 - Randy & Cressy Rossell
February 8 - Ken Christensen, Dave Keiser
February 15 - Bob Ronnekamp, Rick Zarek
February 22 - Pat Jobman, Connie Stevens
March 1 - Glenn Finke, Kurt Stevens

Communion Assistants -

February 1 - Noel & Joni Jacobsen,
Bob Jorgenson
February 8 - Carolyn Hicken,
Tammy McMichael, Lisa Wagner
February 15 - Kendra Boyd, Kevin Boyd
February 22 - Mary Finke, Scott & Jackie
France
March 1 - Macy Finke, Kim Kitzing,
LaMonte Schlake

Reader -

February 1 - Mary Finke
February 8 - Tim Franzen
February 15 - Jo Fuller
February 22 - Logan Feather
March 1 - Lisa Wagner

Welcome Center Host -

February 1 - Barb Hicken
February 8 - Linda Rodine
February 15 - Jan Blecha
February 22 - Jim Long
March 1 - Jonie Birnie

Greeters -

February 1 - Joe & Carol Keiser
February 8 - Steve & Lisa Bihlmaier
February 15 - Corey & Keri Roth
February 22 - Larry & Sue Schledewitz
March 1 - Elaine Keiser, Lori Long

Sound -

February 1 - Eldon Rodine
February 8 - Cressy Rosell
February 15 - Kurt Stevens
February 22 - Scott Aden
March 1 - Eldon Rodine

Offering Counters -

February - Eldon & Linda Rodine
March - Karl & Becky Randecker

Communion Bread -

February 1 - Carol Wahlgren
February 8 - Karan Smith
February 15 - Joni Jacobsen
February 22 - Jan Blecha
March 1 - Lisa Wagner

Communion Support Person-

February 1 - Macy Finke
February 8 - Marci Ostergard
February 15 - Kya Roth
February 22 - Della Hengen
March 1 - Natalie Hengen

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1 9a Property 10a Service of Holy Communion/ Children's Church 11a Linger Longer</p>	2	3 Pony Express Cluster Text Study	4 2:30-3:30p JAM 6p Worship 6:30 Meal 7p Confirmation	5 7p Manna & Mercy Bible Study	6	7
<p>8 10a Service of Holy Communion/ Children's Church 11a Linger Longer</p>	9 7a Men's Breakfast Communion at Stone Hearth	10 Pony Express Cluster Text Study 7p Congregational Council	11 6p Worship 6:30 Meal 7p Confirmation	12 7p Manna & Mercy Bible Study	13	14
<p>15 10a Service of Holy Communion/ Children's Church 11a Linger Longer</p>	16 7p Women's Bible Study Meals on Wheels	17	18 7p Ash Wednesday	19	20 Meals on Wheels	21
<p>22 10a Service of Holy Communion/ Children's Church 11a Linger Longer</p>	23 1:30p Communion at Stone Hearth 7p Women's Bible Study	24 Pony Express Cluster Text Study	25 2:30-3:30p JAM 6p Worship 6:30 Meal 7p Confirmation	26 8:30a Quilters	27	28

February 2026