

Friendship

Lutheran Church of

March 2026

From the Pastor's Desk

Time marches on (see what I did there?) This month, we, the Church and all her people continue our Lenten journey toward Christ and the cross. I recently read an article in the February edition of *The Lutheran Witness* by Dr. Kristen Einertson and Tessa Muench dedicated to the prayers of Lent and how they can help inspire and shape prayers among the faithful. For this month's newsletter, I have borrowed some of their reflections as well as weaving in a few thoughts of my own.

More than any other season of the Church Year, Lent is a time of placing an emphasis on bringing prayer back to the center of Christian life. It also is a season for encouraging believers to renew their attention to God's Word and to pursue habits that will both shape and sharpen our faith. Some practice setting aside a dedicated place for prayer in the home. Yet even with the best intentions and a carefully prepared space, Christians may still wonder what to pray and how to order our prayers. Let us remember that the church's gift of prayer is enhanced with and by the devotional practices that we Christians have inherited. As with many wonderful aspects of the Christian life, we are blessed by the fact that we do not need to reinvent the practice of prayer. One doesn't have to look far in learning how to pray. Christ Himself gave us the Lord's Prayer, which stands at the center of all Christian prayer and teaches us to how to "pray, praise, and give thanks".

From this foundation, the church has used additional prayers drawn from Scripture, including not only brief collects but also complete prayer rites that give structure to regular, daily devotion. One familiar example is the Service of the Word within the Divine Service. Scripture readings, psalms, versicles and appointed prayers shaped by the season of the Church Year are arranged in such a way that teaches the congregation both how to listen to God's Word and how to respond to it. There are "helps" available in helping guide our prayer lives and build upon the experience of Sunday morning. The Lutheran Service Book includes several daily prayer offices

(services) such as Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Matins and Vespers that mirror this same structure on a smaller scale. During Lent, prayers such as the Litany are incorporated into this daily rhythm as well, helping give voice to the believers' repentance and dependence on God's mercy.

The church's prayers are a gift not only because they provide words to say, but also because they help us to shape time itself. From the earliest days of the Church, Christians have recognized that certain hours of the day are fitting times for prayer, echoing the psalmist's confession (Psalm 55:17). This is reflected in Martin Luther Small and Large Catechism, teaching Christians to begin and end each day in prayer while remembering their Baptism.

Long before him, the church developed this pattern in what is known as the Daily Office or the canonical hours - a cycle of prayer that marks certain "hours" of the day with appointed Scriptures and petitions.

While Christian households today may not observe all seven traditional hours of prayer associated with this pattern, the principle remains important: Time itself is ordered by and toward God. By praying at set times, we learn to receive each portion of the day as a gift from Him. These prayers help us to see the connection between the church's calendar and our prayer lives and how they impact our daily life. Prayer helps reinforce and sustain faith through applying steady attention to it. The penitential season of Lent provides yet opportunity for us to grow in our faith. So, join us as we continue our *march* down the road of sorrows that lead to the overwhelming joy that is ours in the resurrection of our Lord on Easter morning that assures us that we, too, will be with Him for eternity.

Blessings,
Pastor Triplett



Elder's Corner

As the winter chill begins to fade and the first signs of spring appear, we are in the season of Lent—a 40-day journey excluding Sundays that prepares our hearts for the joy of the Resurrection. The word "Lent" translated from the Latin word *Quadragesima* meaning: fortieth (observing Jesus' 40 days of fasting and prayer as preparation for His ministry) comes from an Old English word for "springtime," since the season leading up to Passover is in the spring. So, it serves as a period of spiritual "spring cleaning" for the soul. In the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS), Lent is not about earning God's favor through our own efforts, but about slowing down to reflect on the magnitude of Christ's sacrifice for us. Lent began a few weeks ago with Ash Wednesday, where we are reminded of our mortality with the words, "*Dust you are, and to dust you shall return*" (Genesis 3:19). This isn't meant to be gloomy; rather, it is an honest acknowledgment of our need for a Savior. Throughout these forty days, we are invited to practice Repentance which is an intentional turning away from our sin and a returning to the grace found in only God's Word. Next, we are to pray quieting the distractions of a busy world to center our lives on Christ. We have help in doing this with daily devotions and mid-week services. Fasting and self-denial while not a "requirement" for Lutherans, yet many choose to give something up or take something on like a new service project as a way to focus more clearly on the cross. Instead of merely giving up chocolate or social media, consider "taking up" a practice that draws you closer to Jesus. This might include attending our Mid-week Lenten Services to meditate on the Passion of our Lord. Also, it could include reading a daily Lenten devotion which we send directly to your email, or listening to the LCMS or Lutheran Hour Ministries. Practicing Almsgiving, such as contributing to a local food pantry or an LCMS World Relief and Human Care project. As we walk these days of Lent together, may our focus remain steadfast on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. We look forward to seeing each one of you at our upcoming services as we journey together toward the empty tomb. Also, don't forget our Lenten meals at 6 PM before each midweek service. May the Lord bless each one of us as we go through the Easter season.

Your Elders,

Bruce, Kyle & Richard



ELDERS

HERE FOR YOU | WITH YOU | TOGETHER

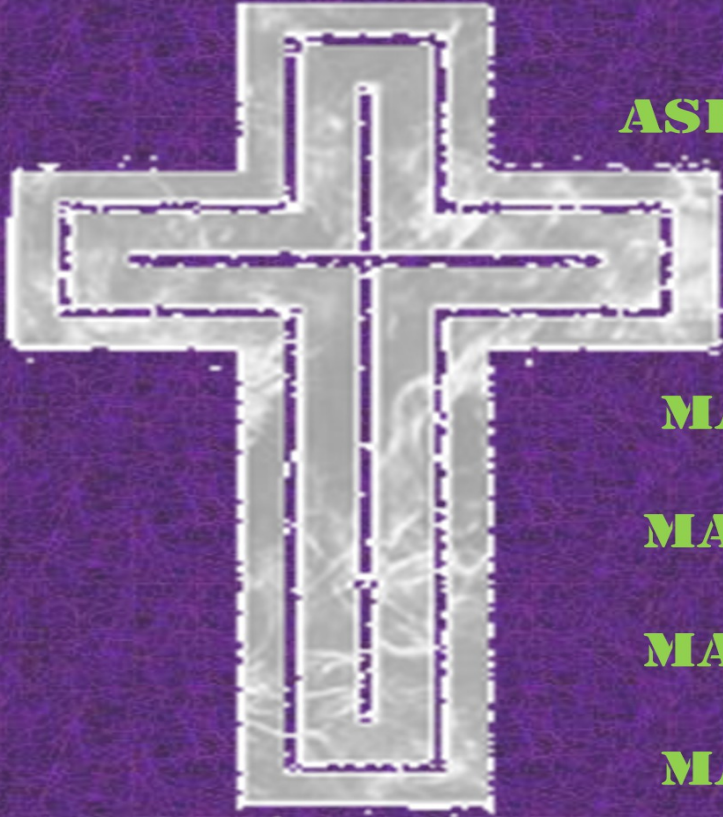
Lent

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

LCMS Stewardship

As a kid, I remember my Grandma and Grandpa Diepholz' home with extraordinary joy. Family fun. Great food. A legacy of faith. One of my lasting memories of that house was the table that sat between their twin beds. It contained a lamp, a Bible, a catechism and a hymnal. These were well-worn, as Grandpa read to Grandma every night before they went to sleep! What a treasure these tools of faith are! Let us spend some time this month in the hymnal to help us better understand our life as Christian stewards! To do this, we will use LSB 785 "We Praise You, O God."

*We Praise You, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
In grateful devotion our tributes we bring.
We lay it before You, and kneel and adore You;
We bless Your holy name, glad praises we sing.*

Stewardship is an act of worship. It flows from the grace and mercy we have received in Jesus! Faithful stewardship can never start with us. Our sinful nature will make us and our desires the center of our worship. Our tributes, our giving and our serving only flow from how the Lord Jesus has given of Himself for our sake! When we have this in clear view, our knees bow and our praises flow freely! All this flows from the Name that has been placed on us in Holy Baptism!

*We worship You, God of our Fathers, we bless You;
Through trial and tempest our guide You have been.
When perils o'ertake us, You will not forsake us,
And with Your help, O Lord, our struggles we win.*

Our stewardship that flows from what God has done for us in Jesus Christ is rooted in history. Passed from one generation to the next, stewards of the Gospel connect God's provision in the past to His continued care in the present.

So often, the struggles we face are self-inflicted. While there are indeed perils that can shake us from outside of ourselves, we are more likely enduring the suffering that comes because of our own choices that are outside the Word and will of God! But even in these situations, the Lord who loves us will never forsake us. When we become selfish, self-serving and self-destructive, the Lord NEVER abandons! The Lord helps us to overcome the struggles in faith and win the victory the steward rejoices in!

*With voices united our praises we offer
And gladly our songs of thanksgiving we raise.
With You, Lord, beside us, Your strong arm will guide us.
To You, our great redeemer, forever be praise!*

Stewardship is more than just an individual thing. There is a corporate nature to our steward life. We see this in the Divine Service. There, stewards of all ages, all economic strata and all languages are joined in the singular task of praise. This stewardship of praise flows from the altar to us, out into the world and then back to the altar! God's strong arm leads us in this stewardship 24/7. This makes stewardship, in all times and places, a matter of worship. We praise our Redeemer who has entrusted us with this great stewardship of the Gospel which forgives our sins, grants us new life and salvation. And this treasure we freely share for God's glory and the benefit of our neighbor!

District News



March 2026

CENTRAL ILLINOIS DISTRICT

of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

News You Can Use

“I do not do the good which I want; however, the evil which I do not want, this I practice” (Rom. 7:19). Our sinful nature, “dead in trespasses” (Eph. 2:5), was “buried with [Christ] through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). The death of Jesus took away the sin of the world, and for His sake God “forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.” But, like the ground squirrels in my church’s cemetery, our sinful nature keeps trying to dig itself out of the grave. As a result, “I am a miserable human being. Who will rescue me from this body of death?” The entire New Testament answers, “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Rom. 7:24-25) God’s Son came in human flesh, and “Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3). So, “if we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and righteous, that He would forgive us these sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). All of us need to recognize our wretchedness, confess our sins, hear what God’s Son did “for us and for our salvation,” and by the power of the Holy Spirit receive God’s gracious pardon. Lent leads us to all that, and leads us to why we know it is all true: “Just as He is risen from the dead, lives, and reigns to all eternity, this is most certainly true.”

CID President Mark Eddy

Pray For Our Central Illinois District Missions, supported by your church’s Mission Dollars to the District. Please remember in your prayers Pastor Pablo Dominguez and Cristo Rey (Christ the King) Lutheran Church in East Moline, where the ministry is conducted almost entirely in Spanish, as well as St. John’s Lutheran Church in Beardstown, where Pastor Dominguez travels twice a month to preach and teach in Spanish.

Notice and Explanation of District Leadership Changes

Elected at Convention

District President: Rev. Michael Mohr
1st Vice-President: Rev. Michael Burdick
2nd Vice-President: Rev. Mark Eddy

As of February 17, 2026

District President: Rev. Mark Eddy
1st Vice-President: Rev. Jason Braaten
2nd Vice-President: Rev. Karl Eckhoff

At the 61st Regular Convention of the Central Illinois District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod held July 13–15, 2025, the above were elected to serve three-year terms in their respective offices by the district voting delegates. Seven months later, the leadership of the district has changed significantly, and this change requires an explanation to our pastors, church workers, and congregations.

On Wednesday, January 28, 2026, District President Mohr was arrested on criminal charges by federal law enforcement. Prior to being held in custody, Mohr was given the opportunity to speak with First Vice-President Burdick and in keeping with district governance temporarily transferred the duties of district president. On Monday morning when the first special session of the Board of Directors met, Rev. Burdick notified the Board that in light of the anticipated duration and demands of the office, he asked to resign from the position of First Vice-President. This resignation removed him from the Board of Directors and elevated Second Vice-President Eddy to First Vice-President and in turn, Acting District President.

Continued on page 6

District News (continued from page 5)

With Rev. Burdick vacating his position, the Central IL District Bylaws (2.15(b)) state, “A vacancy in the First Vice-Presidency shall be filled by advancing the Second Vice-President. A vacancy in the Second Vice-Presidency shall then be filled by the President from the reserve list of nominations, that is from the nominees left after the previous election, according to the number of votes received...” Rev. Burdick represented the Eastern Region, so the second-place nominee at the convention for the Eastern Region was Rev. Jason Braaten of Immanuel – Tuscola. He was then appointed as Vice-President for that region by the Acting District President.

When Mohr resigned from his position and as a member of the LCMS roster, Acting District President Eddy succeeded Mohr as District President and vacated the office of First Vice-President. This resulted in Rev. Braaten serving as First Vice-President and a second appointment according to Bylaw 2.15(b) (cited above) of the third-place nominee for the Western Region, Rev. Karl Eckhoff of Christ - Peoria. This final succession and appointment were ratified by the Board of Directors on February 17, 2026, at a second special session of the Board.

While this situation required careful interpretation of our governing documents, the Board acted in accordance with district bylaws, in consultation with Synod and legal counsel. We thank all who have reached out to offer support and wisdom as well as to all who have granted patience as the Board worked through these processes. We remain committed to serving Christ and His Church faithfully in this district, and it is by grace alone that we serve our people and the congregations of the Central Illinois District.

2026 Youth Bible Bowl

Date: Sunday, March 22, 2026

Location: Camp CILCA

Topic: "The Gospel According to St. Matthew"

Those holding either a circuit Bible bowl, or with team(s) planning for the District Bible Bowl, please contact Trip Rodgers trodgers@cidlcms.org a.s.a.p. so we know how many to plan for. Thanks.

Dollars for Mission Online

Our first project for 2026 is support for *Hispanic Ministry in Beardstown, IL*. \$1800 will be collected to support travel costs for Rev. Pablo Dominguez. Reminder that online one-time and recurring donations can now be made at <https://www.aplos.com/aws/give/LCMSCentralIllinoisDistrict/D4M> or by using the QR code.



<https://www.cidlcms.org/news-that-you-can-use.html>

Quarterly Mission

FLCJ Quarterly Mission For The Illinois Deaf Lutherans Ministry
Is Extended Into 2026 First Quarter

FRIENDSHIP
LUTHERAN
CHURCH of



Illinois Deaf Lutherans

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us!

The Central Illinois Lutheran Deaf Ministry Fund

Contributions to the Central Illinois Deaf Ministry will support the district's ongoing mission to bring the Gospel to a population that is often overlooked.

*** Make checks to FLCJ with Deaf Ministry in the memo section. ***



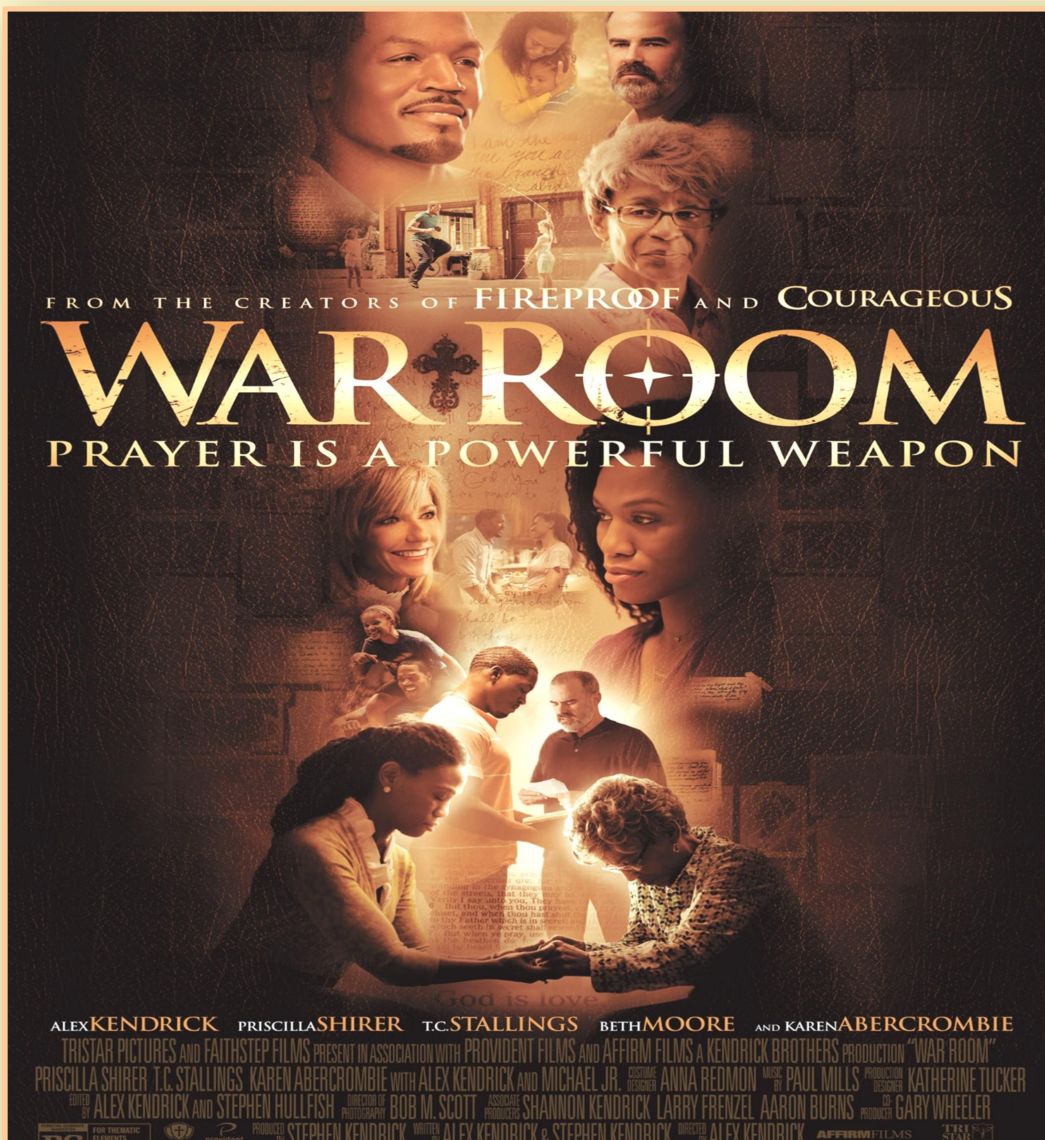
Movie Night

Please join us for Movie Night!

Title: "War Room"

When: Saturday, March 21st @ 4PM

Where: FLCJ Lower Level



War Room is a 2015 American Christian drama film directed by Alex Kendrick and written by him and Stephen Kendrick.

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!

March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Daniel 3:1-30	2 Daniel 4:1-27	3 Daniel 4:28-5:16	4 Daniel 5:17-6:18	5 Daniel 6:19-7:14	6 Daniel 7:15-8:22	7 Daniel 8:23-9:19
8 Daniel 9:20-11:4	9 Daniel 11:5-35	10 Daniel 11:36-12:13	11 Hosea 1:1-2:13	12 Hosea 2:14-4:11	13 Hosea 4:12-5:15	14 Hosea 6:1-7:16
15 Hosea 8:1-9:9	16 Hosea 9:10-10:15	17 Hosea 11:1-12:14	18 Hosea 13:1-14:9	19 Joel 1:1-20	20 Joel 2:1-17	21 Joel 2:18-32
22 Joel 3:1-21	23 Amos 1:1-2:5	24 Amos 2:6-3:15	25 Amos 4:1-13	26 Amos 5:1-27	27 Amos 6:1-7:9	28 Amos 7:10-8:14
29 Amos 9:1-15	30 Obadiah vs. 1-21	31 Jonah 1:1-2:10				

Event Calendar

March 2026

Friendship

Lutheran Church of



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 *Worship 9am LWML Meeting	2	3	4 Men's Bible Study 7am Lenten Meal 6pm & Worship 7pm	5 Elder's Meeting	6	7
8 Worship 9am	9 Elizabeth Circle 10am Women In The Word 6:30pm	10 Council Meeting 7pm	11 Men's Bible Study 7am Lenten Meal 6pm & Worship 7pm	12	13	14
15 *Worship 9am	16	17	18 Men's Bible Study 7am Let's Gather 10am Lenten Meal 6pm & Worship 7pm	19	20	21 Movie Day 4pm
22 Worship 9am	23 Elizabeth Circle 10am	24	25 Men's Bible Study 7am Lenten Meal 6pm & Worship 7pm	26 Prayer Shawl 6:30	27	28
29 *Worship 9am Palm Sunday	30	31				

*Bolted signifies communion will be offered at this service.

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



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.

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

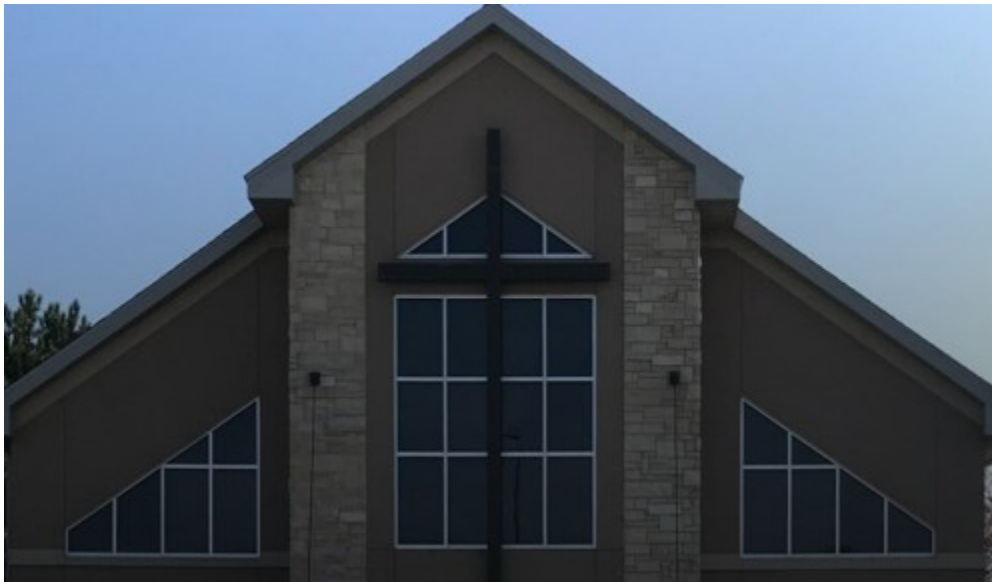
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The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



3601 S. Duncan Road
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Rev. Glen Triplett

