

The March 2025 Epistle

A publication of St. James Lutheran Church,
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MESSAGE
from the
MINISTER

But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you...bless those who curse you; pray for those who mistreat you... love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Luke 6:27-28; 35-36

Love Your Enemies?

We look again at Jesus' command to *love your enemies*. He speaks the phrase twice in his *Sermon on the Plain* and does not back down from it even in the face of the worst opposition imaginable. To many this command sounds ignorant, naive, and crazy. Without our Christian hope, it certainly does.

Walking into harm's way makes no sense whatsoever without our Christian hope. Hear this: **Our assurance is that if we have become united with Jesus in his death, we shall be united with him in his resurrection.** Even if it comes to death, and usually it does not, we know that death is not the end for us. We will continue to live on with Christ. Therefore, no enemy can ultimately destroy us because we are held in God for eternity.

The prayer of Bishop Desmond Tutu celebrates that victory beautifully. It was put to music and can be found in Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW 721). You may know the tune.

Goodness is stronger than evil.

Love is stronger than hate.

Light is stronger than darkness.

Life is stronger than death.

Victory is ours through Him who loves us.

The victory is assured because the ultimate battle over the evil forces of our world was accomplished in the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. At that time, the scales were tipped in our favor and victory was declared so we may now walk confidently forward to love our enemies without fear. For even if they harm us - even in the most extreme circumstances - we know that we will rise again with him on the last day.

This is truly the pinnacle of the teachings of our Lord in the *Sermon on the Plain*. Victory is ours through Him who loves us. Lord, give us ears to hear.

Opportunities in the Weeks Ahead

Please take note of some special opportunities to pray, learn, and dialogue together in the weeks to come. These are special events for worship and learning so I want to bring them to your attention even though they are announced elsewhere in the *Epistle* and our announcements at our services.

March 5 - Ash Wednesday

March 9 - Coffee and Conversation

March 12 & 13 - Prayer & Learning Groups

May God bless you in your work and your rest in the month to come!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bryce Hewlett', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bryce Hewlett, SAM

March Adult Prayer & Learning Group

March: The Great Arc: Understanding the Big Picture of the Bible

Date: March 12, 2025 at 2:00 p.m., March 13, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

- But I don't even know how to make sense of the Bible. What's the big picture that all the other pictures fit into?

Resource Study: www.godsbigpicture.co.uk

Recommended Reading: [*God's Big Picture*](#) by Vaughn Roberts

P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

Hello, everyone! Happy March!

First things first, I would like to thank everyone for entrusting me to take on the role as council president for this year. I am very excited to get to know all of you on a deeper level and to help St. James in the coming year.

Besides me, there are 3 other new council members that have been inducted, Janet Brakel, Glenn Boyles, and Tom Sladky. They are wonderful people and will make a great addition to our council.

On January 27th, we had many volunteers help cook food and serve at Zion Lutheran Church. We provided around 60 people of all ages prayer and a warm meal. The next meal that St. James will serve at Zion will be on March 31st.

We recently got brand new flooring in Fellowship Hall and the kitchen. If you haven't been downstairs to check it out, please do! It adds an updated look to St. James!

A few congregation members have started "Dinner and Donate" nights. People who sign up are working together to provide a meal and the property committee is gladly accepting any free will donation

during these meals to help pay off the loan for the much-needed property updates that have been happening around the church. The dinners will take a pause during the season of lent and Easter, but are expected to start back up following Easter.

We are quickly approaching our season of Lent, which means Wednesday night Lenten Meals and Vesper services. Be on the lookout if you're in a committee to see which week to serve.

I am very excited to see what the next month brings us at St. James!

Peace and Love,
Maddie Schmidt

Lenten Meal Schedule

3/12- Social Ministry and Property—Soup and salad

3/19- Worship and Music Committee and
Choir- pulled pork

3/26 - Friendly Visitors and Finance

4/2 - Site Committee and Christian Education

4/9- Fellowship/Food Pantry and Council



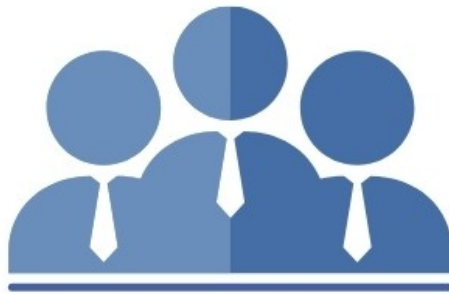
WELCA NEWS



The next meeting of Sarah Circle is Tuesday, March 18th at Church at 1:00 PM.

Marilyn Pieart is the hostess and Maggie Bayliss is the lesson leader.

The Gather Magazine March-April issue will provide our study material.



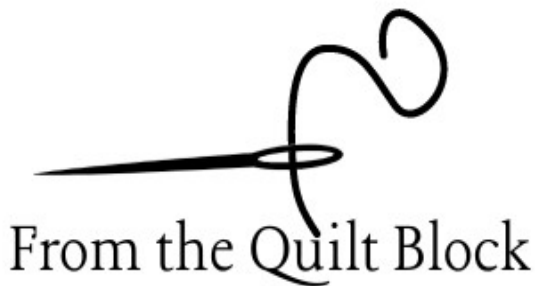
St James GANG

The St James GANG will meet at 11:30 in the Fellowship Hall on Thursday, March 20th. Our speaker will be the director of Camp Courageous, invited by Sue Miller.

Bring your own lunch, dessert and beverages will be provided. Our group has been collecting money for our Food Pantry at our meetings— Thank you for that!

See you at the March meeting. Come and bring a friend!

Pat Larson
563-343-2142



From the Quilt Block

It is the time of year that we give to those less fortunate with Personal Care Kits items:

- 1 light weight bath towel (20"x40" to 27"x52"), Dark color recommended.
- 2 or 3 bath-size bars of soap (equaling 8-9 oz.) any brand in original packaging.
- 1 Adult size toothbrush in original packaging. Multi packs are accepted.
- 1 nail clipper.
- 1 **sturdy** comb (no picks)

Please remember our brothers and sisters in Ukraine who have been deprived of house and home when you donate. If you can donate the items, please put them in the wash tub. If you would prefer that someone else do the shopping, one kit can be purchased for about \$15, The kits will be delivered to Cedar Rapids in the fall.

Seven quilt group members met on January 28th. We finished 3 quilts. March 21st is national quilting day. Lift up Quilters and those who receive quilts in your prayers.

The WELCA Funeral lunch committee served lunch on February 14 for the funeral of Jeanne Peters.

Our next quilt group will be Tuesday, March 25th from noon to 4:00 P.M. at St. James. All are welcome to help for any amount of time you have available NO sewing skills are required. We will gladly teach you anything you need to know. If you have any questions, contact me (Shirley Richlen) at 563-355-3942 or srichlen34@gmail.com

Pieces be with you,
Shirley Richlen

Swanson Scholarship

Attention High School Seniors that will be graduating in 2025: Any Senior church member that would like to be considered for the Swanson Scholarship should contact the church office for an application. All applications need to be submitted for consideration by March 31, 2025. The Swanson Scholarship Committee will review all applications and contact each applicant. If you have any questions, please reach out to **Holly Garcia (563)-508-6673 or garciaholly3@gmail.com**.

ASH WEDNESDAY MARCH 5TH

7AM-8AM

ASHES AND A
BLESSING
AVAILABLE IN
DRIVE-UP FASHION

7PM-8PM

ASH WEDNESDAY
SERVICE WITH
HOLY COMMUNION

LENT

SPECIAL SERVICE TIMES

Midweek Lenten Services:
each Wednesday during Lent

March 12th

March 19th

March 26th

April 2nd

April 9th

5:45 pm - 6:45 pm

Lenten Meals are coordinated by various church committees. If you would like to assist in serving these meals, please contact the church office to connect with our Committees at (563)355-4161.

7:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Holden Evening Prayer
Service

HOLY WEEK

SPECIAL SERVICE TIMES

April 13th-19th

PALM SUNDAY	9AM-10AM Service
Holy Monday Holy Tuesday Holy Wednesday	7PM Vigil
Maundy Thursday	7PM Service
Good Friday	12PM Stations of the Cross <i>(self-guided)</i> 7PM Service
Easter Vigil <i>Saturday</i>	7PM Service

EASTER SUNDAY

Service	9AM-10AM
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Brunch	10:00AM
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	10:00AM
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Easter Egg Hunt	10:30AM
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	10:30AM
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Service	11AM-12PM
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- We are looking for singers to lead the Holden Evening Prayer Service during the 7PM Wednesday Lenten services. Dates are **March 12, 19, 26 and April 2 & 9**. We need 2 singers for each service and you may volunteer for one or more services. If interested, please contact Steve Abel at iamabel213@gmail.com.
- We have 2025 dates available for altar flowers. See the flower chart in the narthex for openings. The cost is \$45 for 2 bouquets. Please indicate on the sign-up if flowers are in memory of/honor of a loved one or in honor of a special occasion. You may take the flowers home after the service to enjoy or donate them to brighten someone's day. We appreciate payment at the time of sign-up. Make checks out to St. James with "flowers" written in the memo or submit payment on our website Giving page at <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZCFN/home>.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

3/3 JERRY NICHOLS

3/4 JACK FORARI

3/7 STEVEN MILLER III

3/11 JENNA SCHMIDT

3/13 MARY MEUMANN

3/15 SANDRA ARP

3/16 JIM KRUMBHOLZ

3/18 EDEN BILEDDO

3/20 KRISTEN WENDELL

3/24 MINHON RIDENOUR

3/25 RYAN MARTIN

3/26 MAXINE DUHM

3/29 CHUCK MEYER

3/30 ED ARP

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

NO MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

Check us out online!

YouTube Livestream

We livestream our services on YouTube each week to help us worship together and stay connected even when we are not at full health or out of town!

Youtube Link:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzjqGF4g_QWtn_I2SqL5Q

Youtube Channel QR Code:



Sermon Podcast on Spotify!

If you missed a Sunday, click the link below or scan the QR code & listen to the Sermon on Spotify

Please contact the church office if you need assistance accessing it!

Spotify Link:

<https://open.spotify.com/show/2bmzh6HFSREErSkUX5mlX?si=zG2ldhASSyCDYZi5QhDc1w>

Spotify Channel QR Code:



REMINDER!

**Deadline for April Epistle Articles
is Friday, March 21st.**



Social Ministry News

Social Ministry will serve the meal at Zion on Monday, March 24th!

If you would like to get involved with making or serving the meal, contact **Judy Larson at 563-340-7902.**

Letter to the Congregation

Thank you to all our friends at St. James Church for your prayers, cards, well-wishes during the past several months. You will never know how much your support has meant to us all as a family. We want to also thank the children and every one involved in the Christmas bags of “goodies.” How very thoughtful—Thank you all!

John & Bert Leder

Prayers for Healing and Support

Congregational Members

Lynn Chamberlain, Bev Chappen, Sherry Germanio, Sandy Henry, Jeff Hicks, Frieda Houldsworth, John Leder, LaVonne Mienke, Maggie Bayliss, Minhon Ridenour

Family and Friends

Barry (cousin of Ellen Hogbin), **Carol** (friend of Joleen & Erik Bakken), **Cathy** (friend of Deb Crooks), **Connie** (friend of Maggie Bayliss), **Diane** (friend of Joleen Bakken), **Dotty** (friend of Joleen & Erik Bakken), **Donna** (Ed Arp's sister), **Drew** (Pat Larson's friend), **Grant** (grandson of Carol Leacox), **Hattie** (Frieda's sister) **Jason** (Lynn Chamberlain & Sherry Germanio's son), **Julia** (Keegan's girlfriend), **Joe** (Janene's son-in-law), **Konnor** (Bert Leder's grandson), **Mark** (friend of Jason Forari), **Michelle** (friend of Joleen & Erik Bakken), **Michelle** (friend of Jason & Melissa Forari), **Phil** (Steve Miller and Pat Sorensen's brother), **Russ** (friend of Steve & Sue Miller, husband to Chris), **Ruthann** (Justina Pessein's mom), **Stan** (relative of Frtiz Voss), **Theo** (Great Nephew to Kathy Melby & Lora Gwin), **Wally** (Frieda's nephew), **Young Family—especially Emmett** (Diana Worley's co-worker's daughter)

Military Personnel

Anthony Karasek (Judy Larson's great nephew)
Lt. Col. **Brandon** Sandoval USAF (Pat Larson's grandson)
CPT **Eli** Smith (Jerry and Myrna Mattly's grandson)
Nathan Pearson USAF (Jenna & Kane Schmidt's friend)
Samantha Richard (friend of Larson family)

In Memoriam

Jeanne Peters
Joann (Frieda's sister-in-law)

March 2025 Worship Assistants

Date	Assisting Minister	Aco-lyte	Usher	Usher	Altar Guild	Altar Guild
Ash Wed 3/5/25	Jason Forari & Janet Brakel		Melissa Forari	Ana Forari	Mary Meuma	
3/9/25	Pat Larson	Carter Royse	Ron Mekalson	Ellen Hogbin	Ellen Hogbin	Terry Martens
Lenten Wed -	Not Needed		Pat Larson			
3/16/25	Janet Brakel	Edi	Fritz Voss	Judy Larson	Shirley Richlen	Mary Meumann
Lenten Wed -	Not Needed		Caroline Hicks			
3/23/25	Judie Brooks	Jude Hewlett	Jerry Nichols	Yvonne Nichols	Shirley Richlen	Mary Meumann
Lenten	Not Needed		Ann Larson			
3/30/25	Tom Sladky	Dex	Kelly Crooks	Ron Mekalson	Marilyn Pieart	Diana Worley

*Please Note: If you find you cannot serve on the date/time scheduled, please arrange for your replacement, then **call or email your scheduler** to advise the name of your replacement. Your gracious cooperation is very much appreciated! Thanks!*

Schedulers

Altar Guild: Mary Meumann (563)355-7138; marybusdvr@gmail.com

Ushers & Assisting Ministers:

Janet Brakel (708)207-5515; jbrakel@ameritech.net

Children's Team: Kim Hewlett (856)296-1023;

kimhewlett18@gmail.com

Counters: Ellen Hogbin (309)519-9936;

ehogbin65@gmail.com

Acolytes: Maddie Schmidt (563)570-6354;

madelineschmidt2016@gmail.com