

Friendship

Lutheran Church of

February 2026

From the Pastor's Desk

You have no doubt heard pastors use the “For You” or “For Us” in describing the why behind the mighty works that our Lord has done. These are not simply a pithy line that we say or use because it is easy to repeat. It is a confession of who God is and what He brings in giving us His Son. It helps us to better understand *why* God would send His Son to die for us. So, this year’s Lenten Series will focus on the *why* and is appropriately titled “For Us”.

The phrase “for us” captures much of the Reformation’s theological emphasis – and was central in Luther’s understanding of Scripture in particular. Luther went from searching for a righteous God and finding only stern rebuke to seeing God in the form of a little baby and as the one who became one of us *FOR US* so that we might become like Him.

Our Lenten preaching series hymn “O Love, How Deep” (*LSB* 544) was originally a twenty-three-stanza poem written in the fifteenth century by an unknown author. In the nineteenth century, an Anglican cleric named Benjamin Webb translated the hymn into English and then chose six stanzas for use in English hymnody with the doxological stanza being added later.

Some hymns tell a story, others teach, and still others create pictures in our minds of the great works of God. Some hymns do all three, weaving together a tapestry that is beautiful yet simple, wondrous yet easy to understand. “O Love, How Deep” is that kind of hymn.

Although it does not appear in the first stanza, the most pointed and beautiful language in the hymn is expressed in the phrase “*for us*.” The phrase is reminiscent of the language of the Nicene Creed: “Who *for us* men and for our salvation came down from heaven.” This phrase

is a perfect reminder for the Church and her mission.

The Church and everything about her points to Jesus as the one who serves, saves, and continues to give us His salutary gifts. Throughout the Church Year we focus on various aspects of the life and ministry of our savior Jesus that are appropriate for that particular season. This month we begin the season of Lent with our Lenten series entitled “For US”. Lent is a multidimensional season of the Church Year, shaped by the preaching of the Lord’s Passion, penitential reflection, and catechesis that lead us back to the cross where forgiveness and grace are extended to us, through our Lord’s sacrifice “For Us”.

Historically, the season Lent developed as a season of reflective repentance and joyful assurance. Liturgically and theologically, Lent is an appropriate time for the church to focus on the significance of both the how and the why of our Savior’s work of bring forgiveness and grace to fallen sinners.

Lent is properly penitential when it brings the cross to sinners and sinners to the cross of Christ as the fountain and only source of forgiveness, life, and salvation which produces joy in those for whom “hear His voice...and follow Him”.

There is both wisdom and integrity in using that which has been received to share the good news of Jesus Christ with those around us. Invite others to come and be served by the Lord who came, died and was raised “For Us”!

Lenten Blessings!

Pastor Triplett



Elder's Corner

It's hard to believe we are turning the calendar to February already. What's even harder to believe is that February 18, 2026 is Ash Wednesday which is the beginning of the Lenten season. This isn't the earliest it could be however, February 4 is the earliest, and March 10 is the latest that the 40-day church season before Easter (excluding Sundays). This time prepares us for the death and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The preparation includes a focus on repentance, fasting, prayer, and increased devotion. Some of the key aspects of preparation and their explanations are as follows.

During Lent you will notice liturgical changes. Our worship services are more penitential in character. The paraments color are purple, which is often associated with penitence. You will notice we omit the "Hymn of Praise" from the liturgy along with the word "Alleluia". In some churches the veiling of crucifixes/art occur. These are all done to create a more solemn, reflective atmosphere. We start the season with Ash Wednesday, which people associate with the imposition of ashes for those who want them. Ashes remind us we are from dust and to dust we shall return. Ashes that can be used are from the burned palms from the previous Palm Sunday. We will once again begin our mid-week services to focus on Christ's suffering and death. One aspect that people get confused about is the practice of fasting. Some people may choose to abstain from specific foods or habits (social media, sweets) as a form of self-denial. That is fine, but doesn't really get to what fasting is all about. Fasting is a form of self-denial, but the purpose of fasting is to strip away the indulgence of the self to better focus on the will of God that brings us into communion with Him. Another aspect of Lent is devotion and study. We can do this by increasing our focus on personal and family devotions. Almsgiving is one most people may not have heard of. It's a focus on charity such as donating money or time that you saved from fasting to those in need. The last thing is pretzels. Traditionally they are considered Lenten food because their shape represents arms crossed in prayer. So now when you eat pretzels, you will be reminded to pray.

Hopefully this has served as a reminder for some and an explanation to others why we do what we do. The thought for this article came from a Lutheran who asked where the ashes come from that are used on Ash Wednesday. We hope that this Lenten season all of our members can make time to attend the mid-week services and the fellowship time before them.

Your Elders,

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

LCMS Stewardship

LCMS Stewardship lcms.org/stewardship

Table of Duties: The Forgotten Stewardship Tool

Luther's Small Catechism is a magnificent tool. Joined with a well-used copy of the Holy Scriptures and an orthodox hymnal, and the Christian is well equipped to live a life of faithfulness to the Lord and service to the neighbor. First in German and now in English and just about any language known to man, this handy masterpiece has introduced generations of people to the central doctrine of justification by grace, through faith, on account of Jesus Christ. The Six Chief Parts have proven to be a faithful framework for a clear confession of the truth of the Gospel for nearly five hundred years!

But more than a textbook, the Small Catechism also serves well as a handbook for Christian living. As a part of its treasure, there is an element that teaches an extraordinarily strong message of stewardship. That hidden treasure that needs to be rediscovered is called the Table of Duties.

The Table of Duties is really nothing more than a categorized gathering of Bible verses. These verses are set apart for "various holy orders and positions, admonishing them about their duties and responsibilities." Addressing pastors and people, government and citizens, husbands, wives, children, youth, workers and so many more, it very clearly lays out what faithful stewardship looks like. Even better, these assembled passages teach one important truth: we are stewards of one another!

The Table is much more than a "how-to" tool; it also lays out the interconnectedness that exists within the body of Christ. Pastors are described by what they are to be as stewards of the Word. 1 Timothy 3 highlights the characteristics of a faithful pastor. Even more, Titus 1 highlights the need for the pastor to be faithful for the sake of those under his care.

Those who hear the faithful preaching of the pastor are stewards of the pastor as well. 1 Corinthians 9 talks about the need for the people to support the livelihood of the pastor. Galatians 6 talks about how the hearers share in the good things that the pastor teaches. 1 Timothy 6 talks about the honor that is owed to the pastor, not because of WHO he is, but rather WHAT he is teaching! Hebrews 13 shows the impact of this stewardship on the pastor, that they perform their duties with joy. Joyful pastors and people are always going to be better stewards of the Gospel!

Outside the church this interdependent stewardship is on display as well. Romans 13 highlights the respect necessary for the governing authorities. As citizens, the faithful steward is called to pay taxes (Matthew 22), pray for their leaders (1 Timothy 2) and that they should be ready to serve in the civil realm (Titus 3), because they are in these positions by God's direction (1 Peter 2).

These steward duties are in the home too! 1 Peter 3 and Colossians 3 shape the husband steward. Ephesians 5 and 1 Peter 3 shape the wife steward. Ephesians 6 form parental stewards and child stewards.

The Table of Duties is a wonderful place for the individual steward to learn how much our stewardship is more than just a "me and Jesus thing!" In fact, it ends with these words: "Let each his lesson learn with care, and all the household well share fare." This is interdependent stewardship on clear display. As each learns stewardship in this way, the more faithful we will be as a family, congregations, communities and the church at large.

LCMS Stewardship *(continued)*

All Things New

January 12, 2026 / [Articles](#), [Ministry Features](#) / By [Nathan Meador](#) / <https://witness.lcms.org/2026/all-things-new/>

“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 of 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 or 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.

You are new now!

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 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 treasure over making sure that people get to hear of the Jesus who has done so much for the world and us.

Stewarding the newness to the world

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 spreads 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.

LCMS Stewardship ministry features may be reprinted with acknowledgment given to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

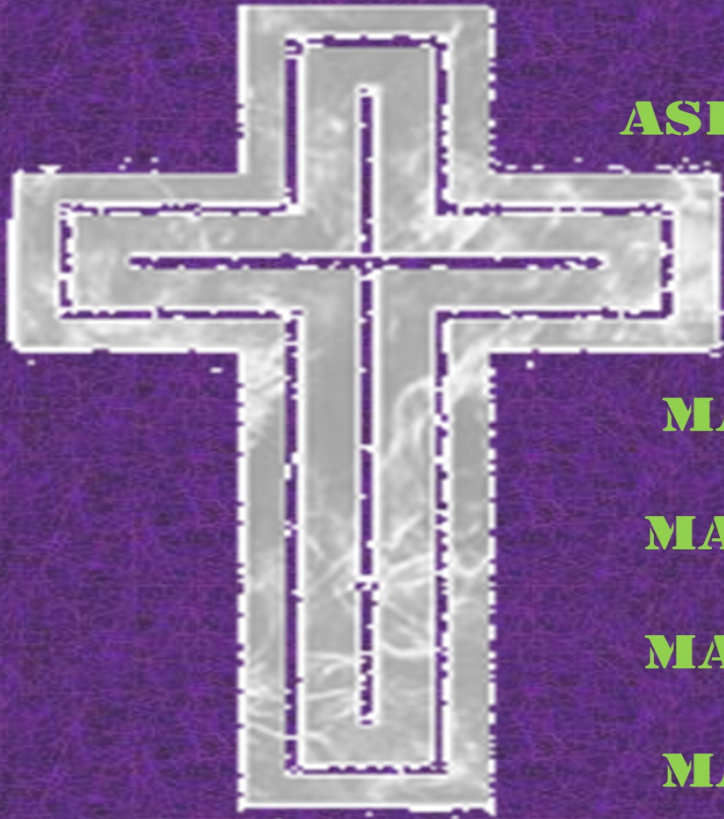
Lent

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

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. ***



Game Day



SUNDAY
FEBRUARY 8TH
AFTER SUNDAY SCHOOL

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!

February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Ezekiel 23:35-24:14	2 Ezekiel 24:15-25:17	3 Ezekiel 26:1-21	4 Ezekiel 27:1-27	5 Ezekiel 27:28-28:10	6 Ezekiel 28:11-26	7 Ezekiel 29:1-21
8 Ezekiel 30:1-26	9 Ezekiel 31:1-32:6	10 Ezekiel 32:7-28	11 Ezekiel 32:29-33:20	12 Ezekiel 33:21-34:19	13 Ezekiel 34:20-35:15	14 Ezekiel 36:1-32
15 Ezekiel 36:33-37:28	16 Ezekiel 38:1-23	17 Ezekiel 39:1-40:4	18 Ezekiel 40:5-37	19 Ezekiel 40:38-41:12	20 Ezekiel 41:13-42:20	21 Ezekiel 43:1-27
22 Ezekiel 44:1-31	23 Ezekiel 45:1-25	24 Ezekiel 46:1-24	25 Ezekiel 47:1-23	26 Ezekiel 48:1-35	27 Daniel 1:1-2:16	28 Daniel 2:17-49
						

Event Calendar

February 2026

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Lutheran Church of



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 *Worship 9am	2	3	4 Men's Bible Study 7am	5 Elder's Meeting	6	7
8 *Worship 9am Game Day After Sunday School	9 Elizabeth Circle 10am Women In The Word 6:30pm	10 Council Meeting 7pm	11 Men's Bible Study 7am	12	13	14 Valentines Day
15 *Worship 9am	16	17	18 Men's Bible Study 7am Let's Gather 10am Ash Wednesday *Worship 7pm	19	20	21
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 

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

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



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.
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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

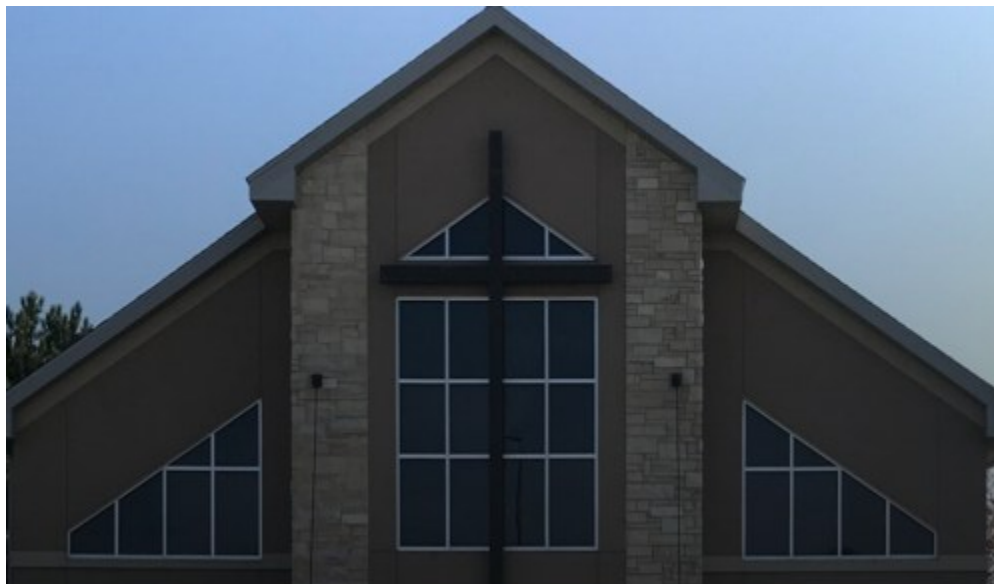
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The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



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Rev. Glen Triplett

