

Friendship

Lutheran Church of

January 2026



From the Pastor's Desk

New Year = New Possibilities. That's the thinking behind the ever popular – and nearly never achieved New Year's Resolutions that people think will change their lives.

As hard as we try, controlling things in our lives is 'nearly' impossible. There are six main areas in everyone's life, like our: spirituality; family; friends; finances; physical health, and occupation. In every area, we have some control... I repeat, SOME.

In most ways however, we have little control and in some we have absolutely none. Let's look at family for example:

For starters, we had no control over what family we were born into. There were many things that happened to you growing up in your family that you had no control over. After you were grown and left the house to start a family of your own, you had little to no control over someone else's feelings for you. Your spouse had some say in the matter. And then some couples want to have children but are unable to conceive. And even the children that are conceived do not always behave according to your desires. It's almost like they are people with a mind and a will of their own.

When it comes to our health, sure we can eat right and exercise, but we have no control over all the various sicknesses and diseases that are out there trying to do us in. Even doctors and scientists can't control these.

Finances are another area where we have some control, but not a whole lot. We can work hard, pay our bills (be faithful in tithing), and we save for a rainy day. But what happens when a rainy day turns into a full-on hurricane - how can we control that? And the economy...let's face it, none of us can control what the Feds are up to.

One would think we had control over our mind and our mouth, they do belong to us, but, it's a struggle to keep the mouth under control and not always say

what is on the mind. The point to all of this is not to fill you with guilt or frustration. The point is that there is an answer to control for all of us - His name is God, The Almighty, All-Knowing, All-Powerful, Ever Present, Lord. He knows what's up and He is in control of everything. King David wrote in Psalm 24:1, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." God is in control.

Job, who had very little control over the things that happened in his life said, "He knows the way ..." Job 23:10. He got it - God was in control of his life and struggles, and it was well with his soul. With so many things around us that that we cannot control, one would think we were pretty helpless. And yet, God said in Jeremiah 6:16, "**Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.**" This Word to Jeremiah, and to us, sounds like there is something we can control - which path we will take. Some think the 'crossroads' refers to a place of decision, and in a sense that is true. But, if we think we can manipulate things to where we are in total control of our environments, our opportunities, our outcomes, or our detractors in this new year, then I got news for you: You will be making the same "resolutions" in 2027 - with the same results. So, my advise is to quote from one of my favorite hymns:

When peace like a river attendeth my way

When sorrows like sea billows roll;

Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,

It is well with my soul.

It is well, it is well with my soul.

Peaceful, New Years Blessings!
Pastor

Elder's Corner

Happy New Year! As the calendar changes to a new year, do you have those new year resolutions written down hoping this is the year you will be able to keep them? Not to discourage you, but success rates are 6 – 9% of people see them through till the end of the year. These are often because they set vague goals. If you do succeed, studies show that only 19% have kept them after two years and only 6% achieve long-term change.

If you change and start going by the church year, you are already a month behind, since we start the church year in December. Pastor reminded us of this at the end of November and again at the beginning of December. Some of you may know, others might not remember, that we do follow a church calendar. Now it doesn't look like a calendar that we use to write down appointments, meetings, or see what day of the week a certain day is on. The church calendar is divided into seasons, and gives us the dates of the Feasts and Festivals of the Church. It also gives us the readings for any given Sunday and special services: these are listed under Lectionaries in the front of our Hymnals. The LCMS churches follow either a one year lectionary or a three year lectionary series. The three-year series is broken into Series A, B, and C; this is what we follow here at Friendship Lutheran. This year we are following Series A. Some of you may be saying I already knew this, or questioning why does it matter. For one it serves as a reminder, for others they may not have known and the other is to serve as an orderly guide for appropriate readings through the church year. It also can explain if you were visiting a different LCMS church why they had different readings. As stated above, this information and more can be found in our hymnals. The hymnal is not just a book with songs in it for us to sing, it has a lot of information. As a challenge to all of us take some time before or after church or take one of the hymnals home and look through it and see its more than a book with songs. FYI on page xxiii of the hymnal is the dates for Easter through 2050. Have a Blessed and great 2026.

Bruce, Kyle & Richard

The logo features the word "ELDERS" in a bold, serif font, centered within a white rectangular border. Below the border, the tagline "HERE FOR YOU | WITH YOU | TOGETHER" is written in a smaller, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a dark, textured background that resembles wood grain.

ELDERS

HERE FOR YOU | WITH YOU | TOGETHER

Stewardship

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

LCMS Stewardship Ministry: <https://resources.lcms.org/worship-planning/national-mission-bulletin-blurbs-and-newsletter-articles-january-2026/>

Newsletter Article – January 2026

“And he who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new. Also, He said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true’ (Revelation 21:5).

In January there is a great deal of “new” talk. Parties are held to ring in the “new” year. “New” year’s resolutions are made to set a “new” course of life in the “new” year. There is date forgetfulness as checks and other forms are filled out without using the “new” year on the dateline.

We use all this “new” talk because there is very often so much wrong with the old in us. We think back to the “new” resolutions from the previous year that only lasted a few weeks. That “new” person did not shed any pounds and instead, picked up a few. The “new” habits of going to the gym were soon replaced by even more time on the couch binging on Netflix. The “new” person who does not lose their temper, use sarcasm as a lethal weapon and spend more money than necessary, but who worships, prays and serves the Lord and the neighbor, never seemed to stick around. We need “new” talk because the Old Adam is alive and well within every one of us.

But this promise of “new” is a matter of stewardship. It is the Lord Himself who makes the promise of all things being new. These words recorded by St. John are not pious wishes or hopeless promises. They do what they say. YOU, that one baptized into Jesus’ death and resurrection, are NEW! These words are indeed trustworthy and true. This “new” comes to you in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It comes free of charge, even without our prayer.

This stewardship of “new” is not a vague, someday kind of stewardship either. You are NEW now! Forgiven. Reborn from above. The old is gone, nailed to Calvary’s cross and buried and rotting in a tomb that was only borrowed by Jesus for His resurrection rest. The Gospel is what makes us NEW every morning. Remembering your baptism, you are new. Confessing your sins and receiving absolution makes you new. Hearing the Gospel filling your ears makes you new. Feasting on Christ’s body and blood in the Holy Supper makes you new.

These mercies, totally undeserved as they are, are entrusted to us to steward TODAY even as we long for the Last Day. But we know how often we fail in this stewardship. We hoard God’s creation as if it belongs to us. We belittle and devalue our neighbor because they look or sound or act in a way that we do not like. We seek to make the Holy Word of God softer and more palatable for those, or even ourselves, who refuse to confess sin as sin and repent. We value our comfort over truth, our reputation over faithfulness and our treasure over making sure that people get to hear of the Jesus who has done so much for the world and us.

We, as stewards of the Gospel, need to be made new every day. This is exactly what the Lord does. We failed in stewardship of the Gospel last year, so He gives us a new year. We failed in stewardship of the Gospel yesterday, and He gives us a new day. We failed in stewardship of the Gospel in the last few minutes, and yet in mercy our newness comes with each tick of the clock! Because that is how the Lord works.

As we see this working of all new things in us, it then calls us to be stewards of this newness to the world. This starts right in our own homes. It radiates out to our neighbors. It beams out from our congregations. This newness is teamed at the circuit, district and Synod levels all to shine the newness of the Gospel to those who need it.

Your new talk starts in the newness of the Gospel. Steward this treasure in this new year and this new day. It starts with a new you in Jesus. This is indeed trustworthy and true.

Central Illinois District



From the *President's Desk*

Rev. Michael W. Mohr, CID President
mmohr@cidlcms.org

Cravings

It's time for New Year's resolutions. One of the most popular resolutions as we turn a new year is to fight off giving in to our cravings. Go on a diet and lose 25 lbs. Stop nibbling on chocolate. Stop mindlessly nibbling on salty snacks. Stop... stop... stop...

But in this New Year, I want to challenge you to indulge in a craving. Cultivate it, feed it, make it a priority in how you order your life in this coming year. "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk," the Apostle Peter exhorts us (1 Peter 2:2a-NIV). Crave the pure Word of God, "so that by it you may grow up in your salvation" the verse concludes.

Cravings take hold of us, they invade our every thought until we either fulfill them or kill them. When you want that bit of chocolate, you begin to smell chocolate (even when it isn't there). You notice chocolate in things that you never before realized had chocolate in them. To borrow a phrase from a 1970s ad campaign: "Whatever it is I think I see becomes a Tootsie Roll to me!"

And so should our desire to be fed with the pure spiritual milk of God's Word. When the people of God gather to receive His gifts and we are not there, it should gnaw at us and knock us off of our game — as though we now had to finish the week's work left-handed (or right-handed, if you are a southpaw).

Our Lord delivers this pure spiritual milk of His grace and every blessing in a very public way. Because it is our own faith, and not the faith of another, through which we are saved, we sometimes mistake God's delivery of His grace as "just me and Jesus." Our Lord has called us into fellowship with Him, and in so doing, fellowship with one another. In the oldest surviving statement of the Christian faith outside of the Bible (the Apostles' Creed), this is expressed in a glorious double entendre. In the Third Article of the Creed, we confess the holy and universal Church to be "the communion of saints." But the word translated into as "saints" is simply the adjective "holy." Is the Church the oneness of the people of God who have been made holy by Him (the saints), or is the Church the

oneness of the people of God with those holy things by which God makes them holy (the sacraments)?

The answer, quite frankly, is "yes." The church is the gathering of God's holy people around His holy things. Apart from being gathered as holy people around the holy things of God, our faith smolders and dies like a coal removed from a fire. Our craving for the pure spiritual milk of God's grace and mercy should prompt us to action — the action of being where the holy things of God are there for us, either by coming to the Divine Service or (for those unable to come) by calling upon the pastor to bring the Divine Service into our homes.

We read in the prophets how our Lord responded to His people when their laziness dulled their craving for the pure spiritual milk of gathering in the Lord's house. "Work! For I am with you, declares the LORD of Hosts" Haggai prophesied. (Haggai 2:4) With the work of salvation accomplished for us by our Lord, Emmanuel (which means "God with us"), we show ourselves to be the workmanship of God's hand, prepared to work the labors He has set before us for the sake of our neighbor (see Ephesians 2:10). Our life together as God's people gathered around His holy things requires not only the labor of God's appointed messenger (the pastor), but of many others. Acts 6 describes this labor as "serving tables," and the congregation established additional offices to assist in such work so that life together could be well ordered and the devil would not distract and divide the Church. So also have we established offices to help with good order within the congregation.

As we turn the page to the New Year, let your craving for the pure spiritual milk of God's mercy and love prompt you to action — crave being in Sunday School or Bible Class, crave receiving God's gifts in the Divine Service every Sunday, crave serving as an officer in the congregation, crave creating your own avenue of service by asking, "How can I help?" — Crave the pure spiritual milk and the fully grown salvation that bears its fruit in every aspect of your life.

<https://www.cidlcms.org/resources/gatepost/2025.GatePost.5.pdf>

Religious Reading Materials

We collect used Portals of Prayer, Bibles, Bible Studies and other scripture materials for distribution to shut-ins.

Place your items in the box located near the FLCJ front door.



In Our Prayers

- Cami
- David
- Dennis
- Donna
- Eileen
- Jackie
- Jessica
- Lenny, Shelby, Joey
- Roger
- Ron
- Church members
- LCMS Synod, Districts, Members and Pastors
- Those who have yet to believe
- Country, state, and local governments
- All who serve (first responders, military, police, fire, EMT's)
- For all who mourn



Update From Trinity In Tryon, NC

20 December 2025

Dear Fellow Saints in Our Lord Jesus Christ,

All praise and glory be to God our Father through our Lord Jesus Christ!

It is with great humility and joy, and thoughts of deep appreciation to each of you, that we the members and friends of Trinity Lutheran Church (LCMS), Polk County, NC, once more “enter into His gates with thanksgiving” at 3353 U. S. Hwy 176 outside Tryon in the Pacolet River valley. It has been fifteen months since Hurricane Helene drove us from our church home, from the place chosen by an earlier generation of confessional, liturgical Lutherans to gather for divine service. With your support by your physical presence and hard labor, your generous monetary gifts, and your fervent prayers—by the merciful kindness of our great God and Father and Jesus His only-begotten Son—we return to a wholly clean, fortified, and renovated church on the banks of the Pacolet.



While the river raged and beat against our building that Friday, undermining the foundation wall and completely ruining the crawlspace and all that was in it, the Lord told the waters to stop at the sanctuary doors and to steer clear of the inner spaces of His house. Once the members of the congregation were in safe spaces, cleanup work began on Monday morning and continued for the next six months until time to restore and possibly to renovate arrived. Decisions were made slowly and deliberately—to replace the deck, to redo the kitchen, to move the sacristy and thus open up the sanctuary a bit, with the biggest decision being to raise the sanctuary ceiling and enlarge the chancel. Pews were also acquired to replace the chairs in the nave.

The congregation returns to our *almost complete* church building in the valley on December 21 for

the first time, with the holy days of Christmas soon upon us. The collar ties have yet to be boxed in and we await the crucifix for the chancel wall. A service of thanksgiving and rededication will take place at Trinity Lutheran Church, Tryon, NC in late January or early February of 2026 when the work should be finished.

It is with repentant hearts that we have accepted the amazing selfless gifts of time and money that have been given to us. A dozen and a half or more weeks of volunteer help and gifts from outside the congregation totaling over \$200,000 as well as internal gifts for renovation of \$140,000 paid for so much of the work that has been done. We are unworthy of your kindness and of the blessing and love of our Savior God.

By the mercy of Jesus Christ and His great compassion unto death for us in human flesh like ours and by the power of His resurrection, we have endured a great trial by His life-giving Spirit. God’s love has been manifested again and again in more ways than we can count by those whom He has perfected in the blessed flood of baptism. Jesus said you would be “perfect” and you are, for you have blessed us with His mercy in helping bear the burden laid upon us. And now Christ our Lord has made us stand once more to confess Him before men. We have returned home to hear His Word and to receive His Sacrament.

From His birth as an infant in Bethlehem to His innocent suffering and death on the cross to take away our sins, to His resurrection and ascension to the Father’s right hand, our Lord Jesus has been our Immanuel and He is with you. God bless you and yours this Christmastime and always. VDMA

Sincerely in Christ,

Pastor Thomas Olson

Pastor Thomas Olson and the Members and Friends of Trinity, Tryon, NC



One Month Bible Reading Plan

Most people professing faith in Jesus have never completely read their Bible. Many people start reading the Bible but then become overwhelmed by the number of chapters (1,189) and verses (31,102) there are. What we don't realize is that we can read the Bible in a year by reading fewer than four chapters a day. Every month we will post the "reading schedule" in the Newsletter, for three years. This structured approach of reading Scripture brings a fresh approach to each day's reading, while providing a clearer understanding of the Bible's larger message.

Tips on Reading the Bible Daily

1. Start reading the Bible today — there is no better time than now!
2. Set aside a specific time each day. Set your schedule and then stick to it. Feel free to use any time that works consistently for you. If you miss a day, just make it up (don't give up); habits both good and bad are formed easily.
3. Read the Bible for the sake of learning, not simply to accomplish your next reading. Say a short prayer to God before you begin, asking the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and understanding, then be refreshed by the words you read!

January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Jeremiah 50:33-51:10	2 Jeremiah 51:11-32	3 Jeremiah 51:33-48
4 Jeremiah 51:49-64	5 Jeremiah 52:1-34	6 Lamentations 1:1-15	7 Lamentations 1:16-2:9	8 Lamentations 2:10-3:9	9 Lamentations 3:10-57	10 Lamentations 3:58-4:15
11 Lamentations 4:16-5:22	12 Ezekiel 1:1-28	13 Ezekiel 2:1-3:27	14 Ezekiel 4:1-5:17	15 Ezekiel 6:1-7:9	16 Ezekiel 7:10-27	17 Ezekiel 8:1-9:11
18 Ezekiel 10:1-11:15	19 Ezekiel 11:16-12:28	20 Ezekiel 13:1-14:11	21 Ezekiel 14:12-16:14	22 Ezekiel 16:15-43	23 Ezekiel 16:44-63	24 Ezekiel 17:1-24
25 Ezekiel 18:1-32	26 Ezekiel 19:1-14	27 Ezekiel 20:1-31	28 Ezekiel 20:32-21:13	29 Ezekiel 21:14-32	30 Ezekiel 22:1-31	31 Ezekiel 23:1-34

Event Calendar

January 2026

Friendship
Lutheran Church of



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 New Year's Day	2	3
4 9am Worship	5	6	7 Men's Bible Study 7am	8 Elder's Meeting 6pm	9	10
11 9am Worship* LWML Meeting after worship	12 Elizabeth's Circle 10am Women in the Word 6:30pm	13 Council Meeting 7pm	14 Men's Bible Study 7am	15	16	17
18 9am Worship*	19 Martin Luther King Day	20	21 Men's Bible Study 7am Let's Gather 10am-Noon	22	23	24
25 9am Worship	26 Elizabeth's Circle 10am	27	28 Men's Bible Study 7am	29 Prayer Shawl 6:30	30	31

***Bolded signifies communion will be offered at this service.**

Happy New Year

New Year
Blessings!

2026

Please continue to watch our worship services on
You Tube & our website. **Be sure to P.T.O. (Pass This On)**



**Friendship Lutheran
Church of**

3601 S. Duncan Rd.
Champaign, IL 61822

217-355-0454

Pastoral Care

Pastor Glen Triplett
pastorglen@friendshiplutheran.com

Staff

Kathy Reifsteck—Church Secretary
officemanager@friendshiplutheran.com

(Office hours 9:00-2:00
Monday, Tuesday & Thursday)

Visit us on the Internet!
www.friendshiplutheran.com

9:00 a.m. Service
10:15 a.m. Bible Study

Holy Communion is offered
on the 1st & 3rd Sundays.

OUR MISSION:

To *Joyfully* connect people to Christ and His family.

Friendship

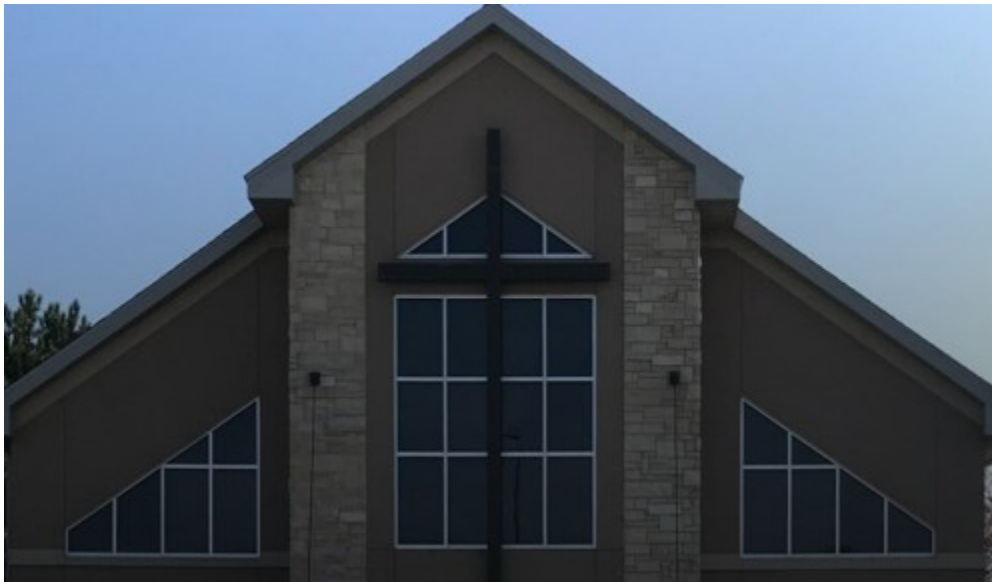
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The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



3601 S. Duncan Road
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Rev. Glen Triplett

