

Friendship

Lutheran Church of

April 2026

From the Pastor's Desk

"He is not here, but has risen." — Luke 24:6

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! That simple, powerful proclamation is not just something we say on Easter morning. It is the reality that shapes (or should shape) every single day of our lives as God's redeemed people. The tomb is empty. Jesus is alive. And because He lives, everything is (or should be) different. It can be easy, though, for Easter to feel like just another moment that we reflect on instead of being an entirely attitude changing way of looking at life. The celebration comes and goes, it is filled with joyful hymns, maybe there seems to be a fuller sanctuary, and there's the beauty of hearing the resurrection account. Maybe there is even an incredible message of the hope and the peace and the joy that can be ours because He lives. We love us some Easter mornings, don't we?

Then Monday comes. The same old routines of life return. The same struggles and pressures you felt before Easter Sunday persist. The questions linger. And even though we may believe in the resurrected Christ and even though we may know that our eternal future is secured, we might be tempted to wonder what difference Easter really makes in the here and now.

The answer is this: The resurrection of Jesus is not just an event we remember. Jesus (and His resurrection) is THE one and only truth. He is THE WAY and THE TRUTH and THE LIFE (*John 14:6*). This is life – the life

of the world. When Jesus rose from the dead and left the tomb empty, He did not simply prove something about Himself, He accomplished something (everything) *for you*. Your sins have been forgiven. Your guilt has been removed. Your death is defeated. As the apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 4:25, Jesus "*was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.*" That means the resurrection is God's declaration that everything needed for your salvation has been fully completed in Christ! Therefore, as a repentant and fully redeemed believer in the gifts of forgiveness and grace that have been bestowed upon every believer - by (and only by) the merits of Jesus' work of salvation on the cross, that take away the sin of the world (and its consequences for believers) should bring great joy! This knowledge of and awareness of our own impending resurrection upon the Lord's return (*Parousia*) changes everything - including how it is we deal with adversity, inconvenience, temptations or anything else that presents challenges to our physical, mental or spiritual well-being.

Easter is all about Joy. We are Easter people and our disposition in any and all matters is an overwhelming testament (or should be) to the glory that is God's love made evident in the empty tomb that once held Jesus – and assures that one day the tomb that awaits you will also be just as empty.

Present and Eternal Easter Blessings!
Pastor



Elder's Corner

"He is Risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia"

As we move through the month of April, these words continue to echo in our hearts and our church. While the world may see the change of seasons and the arrival of spring as merely a time of physical renewal, we as Christians know that it is a time of eternal victory won by Jesus Christ. As your Elders, our role is to walk alongside you in your faith journey. This month we encourage you to let the joy of Easter be more than a single day on the calendar. Hebrews 13:8 reminds us that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." This should be a comfort in a world that feels like it's constantly shifting. Whether you are facing a season of celebration or a season of trial, the victory Christ won at the empty tomb is your constant reality. This month we also would like to encourage you to join us for Sunday morning Bible study or any other Bible studies we have going on. As Christians we are to be Easter people in everyday life, so look for opportunities to share the "hope that is in you." Our identity isn't just found in what we do, but in who we are, a beloved child of God redeemed by the blood of Christ. As your Elders we are here for you. If you have been away from the Divine service for a while, or if you are in need of prayer or a visit, please reach out to an Elder. We ask that you continue to pray for our Pastor and all Pastors in the district, along with our District President and remember to pray for one another. May the joy of the Risen Christ fill your hearts and homes in this month and always.

Your Elders,

Bruce, Kyle & Richard



ELDERS

HERE FOR YOU | WITH YOU | TOGETHER

Holy Week

FOR US

FRIENDSHIP
LUTHERAN
CHURCH of

joy

2026 LENTEN SERIES



ASH WEDNESDAY

FEB. 18 @ 7PM

FEB. 25 @ 7PM

MARCH 4 @ 7PM

MARCH 11 @ 7PM

MARCH 18 @ 7PM

MARCH 25 @ 7PM

HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY MARCH 29 @9AM

MAUNDY THURSDAY APRIL 2 @7PM

GOOD FRIDAY APRIL 3 @7PM

SATURDAY VIGIL APRIL 4 @7PM

Easter Sunday
April 5 @9 am

LCMS Stewardship

<https://www.lcms.org/how-we-serve/national/stewardship-ministry>

The most common question about stewardship is not whether a Christian should give to their church. Of course Christians should give to their church. Everyone knows this. Rather, the question asked most is, “How much should I give?” But this question really means, “Should Christians give a tenth of their income to their local congregation?”

Here are some common reasons against tithing. Some say tithing isn’t necessary because it isn’t expressly commanded in the New Testament. There is no “Thus saith the Lord,” or “should” concerning tithing. Others say that Christians give to their congregation in ways much broader than money. They give of their time and their talents, and these together with treasures (money) add up to more than a tithe. Still others say that they give of their treasures to other things besides their congregation, and they want to support those things alongside their church. And then there are those who think Christians shouldn’t tithe because of some fear. They are afraid that if they tithe, their gift will be misused, or that after tithing, there won’t be enough left over to get the things that they use, want or need.

Here are some reasons why Christians should tithe. Even though the New Testament doesn’t specifically command Christians to tithe, the Old Testament people were commanded to. And on top of this, St. Paul often describes giving a regular and generous proportion of the first fruits of one’s income — terms similar to a tithe (2 Cor. 8:7–23; 2 Cor. 9:2–7).

But here’s another way to think about it. What was the point of the tithe in the Old Testament? Where did it go? This tithe was intended to support the ministry of the Levites. They were not given any land because they had no time to farm; their full-time job was the ministry. What does it say in the New Testament? “The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14). This is the verse that Luther used in the Small Catechism’s Table of Duties to explain what Christians owe to the support of the ministry.

It seems clear from both the Old and the New Testaments that the tithe is the goal of Christians in their giving. But what if we’re not there yet? How should we handle this? What are we to do?

Let’s answer this by asking a different question. What would you say to your adult children who only attended church quarterly or once a month? After all, there is no passage in the New Testament that requires Christians to go to church weekly. Hebrews 10:25 is the closest verse we have, and it states simply that Christians should not neglect gathering together. And even though there is no passage that commands Christians to gather weekly, that is the implicit expectation throughout the Old and New Testaments.

So, what would you say to that son or daughter? The conversation might go something like this. I’m glad you’re still going to church. It is a wonderful blessing to hear God’s promises of forgiveness, life and salvation, and to receive His gifts in Word and Sacrament. But you can do better, and it will only be a blessing to you. There is a better way, and I’d really like you to try to attain it.

We should approach the topic of tithing with a similar conversation. The tithe is not specifically commanded in the New Testament, but it sure seems like the implicit expectation of both the Old and New Testaments. So, we’re ecstatic that you’re giving, and that you’re giving in all these various ways — time, talents and treasures. But there is a better way. And that will only be a blessing to you, just as the Word of God — Old and New Testament alike — promises. Can you try increasing your gifts over the coming weeks, months and years? Can you put your trust in the God who sent His Son to take away your sin and give you everlasting life? And if He did this for you, if He did not spare His only Son, how will He not give you all things? He will not disappoint.

What is A Dollar for Missions?

The Central Illinois District encourages its congregations to invite their members to contribute one dollar per member per week for missions, in addition to their ordinary offerings. This kind of over-and-above giving is called "A Dollar for Missions" (DFM).

As God's blood-bought people, we therefore give of the resources that the Lord has placed at our disposal. We make contributions to support the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments at home and elsewhere.

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9).

We give sacrificially, digging deep at times. Realistically, one dollar per week does not amount to much of a sacrifice for most of us. Still, many gifts of one dollar a week add up, and they enable CID to provide funding for missions in a new way.

Projects DFM supports:

After DFM funds are received, CID makes them available to support projects in the following order of priority:

1. New church starts
2. Mission-focused augmentations to existing ministries
3. Established CID Missions such as Ministry in Spanish, Campus Ministry, Deaf Ministry, and Prison Ministry

2025 Approved DFM Projects

On November 26, 2024, CID's Board of Directors established a list of projects to receive Dollar for Missions (DFM) funds in 2025. Since the District had not received for DMF funds to start new churches or to augment existing ministries in mission-focused ways during 2025, the projects on the 2025 list will all support existing CID missions.

The projects are reported in funding order below. That is, each project will be fully funded, starting with the first, before the District starts applying DFM contributions to the next one on the list.

Amount	Project	Status
\$25,000	Masonry/tuckpointing at University Lutheran Church, Champaign	<i>Funded!</i>
\$2,600	Parking lot closure devices and camera installation, Immanuel Lutheran Student Center, Macomb	<i>Funded!</i>
\$1,000	Water heater for Cristo Rey, East Moline (if this project remains incomplete at the end of 2024) - COMPLETED IN 2024	<i>Funded!</i>
\$6,000	Refurbish seating in library and game room and technology in game room, Immanuel Lutheran Student Center, Macomb	<i>Funded!</i>
\$10,000	Replace insulation in chancel ceiling at Wittenberg Lutheran Center, Normal	<i>Funded!</i>
\$11,000	Replace original kitchen equipment in the sexton's apartment at Immanuel Lutheran Student Center, Macomb	<i>Currently Funding</i>

<https://www.cidlcms.org/ministry-a-dollar-for-missions.html>



**CENTRAL ILLINOIS
DISTRICT**

of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

News You Can Use

Quarterly Mission

Our new FLCJ quarterly mission begins this month and will benefit the University Lutheran Church and Student Center.

On your check payable to Friendship Lutheran Church of Joy, please write "Quarterly Mission" in the memo section.



University Lutheran Church (UniLu) is a campus ministry congregation serving the students, faculty, staff, and neighbors of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

**Rich in the Word.
Reverent in Worship.
Joyfully Lutheran.**

Jesus is here for you at the U of I.



“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.” (Luke 10:2-3, ESV)

Your prayers are an essential part of your support of the work being done at University Lutheran (UniLu). In the midst of cultural chaos and confusion, University Lutheran aims to be an outpost of the Gospel so that many would be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

Gifts pay for our operating and program costs which include paying all other staff apart from the pastor (paid by CID Mission Budget), utilities, insurance, minor (and some major) repairs, activities, meals, snacks, trips, etc.

Easter Lilies



**PLEASE
BRING IN EASTER
LILIES DURING
HOLY WEEK**

In Our Prayers

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



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.

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!

April 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Jonah 3:1-4:11	2 Micah 1:1-2:5	3 Micah 2:6-4:2	4 Micah 4:3-5:9
5 Micah 5:10-6:16	6 Micah 7:1-20	7 Nahum 1:1-2:10	8 Nahum 2:11-3:19	9 Habakkuk 1:1-17	10 Habakkuk 2:1-20	11 Habakkuk 3:1-19
12 Zephaniah 1:1-18	13 Zephaniah 2:1-15	14 Zephaniah 3:1-20	15 Haggai 1:1-15	16 Haggai 2:1-23	17 Zechariah 1:1-2:13	18 Zechariah 3:1-5:11
19 Zechariah 6:1-7:14	20 Zechariah 8:1-9:8	21 Zechariah 9:9-10:12	22 Zechariah 11:1-12:14	23 Zechariah 13:1-14:21	24 Malachi 1:1-14	25 Malachi 2:1-3:6
26 Malachi 3:7-4:6	27 Matthew 1:1-2:6	28 Matthew 2:7-3:17	29 Matthew 4:1-5:12	30 Matthew 5:13-6:4		

Event Calendar

April 2026

Friendship

Lutheran Church of



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Men's Bible Study 7am	2 Maundy Thursday *Worship 7pm	3 Good Friday Worship 7pm	4 Saturday Vigil Worship 7pm
5 Easter *Worship 9am	6	7	8 Men's Bible Study 7am	9 Elders Meeting	10	11
12 Worship 9am	13 Elizabeth Circle 10am Women In The Word 6:30pm	14 Council Meeting 7pm	15 Men's Bible Study 7am Let's Gather 10am-Noon	16	17	18
19 *Worship 9am	20	21	22 Men's Bible Study 7am	23	24	25
26 Worship 9am	27 Elizabeth Circle 10am	28	29 Men's Bible Study 7am	30 Prayer Shawl 6:30		

*Bolted signifies communion will be offered at this service.

Easter Blessings



REJOICE! HE IS RISEN

May the promise of the
Easter season bring you
great joy and abundant
peace in the love and
promise of the Lord.

*Happy
Easter*

*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

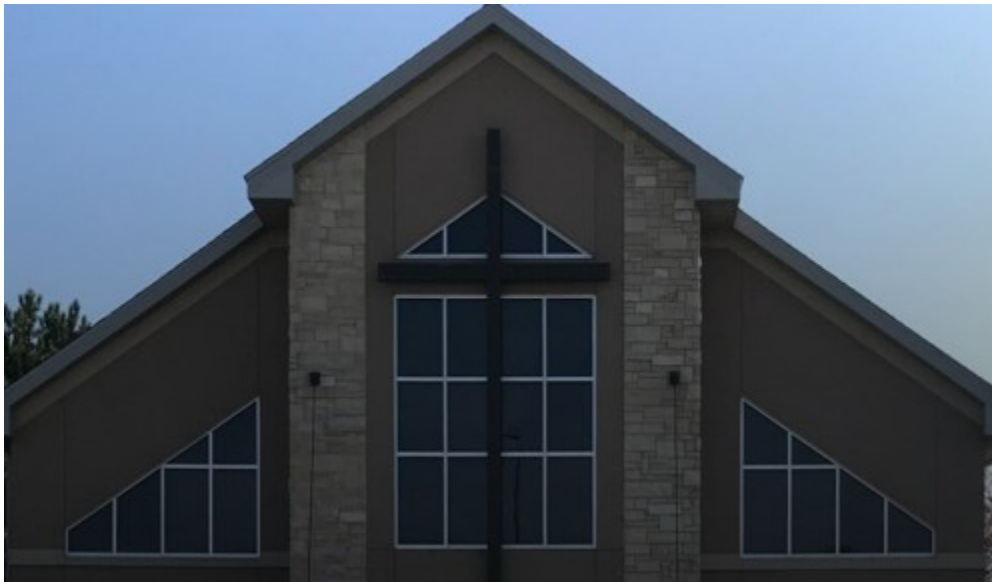
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The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



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Rev. Glen Triplett

