



THE TORCH

TrinityLCPV.com
Facebook.com/Trinity LCPV

Email: office@trinitylcpv.com
Youtube.com/@TrinityLCPV

May 2026
Sunday Worship
9:00 AM

Trinity Lutheran Church • 18137 Criswell Street • Bettendorf, Iowa 52722 • 563-332-5188
Pastor Stephen Nilsen 563-332-6432 (office) 319-540-1172 (cell) snilsen@trinitylcpv.com (email)

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

Throughout this Easter season, I have been reminding myself and others that Easter doesn't only pertain to that one glorious Sunday morning, but extends into all aspects of our lives as we enter in to new life in Christ in all that we do, with a season stretching fifty days from the Sunday of Easter through Pentecost (this year that means April 5 through May 24). I love the readings we get this time of year, because often they pertain to the "what next" for the early followers of Christ: Christ is risen... but now what next?

Perhaps no better reading pertains to that "what next?" feeling than the first reading from this year's Fourth Sunday of Easter: Acts 2:42-47. Throughout the second chapter of Acts, the early church gathers together, moved by the Spirit in the story of the first Pentecost, hearing a sermon from the Apostle Peter, and then witnessing a massive baptism of around 3,000 new believers. Immediately following that burst of excitement and baptisms, we read:

"The baptized devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved." - Acts 2:42-47, NRSVUE

Imagine this great community! Gathering together, sharing all things in common, providing for the needs of one another, and belonging to a community that is growing, by the Lord's good work. In just a short time after the resurrection of Christ, these early followers are moved to a deep relationship.

Relationships have been on my mind a lot in this Eastertide as well. Relationships are what allow for our ministry and lives to thrive... or struggle. There were several books I read from the family systems theorist and rabbi Edwin Friedman during my seminary journey, but one chart that has always remained pertinent is below:

Relationship determines meaning

If the relationship	A "mistake" is heard	A "gift" is heard as...
Trusting and connected	An honest oversight	A genuine act of love
Anxious and reactive	Deliberate sabotage	A manipulative bribe
Distant or cold	Evidence of incompetence	A confusing anomaly

— Edwin Friedman

When we share in trusting relationships, our gifts are seen as love and our mistakes are given grace. The more anxious and reactive our relationships get (or even distant or cold), fear, manipulation, confusion, and sabotage are bred. I pray that in the light of the resurrection, we carry forth in trusting and connected relationships, growing in God's love, and sharing in a future together.

"Lord, we pray. I do not remember Jesus calling us for competition or comfort set apart, or describing faith in any certain terms that reward our isolated maintenance. But he might recognize this vulnerable hope, careful Discerning that merges dreams, the stark awareness of our mortality that defies earthly metrics for holy story. I do not remember Jesus calling us to hang onto what we have made, but he might recognize these hands holding lightly what is ours to tend for a while. Amen." -Meta Herrick Carlson, *Speak It Plain*, 156

Yours in relationship, *Pastor Stephen Nilsen*

Trinity Office Hours Tues, Wed, Thurs - 9AM-1PM
Pastor Stephen's Office Hours Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs - 10AM - 2PM



From the President's Desk

HAVE AN ITEM FOR AN UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETING?

Reach out to one of the 2026 Council Members or Pastor Stephen to share your item of concern. You may also leave the note in the suggestion box at the desk by the office.

2026 Council Members

Dane Crist — President — Education Committee
 Al McIlrath — Vice President — Endowment Committee
 John Ahlers — Treasurer — Stewardship Committee
 Kathy Naslund — Secretary — Social Ministry Committee
 Dawn Brick — Memorial Committee
 Diane Cook — Personnel Committee
 Diane Holst — HOT Team
 Don Kathan — Property Committee
 Sally Morrow — Worship & Music Committee

I hope you all have been able to enjoy some of the nicer parts of our Spring weather. This weekend we will have a Spring Clean Up around the church grounds on Saturday, and Sunday we will have a Congregational vote on fixing up the parking lot and getting a new mowing tractor. I hope you will vote yes on both, as both expenditures seem needed and it does appear we can afford them.

This month is our Synod Assembly, please pray for Pastor Stephen, Michelle, and I as we go represent Trinity at the SEIA Synod Assembly and as we vote for Bishop and other normal business on the Agenda. It is very interesting what we learn from attending these Assemblies about the ELCA and about what is happening at other churches in the Synod. I wish more of our Congregation would volunteer once to go as it is very eye-opening how much is actually going on in our Lutheran World.

Blessings,

Dane Crist

Trinity Council President

SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, May 3 after worship



Special Congregational Meeting

Sunday, May 3 after Worship

Council invites you to a congregational meeting to vote on a pair of proposals for funding a new lawn tractor and some parking lot repairs. Please make an effort to attend so that we can have a quorum and have your input on this upcoming project. See a member of council or the property committee if you have any questions.

Funding for the project is proposed to come from the Thrivent-held Stewardship Reserve Fund, which sits at a balance of over \$86,000 as of the end of April.

Calling all interested parties! If you are interested in reviewing and possibly updating the Trinity Lutheran Church Congregational Constitution, your help could be valuably used in the coming months ahead. Reach out to Pastor Stephen if you would like a copy of the constitution or other documents needed for the updates. *See page 10 for more info from the Synod.*



WANT TO CONNECT THE WITH WEEKLY HAPPENINGS AT TRINITY?

Sign up for our weekly email bulletin that will let you know what's happening in the week ahead and have other great upcoming announcements, as well as the weekly bulletin for worship.

Call (332-5188) or email Paula (office@trinitylcpv.com) to sign up!

YEAR TO DATE FINANCIAL INFO THROUGH MARCH 2026

Collections to date	\$47,028.49
Expenses to date	\$45,789.13
Net to date	\$ 1,239.36

No funds have been transferred from Stewardship Reserves year to date.

ATTENDANCE TOTALS FOR APRIL 2026

March 29	Palm Sunday	60
April 3	Maundy Thursday	23
April 4	Good Friday	23
April 5	Easter Sunday	113
April 12		56
April 19		58
April 26		39



BIRTHDAYS

7 Barb McIlrath
7 Logan Paul
8 Maggie Wright
9 Jeff McIlrath
12 Tom Shelton
15 Cathy Newman
19 Gannen Hank
31 Julia Denain

ANNIVERSARIES

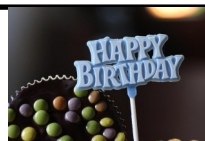
19 Vicki & Stephen Engler
29 Karen & Bill Romans
30 Leah & Stephen Nilsen

Happy Anniversary



Thanks for all the prayers, cards, and phone calls while I was recuperating from hip surgery. A nice bouquet of flowers and a few treats were waiting when I got back in the office.

Paula



Worship & Fellowship Volunteers

	May 3	May 10	May 17	May 24	May 31
<i>Altar Guild</i>	Mary Shelton	Linda Busch	Mary Shelton	Sally Morrow	Diana Mayes
<i>Communion Assistant</i>	Marcia Brunsvold	Lois Schurr	Diane Holst	Claudia Neumann	Michelle Crist
<i>Lector</i>	Ellen Opperman	Jo Ann Hogenson	Barb Paul	Susan Varilek	Dane Crist
<i>Usher Greeter</i>	Travis Brunsvold Paul Opperman	Chris Kaul Barb Paul	Wayne Holst Ron Morrow	Deb Anderson Don Cordts	Ron Morrow Sally Morrow
<i>Worship Video Livestream Producer</i>	Randy Goslin	Randy Goslin	Randy Goslin	Randy Goslin	Randy Goslin
<i>Fellowship</i>	Lois Schurr	Men of Trinity for Mother's Day	HOT Team Pie Sunday	Mary Shelton	Dane & Michelle Crist

If you would like to help us in our Sunday Gathering by doing any of the above tasks, please contact the church office to be added to the list of volunteers.

If you are unable to fulfill your duties, please find a replacement and call or email the church office (332-5188 or office@trinitylcpv.com) with your replacement. Thank you.



Trinity Blood Pressure Ministry *After worship on May 3*

Trinity will be offering this ministry the first Sunday of each month by our qualified congregational nurse members. There are several stories of

health monitoring, helping the lives of those who have joined in this ministry.



Trinity Card
Crafting
CRAFTED WITH LOVE

Trinity Card Crafting Ministry Spreading Joy

Thursday, May 14 1:00 - 3:00 PM

Trinity's card ministry meets monthly on the second Thursday of the month at in Fellowship Hall. The next meeting will be May 14 from 1:00-3:00 PM. All are welcome to join us with no experience necessary!

Each month we make and deliver cards to the residents of Aspire of Pleasant Valley Nursing and Rehab (Formerly River Manor). We also make and mail greetings to members and friends of Trinity. In addition, the committee has been working to replenish the supply of greeting cards for sale in the Fellowship Hall. All cards are \$2.00.

Thank you for your support of this ministry. If you have any questions, please contact Chris Kaul, Linda Busch, Claudia Neumann, Marcia Brunsvold or Pastor Stephen.

Spring Clean-Up Day



Saturday, May 2 - 8:30 AM - 12 PM
Raindate: Saturday, May 9

Volunteers of all skill levels will be needed for the 2026 Spring Clean-Up Day! Whether you are great with a shovel or more into indoor cleaning, there's a role for you. Refreshments will be provided.

FIRST COMMUNION CELEBRATED

Sunday, April 26



We give thanks for the Spirit that gathers us in for worship each and every week, and especially on Sunday, April 26 as we celebrated communion with three children receiving the Holy Supper for the first time at worship here at Trinity: Fletcher, Georgia, and Kohler Wright. We continue to celebrate their growing faith at this milestone as well as sharing in the community with Christ we share in the eucharist every Sunday. The bread for two Sundays was also baked and prepared by the Wright children at their First Communion class.

If you know a young person who might be interested in communion, you can arrange for instruction by emailing Pastor Stephen.

You're Invited to a Graduation Party!

Dayton Paul



BETTENDORF CLASS OF 2026

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A GRADUATION PARTY
SUNDAY MAY 24, 2026 2-5 PM
FOREST GROVE PARK
6000 FOREST GROVE DR
BETTENDORF IA



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF Baby & Personal Care Kits

Now through June 14 in the Narthex



Collecting Items for Summer Day Camp Kids
to Assemble and Help Neighbors in Need

Collections of Baby & Personal Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief

Now through June 14

Trinity will be collecting items for the Summer Day Camp Kids to assemble into kits to help our neighbors in need with Lutheran World Relief Baby & Personal Care Kits. Signs in the Narthex will explain what items are needed, or you can learn more in the Narthex or at LWR.org/kits



Baby Care Kits

These items are still needed for the Baby Care Kits & the Personal Care Kits for our Vacation Bible School children to pack and send to Lutheran World Relief.

Large Medium weight bath towels (40" x 20" or 52" x 27")

Bars of Soap in the original packages

Toothbrushes in original packages

Large Sturdy Combs

Baby Sweaters or Jackets (any size 6 through 24 month)

Receiving Blankets (36" square or 52")

Baby Sleepers (one piece) (any size 6 through 24 month)

Diaper Pins or Large Safety Pins

Extra Large Plastic Clear Ziploc or similar bags (15 square inches or larger)



Personal Care Kits



New Baptismal Font Bowl Installed

We give thanks for the many gifts to our Memorial Fund over the year that have been used in a variety of ways in our sanctuary and congregation. One new one you might have noticed is our new baptismal font bowl that was made by local glass artists Beth Campshire and Bill Hugunin. The new font features a carved seashell in the bottom of the bowl. As we give thanks for the gifts of baptism during this Easter season, we give thanks for gifts of art and share in the joy of baptisms to come in the years ahead.

Join Trinity Prayer Chain to Connect with Community



A community that prays for one another is transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. We have been praying for and with each other for a long time here at Trinity Lutheran Church, but often we don't know exactly what we are praying for in those instances. If you would like to share in brief emails when there are prayer requests sent in to the office or to Pastor Stephen (at the times when permission is given), please email [Pastor](#) or the [office](#) to be added to the Trinity Prayer Chain. These will likely be brief emails to provide a notice when an emergency has happened or when someone is requesting prayers for a family member. Prayer requests will be asked, whether they would like any details shared with the prayer chain, when they make those requests.



MOTHER'S DAY FELLOWSHIP

MEN OF TRINITY WILL BE HOSTING THE FELLOWSHIP HOUR TO GIVE THANKS FOR MOTHERS AND MOTHERLY FIGURES IN OUR CONGREGATION

Sunday, May 10
After 9 AM Worship

PIE SUNDAY

Sunday, May 17
After 9 AM Worship

TAKE PART IN THIS TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH TRADITION. SHARE IN FELLOWSHIP AND ENJOY SOME WONDERFUL PIES

THEOLOGY ON TAP

**QUESTIONS ABOUT LIFE?
QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD?
QUESTIONS ABOUT BOTH?**

Grab a drink, have a seat, and Join for an evening of discussion of whatever is on your mind.

TUESDAY, MAY 19 AT 6:30 PM

TWIN SPAN BREWING | 6776 CHAMPIONSHIP DRIVE, BETTENDORF



**TWIN SPAN
BREWING**



Crossroads Youth Ministry

End of Year Lock-In Coming Soon

TLC youth from 6th through 9th grades have had a great year joining together with First Presbyterian Church's youth for fun, faith-filled youth group Sundays through the school year. Weekly Sunday evening meetings have ended at the end of April. We will be ending the year with a classic church lock-in with a bonfire and more fun and games sometime later in May.

If you would like to help with either the lock-in or future youth activities next fall, contact Pastor Stephen.



Scott County Library's Bookmobile Stops

The Scott County Library Bookmobile will be back again for you to stop by the church parking lot through the spring on Tuesday afternoons every three weeks. Anyone with a library card from a library in

Scott County can check out books and other media. We will have snacks and drinks available in Fellowship Hall. More stops will be coming in the summer too!

We hope to see you there!

Tuesday, May 19. 4:40-5:10 PM

For more info, visit: Scottcountyia.gov/library/



Secure Your Documents. Support Your Community.

Thrivent love helping our community - and would love for you to join in!

 Saturday, May 30, 2026
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

 Redeemer Lutheran Church
1107 Tanglefoot Ln,
Bettendorf, IA 52722

Come to Redeemer Lutheran Church for a secure document Shred Event supporting One Eighty ministry to equip people facing crisis, poverty and addiction to invest in healthy relationships, overcome barriers to freedom, and encounter hope in Christ. Bring a donation of toilet paper or a monetary gift to support One Eighty's ministry.

Questions? Call Julie Schumann at 563-345-6424 or email julie.schumann@thrivent.com. No products will be sold.

Join the PPALs Bible Study

Saturdays 8 AM

Trinity Lutheran Church

Join together in a new Bible Study with Christians from around the PV, Princeton, Argo, and Le Claire area that make up PPALs.

We encourage you to grab a coffee or beverage and join in for readings and discussion of the Bible. For more info, see

[Randy Goslin](#).



Saturday Morning
Bible Study
Saturdays at 8 AM

BIBLE Study

WEDNESDAYS AT 10 AM

Join us for a **weekly** Bible study centered around the texts for the upcoming week's worship service as we find what God is up to in the text and our lives this week



WEEKLY READINGS

05/03 Acts 7:55-60, Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16
1 Peter 2:2-10, John 14:1-14

05/10 Acts 17:22-31, Psalm 66:8-20
1 Peter 3:13-22, John 14:15-21

05/17 Acts 1:6-14, Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35
1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11, John 17:1-11

05/24 Acts 2:1-21, Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
1 Corinthians 12:3b-13, John 20:19-23

05/31 Genesis 1:1--2:4a, Psalm 8
2 Corinthians 13:11-13, Matthew 28:16-20



Open To

Children ages 4
through Grade 6

Join Us!

- **Dates** June 15-19
- **Times** 9am-4pm
- **Where**
Trinity Lutheran Church
18137 Criswell St.
Bettendorf 52722
- Snacks and meals will be provided
- Family night campfire on Thursday evening

Save the Date!

VBS June 15-19

Trinity Lutheran is partnering with Zion Lutheran Church, Grace Lutheran Church & St. James Lutheran Church to host a week-long Day Camp with Camp Ewalu counselors

Learning, Crafts, Games, and More!

Counselors from Ewalu Bible Camp will lead children in our own local camp experience with all the fun of a park-like atmosphere surrounded by nature

Register Online:

@ trinitylcpv.com/day-camp
or scan the QR code →

- \$40 / child: register by April 19
- \$50 / child: after April 19
- Registration ends June 1



Questions?

Trinity Lutheran Church | 563-332-5188
Pastor Stephen | snilsen@trinitylcpv.com

Ewalu Camp | 563-933-4700
camp@ewalu.org | ewalu.org/day-camps

Volunteers Needed

We'll need volunteers of all sorts ranging from hosting counselors for the week to serving snacks and lunches, accompanying children to clean-up after each day of camp.

If you are interested in volunteering in any way, please contact Pastor Stephen, Dane Crist, or Cathy Newman or Sign-up on the Narthex Bulletin Board Sign-Up Sheet →



TRINITY
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Zion
Lutheran Church



St. James
LUTHERAN CHURCH

GRACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH





SOME BUZZ An Update on Our Native Garden (A Plea for Help) By John Newman



The Trinity Flutter Patch could also use your help with empty, clean gallon milk jugs that can be used as mini greenhouses for the newly planted native plants in our garden. You may drop them off in the narthex in the plastic bin there.

Flutter Patch seems to me to be a catchy name for the median garden that is being developed in our parking lot median. It is actually derived from the Creation story as translated by Young's Literal Translation Bible (which purports to be the most literal English translation of the Bible from Hebrew and Greek, leaving out many connecting words required of English grammar). According to Young, Genesis is best translated to describe God's Spirit "fluttering" about the waste and void as God undertook the creation. Indeed, I can certainly imagine God moving in and about the creation, joyfully adding one element after another to create the perfect harmony of the masterpiece He deemed to be very good.

Perhaps with the creation story and the Gospel in mind, Martin Luther commented (perhaps more than once) that God's Love is creative - seeking to make lovely out of that which is unlovely. Human love tends to be responsive - drawing nearer to that which we perceive as lovely, while avoiding that which we believe to be unlovely. Our challenge is to strive to imitate God's love.

A garden speaks volumes about who we are on numerous levels. Because a garden changes with the seasons, the change provides us with the opportunity to involve ourselves in its renewal. To take the time to make more lovely a piece of God's creation given to us, and by natural passage of time will become unlovely because of weed growth and natural plant death and decay before new life springs forth.

The Native Garden that I envision will consist of Iowa native prairie plantings that evolved and thrived over thousands of years before human intervention displaced the prairie for economic reasons. Prairie plants are flowers and grasses that co-exist with Iowa's native pollinators and wildlife.

The garden will be low maintenance, but creating it to the level of self-sustenance over several years is much like raising children to adulthood. It takes time, effort, and patience, especially since the task requires eradication of invasive plants from Asia, Europe, and Canada and other places not Iowa. By definition, invasive plants do not co-exist with other plants; they out compete them for nutrients, water, and light until the invasive plant dominates the landscape.

I could use, and would much appreciate, some help from others: Light weeding, watering, and other things that are garden related. I do not ask for commitment of large amounts of time, and I do not ask others to do that which they are physically unable to do. If interested in helping, we can talk and I am certain we can find some small thing you may be able to do.

Please prayerfully consider this request and approach me. You just might find some joy in the creative love engendered by tending a garden in some small way.



Calling All Green Thumbs: Trinity Anti-Hunger Garden Returning for Fourth Year!

Whether you've been growing vegetables or fruits on your own for years or you've never tried but wanted to see what gardening is like while making a difference in our community, there's a place for you to help with our Trinity Anti-Hunger Garden Ministry! April will mean the early gardening work: getting the soil ready, planting some early crops like lettuce, and other tasks as needed for our season ahead. The fruits of this labor go to serve our neighbors in need through both the Trinity Food Pantry and the Central Community Circle (CCC) Food Pantry in Davenport – providing fresh produce to neighbors in need.

With additional questions, please contact Dane Crist (563-340-6343, gr8tdane_10@yahoo.com).

Did you know... you can also drop off other produce that you help to grow at the Trinity Food Pantry? In the past few months, we have received everything from apples to rhubarb and more from members of our community who look to help feed neighbors who can use our assistance. If you drop off some food at the pantry, please notify Dane Crist or one of the volunteers at the Pantry.



ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE SEEKS DISBURSEMENT RECIPIENTS FOR 2026

*In 2025, Trinity Endowment Fund was able to distribute **\$19,000** to various agencies within the ELCA and our community. Many of our recipients were recommended by members of the congregation. This year we will be distributing **\$20,000** and would like to hear your suggestions for organizations that could benefit.*

The Endowment Agreement stipulates the following guidelines for distribution:

20% (\$4000)	to Trinity's Council Discretionary Fund
20% (\$4000)	to ELCA Affiliated Programs
20% (\$4000)	to Community Service Programs
40 % (\$8000)	to Miscellaneous Organizations

Forms for your recommendations will be available in the Torch, the church office and on the bulletin boards. Completed forms can be returned to the church office. Please contact any of the team members if you have questions.

Deadline for applications: July 31, 2026

Committee members: Sue Davison, Diana Mayes, Bill Romans, Maggie Wright

Treasurer: Ridge Raddatz

Council Representative: Al McIlrath

Coordinator: Marcia Brunsvold

Trinity Lutheran Endowment Committee Congregational Suggestions for Endowment Fund Distribution

Congregation members, committee members or groups seeking resources to support a program. Organization, ministry or mission are invited to submit to the endowment Committee request for use of Endowment Distributions. All requests must be submitted in writing and received by July 31, 2026 for the Current years distributions.

Your name _____

Your contact information: Phone _____ **Email** _____

Organization you recommend for Donation _____

Please provide information about the organization, ministry and suggested use.

Suggested donation amount _____

(Please note that the committee is not bound by this suggestion, but your input is appreciated.)

For questions, please contact Committee Members:
Sue Davison, Diana Mayes, Bill Romans, Maggie Wright,
Ridge Raddatz (Treasurer), Al McIlrath (Council Representative)
or Marcia Brunsvold.

You may complete the form above or online using the QR Code.
Completed forms can be turned into the office or emailed to
brunsvoldmarcia@gmail.com





Trinity Food Pantry Continues Feeding Our Neighbors

Pantry Hours: Mondays, 9-11 AM and Thursdays, 4-6 PM

Our community food pantry continues to serve our neighbors. We are blessed with many volunteers, but more are always welcome. We welcome volunteers for other aspects of the food pantry beyond the times when we are open, such as organizing the food in the pantry and sorting new donations. If you would like to help out, please reach out to Dane Crist or Pastor Stephen or email pantry@trinitylcpv.com.

Thanks so much for your support!
Trinity Food Pantry Team

pantry@trinitylcpv.com

Join our friends at
Grace Lutheran Church
1140E High St
Davenport, IA

Life & Legacy Series

10:45am - 12:00pm

Thursdays in May

- ☒ What legal prep is best to protect my family and assets?
- ☒ How does one choose an independent living community?
- ☒ What are some resources that can support my mental health?
- ☒ How do I create and leave a legacy?

These are just a few of the questions we all seek to understand as we grow older. Our guest speakers will address these and other topics and offer time for questions and answers. There is no cost to attend the classes, and light refreshments will be served.

Topics include: downsizing, mental healthcare, endowment legacies, funeral planning, and more.

Please join us and invite a friend!

To register: scan the QR Code, go to bit.ly/LLMay2026, or call 563-322-0769. You may attend any or all classes.



Share-A-Meal Serves 65 Neighbors on April 23

We would love to hear from you if you would be able to help serve our neighbors in need at the Churches United Community Meal Site at Zion Lutheran Church in Davenport on Thursday, April 23. Deb Anderson helps to coordinate volunteers for this valuable ministry. She will need volunteers to cook our meal that afternoon, and to serve the meal. As always, cookies can be dropped off by noon that Thursday to be served for dessert at the meal. Please contact Deb (563-726-1278) for more information.

Did you know...?

Our food pantry food like fruit cocktails and spaghetti sauce along with some of the hunger ministry garden vegetables are used by the Share-A-Meal volunteers to help feed our neighbors!



The Importance of Keeping Governance Documents Up to Date

Deacon Jodi Schuman
Southeastern Iowa Synod

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Does this sound familiar? Can we _____, or how do we _____?
The blanks might contain “only have five people on the council” or
“notify the members about a congregation meeting.” Answers to
these questions can and should be found within an organization’s
constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions.
Some organizations keep these as living, breathing documents
that accurately reflect current practices. Other organizations create
them once and then file them away with little thought to what they
say. The three expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

America intend for the former to be true, and yet, we know the latter is sometimes the reality. Rules for
meeting notification and council size sometimes seem far removed from the excitement and challenges of
day to day ministry, but good and timely governing documents help the church’s mission too.

The ELCA was organized as three interdependent expressions: churchwide organization, synods, and
congregations. One way the three expressions maintain the connection is through a shared governance
structure and purpose. Amendments to the *ELCA Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* affect
the governing documents for synods and congregations. There are portions in each expression’s
governing documents that are held in common and required as a part of the ELCA. Amendments to these
common portions are made at churchwide assemblies, the largest legislative body of the ELCA.

After a churchwide assembly the ELCA Office of the Secretary releases a new *Constitution for Synods* and
Model Constitution for Congregations. At the 2026 Synod Assembly the voting members will consider
amendments to the *Southeastern Iowa Synod Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions* to align
with the 2025 version of the *Constitution for Synods*. Congregations are encouraged to follow suit and
align to the new *Model Constitution for Congregations*. It is also a chance to align other portions to current
practice and needs.

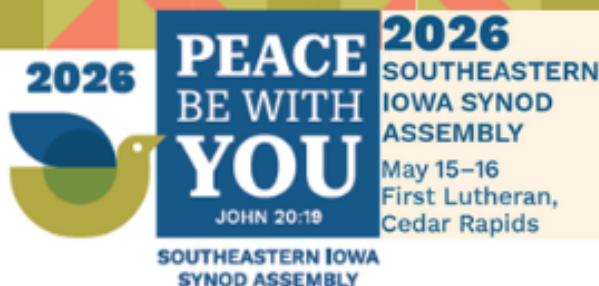
The good news is there are resources available to you. **First**, there is a synod Constitution Committee
ready to assist you. The purpose of this committee is to steward the synod’s governing documents AND
assist congregations in the stewardship of theirs. **Second**, there are resources available on the synod
website to get you started. Third, the ELCA also has details on the amendments made at each churchwide
assembly. If you have not aligned to the new *Model* or if your governing documents do not reflect your
practice and no longer serve you well, consider embarking on the faithful work of an update.

Constitution Committee:

Pastor Brian Middleswarth, *Chair, St. John, Ely*; Chuck Corr, *Faith, Andover*;

Pastor Bunny Dillard, *Our Savior, Cedar Rapids*; *Ex Officio*: Bishop Amy Current; Kevin Mote, *Secretary*

2026 is a bishop election year in
the Southeastern Iowa Synod.
The Bishop serves as the **Pastor**
to the synod, as the **Missional**
Leader of the ELCA on the territory
of the synod, as the **Ambassador**
of the synod with ecumenical and
global partners, and as the Chief Executive Officer of the synod.



The process for electing a bishop begins with discernment. Pastors discern whether they feel called to this
sort of ministry. Voting members to the synod assembly discern how the Spirit calls them to vote.
The whole synod may assist by submitting a question that may be asked of bishop candidates at the
Assembly.

For more information on the Synod Assembly or to submit a question, visit the synod’s website at
SEIASynod.org/2026-synod-assembly

Help Surround the Assembly
in Peace & Comfort

DONATE

PRAYER SHAWLS
& LAP QUILTS

Ways to Support the Synod Assembly

Pray for the voting members as they gather to
elect a bishop, synod council, and committee
members; consider constitutional changes, budgets,
and Resolutions; and engage in worship, Bible
study, and fellowship. Trinity’s voting members are
Dane and Michelle Crist.

Create and share prayer shawls and lap quilts
“peaced” together by our congregations to surround
voting members with care during the Assembly and
later to be shared to meet local needs. Bring your



Greetings,

As May arrives, we are reminded of the beauty of renewal unfolding all around us. The warmth of the season, the blooming of flowers, and the promise of new beginnings reflect the ongoing work of God in our lives and communities.

We are deeply grateful for your prayers, your volunteer efforts, your generous gifts, and your faithful support. Because of you, lives are being touched in meaningful and lasting ways. At LSI, we are blessed with the opportunity to extend a helping hand to those in need with a mission that is firmly rooted in our shared faith.

Thank you for walking alongside us and for being an essential part of this mission. Your partnership makes all the difference.

If you have any questions, please reply to this email or reach out to Andrea Maschka, LSI's Chief Development Officer at Andrea.Maschka@LSIowa.org

We are so grateful for your partnership in sharing our mission!

LSI proudly serves Iowans in all 99 counties through our services of Mental Health, Early Childhood, Foster Care & Adoption, People with Disabilities, and Immigrant & Refugee Community Services. We serve individuals of all ages, from families with newborns navigating the early stages of parenthood, to Refugee and Immigrant elders, as well as children at every stage of development. Our heart beats for the people we serve. We empower families and communities by recognizing and honoring the strengths and gifts of every individual.

A Testimony from a Grateful Family

"We first learned about LSI's school-based therapy program through our son's school counselor. We had wanted to get him into therapy for a long time, but it often felt out of reach. We do not have many extra resources, and finding a provider in Dubuque with availability for a child under 12 was incredibly difficult. On top of that, we both work and did not know how we would manage getting him to appointments during or after the school day.

When we found out that therapy could take place right at his school, it truly felt like an answer to our prayers. He did not have to miss much class, we did not have to take time off work, and he was able to meet with someone in a place where he already felt comfortable.

Even after getting connected, we still had concerns. Our insurance included a copay that was difficult for us to afford. LSI let us know that financial assistance was available to help cover those costs, as long as we remained committed to his treatment. That support made all the difference. Without it, I do not think we would have been able to continue.

Our son has only been in therapy for about six weeks, but we are already beginning to see small changes. He seems to be learning new ways to manage his emotions and is starting to talk more about what is bothering him instead of shutting down or acting out. We know he still has a long road ahead, but for the first time in a long time, we feel hopeful.

We are so grateful for this opportunity and for the support LSI has provided to our family. Without this program and the financial assistance, I truly do not know if our son would have been able to receive the help he needs."

LSI provides therapy services to all 99 Iowa counties through in-person locations and online sessions!



LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at LSIowa.org and facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

MAY 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Pastor's Sabbath	2 8 AM - PPALS Bible Study
3 9 AM Worship 10 AM Congregational Meeting 10 AM Blood Pressure Clinic	4 9 - 11 AM Food Pantry	5 3:30 PM Social Ministry Committee	6 10:00 AM Bible Study	7 4 - 6 PM Food Pantry 4 PM Day Camp Planning	8 Pastor's Sabbath	9 8 AM - PPALS Bible Study
10 9 AM Worship 10 AM Fellowship	11 9 - 11 AM Food Pantry 5 PM Stewardship 6 PM Council	12	13 10:00 AM Bible Study 5:30 Endowment	14 1-3 PM Card Ministry 4 - 6 PM Food Pantry	15 Synod Assembly at First Lutheran in Cedar Rapids	16 8 AM - PPALS Bible Study Synod Assembly at First Lutheran in Cedar Rapids
17 9 AM Worship 10 AM Fellowship	18 9 - 11 AM Food Pantry	19 4:40-5:10 PM Bookmobile	20 10:00 AM Bible Study	21 4 - 6 PM Food Pantry	22 Pastor's Sabbath	23 8 AM - PPALS Bible Study
24 9 AM Worship 10 AM Fellowship	25 <i>Food Pantry Closed for Memorial Day</i>	26	27 10:00 AM Bible Study	28 4 - 6 PM Food Pantry	29 Pastor's Sabbath	30 8 AM - PPALS Bible Study
31 9 AM Worship 10 AM Fellowship						