

THE CALLER

AMERICAN LUTHERAN
CHURCH
CASTLEWOOD, SD

Volume 29, Issue 2, February 2024

"Love" - P.T.'s Practical Theology

A Pharisee seeking to put Jesus to the test asked: "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 22:35-40

Have you been part of a wedding reception recently? If the reception included a dance with a Disc Jockey, you will most likely know from where I speak!

It has been a tradition at wedding receptions that when you want the bride and groom to kiss, you tinkle the side of a glass with a knife or fork, and they must kiss! All well and good if you are a guest, but maybe a bit tiresome if you are the happy couple. So, more recently it has been a trend that if you want the couple to kiss, you and anyone else you can cajole to join you, step to the front, grab a microphone and have to sing a song with the word "love", and then the couple will kiss.

Now, if I gave you five minutes to list all the songs you know that contain the word "love", I suspect you would have quite a list! After all, music is to stir the emotions and what deeper emotion is there than love?

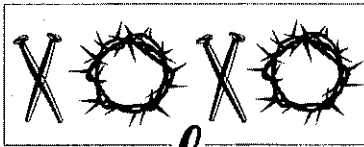
Of course, love is not just a sentimental emotion that we sing about to make a wedding couple kiss. No, love is also a Biblical Mandate from God for us to practice and seek to perfect. According to my on-line Bible, there are 684 times that the word "love" is used in Holy Scripture, and only a couple of those times have anything to do with marriage. For the deeper and most abiding form of love is at the heart of what God bears for his creation. Love is the declaration that God has made us to be in relationship with him, beyond sentimentality. Love is the prime emotion that incorporates trust, fidelity, and grace. Love is then the reason behind God's actions on our behalf, as well as it should be the reason behind our actions with each other.

In Matthew 22, a Jewish Teacher of the Law was trying to trap Jesus into giving an answer that would be in opposition to the Law of Moses. But, Jesus was not going to fall for the trap. Instead, when asked about the greatest commandment, Jesus declared *"that the greatest commandment is to love God, and the second is like it – to love the neighbor"*.

May God in Christ Jesus, in the blessed power of the Holy Spirit keep us ever grounded in His word that we might practice this command and seek to perfect it our lives as a reflection of the Almighty!

P.S. Speaking of love, this year Ash Wednesday is also St. Valentine's Day!!

In Christ's Service,
Pastor Tom Christenson



The Original *love* Letters

February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 4th** **8:30 a.m. Choir Practice**
9:00 a.m. Worship Service with Holy Communion
10:00 a.m. Fellowship
10:15 a.m. Sunday School
12:30—1:30p.m. Blessing Center Open
- 7th** 5:15 p.m. Confirmation Class
6:30 p.m. Youth Group ((Sign-up for Serving Mid-Week Lenten Meals))
- 11th** **8:30 a.m. Choir Practice**
9:00 a.m. Worship Service
10:00 a.m. Fellowship
10:15 a.m. Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Church Council
- 14th** **VALENTINE'S DAY**
6:15-6:45 p.m. Lenten Supper
7:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship
- 18th** **8:30 a.m. Choir Practice**
9:00 a.m. Worship Service with Holy Communion
10:00 a.m. Fellowship
10:15 a.m. Sunday School
12:30—1:30p.m. Blessing Center Open
- 19th** **PRESIDENTS DAY**
- 21st** 6:15-6:45 p.m. Fellowship Meal
7:00 p.m. Wednesday Worship
- 25th** **9:00 a.m. Worship Service**
10:00 a.m. Fellowship
10:15 a.m. Sunday School
11:15 a.m. Carpool to Sioux Falls for "Kids Against Hunger"
- 28th** 6:15-6:45 p.m. Fellowship Meal
7:00 p.m. Wednesday Worship
- 29th** **LEAP DAY**



Worship Banners

Lenten Banners – The Purple Banner Set that will be used for the first time on Ash Wednesday is a gift to American Lutheran Church by Kim and Barbara Stevens. Our thanks to them for this set that will provide power visuals for our Lenten Season.



Council Update

Thank you to those who attended and participated in the church annual meeting on January 21, 2024. The meeting went very well and was productive in the business for the church. The council would like to thank Dan Grupe for his years of service as our President, to Rod Fischer for his years of service as our Treasurer, as well as to Carrie Henrichsen who serve for two years on our Church Council.

Your council looks forward to serving the faith and the needs of American Lutheran Church in the coming year. The council members welcome your suggestions and comments for American Lutheran.

The church council has been set for 2024 with the following members;

President: John Bucher

Treasurer: Doug Strait

(Vice President & Secretary Positions to be elected from the Council)

Traci Bass (2026)

Lynn Borer (finishing Carrie Henrichsen's term – 1 year)

Dan Davis (2026)

Mark Larson (2025)

Amanda Pribbenow (2027)

Jessi Ruml (2025)

Andy Smith (2027)

Lyndsey Vetter (starting 2nd 3 year term)

God's peace to all.

John Bucher, President

American Lutheran Youth!

Grades 7-12 will meet at the church each 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of February.

February 7th - 6:30 - Youth Sign-Up for Serving Mid-Week Lenten Meals

February 21st - Begin to plan for Easter Sunrise Service and Easter Breakfast.

Confirmation Ministry – Grades 7-9

February Acolytes:

- 4 Trevor Everson
- 11 Easton Carter
- 18 Sawyer Craig
- 25 Kendra Nielsen





FEBRUARY Birthdays

Hadley Severson	2-02
Solvei Gasner	2-04
Hannah Mickey	2-09
Steve Janssen	2-10
Carrie Henrichsen	2-10
Emery Nei	2-11
Tanner Hanson	2-13
Emerson Carter	2-19
Sharla Hamen	2-22
Lynn Borer	2-23
Larz Tvedt	2-24
Brent Bass	2-28

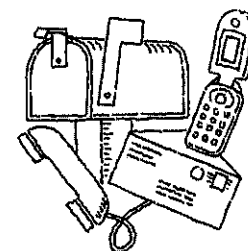
FEBRUARY Baptisms

Deb Aderhold	2-05
Barrett Wittnebel	2-08
Bostyn Ruml	2-12
Sherwin DeKam	2-13
Kellyn Jackson	2-13
Claire Severson	2-14
Kylie Haight	2-17
Andrew Bemis	2-18
Christina Kenyon	2-18
Rod Fischer	2-22
Jodi Hanson	2-22
Jacob Severson	2-23
Sarah Christenson	2-25
Dennis Strait	2-27
Ashley Hofwalt	2-28

If there is a need for pastoral care please contact

Pastor Tom

Christenson
605-793-2444.



Remember there is CALENDAR on our Website!

Go to: americanlutheranchurch.com and you can see the calendar of events for American Lutheran. If you have anything church related to add to the calendar, please contact Pastor Tom at pas-tortlc@gmail.com



Sr. High/Adult Choir!

Practices on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Sundays of each month in the fellowship hall and will generally be prepared to provide the anthem on the 3rd Sunday in Worship.



Items that you wish to borrow from the church, please contact Pastor Tom or Janell to coordinate the use of those items. Thank you!

Church Council Meeting Minutes

American Lutheran Church

December 17th, 2023

Members Present: Danny Davis, Traci Bass, Jessi Ruml, Dan Grupe, John Bucher, Rod Fischer, Carrie Henrichsen, Mark Larson, Lindsey Vetter, and Pastor Tom.

Call to Order: President Grupe called the meeting to order, declaring a voting quorum as being present.

Prayer: Led by Pastor Tom

Meeting Minutes: Review of the meeting minutes from November 11th, 2023. Motion by Pastor Tom, second by Traci to approve the minutes as read. **MC**

Financial Report: Rod presented the November 2023 financial report. Motion by Traci, second by Lindsey to approve as presented. **MC**

Pastor's Report: Brief report on the summer 2024 Youth Mission Trip.

Old Business:

Repairs: Parsonage Tub – No Action

Paint for Basement of Church – Lindsey and Jesse will complete this.

Storage Shed: Mark Larson will begin this project soon.

New Business:

Communion Schedule: December 24th - Jessie /January 7th and 21st - Mark

Lector / Fellowship Sign-ups: Dan will continue to work on this.

Software Purchase: No action taken – will continue to look into this.

Thanksgiving Dinner Proceeds: No action taken.

Christmas Schedule: Christmas Eve Service will be at 5:30 PM on 12/24/2023. Ruml children will read. There will be no Monday service.

Annual Meeting: Council set the annual meeting to be held on 1/21/2024 after Church service. The council will meet on 1/14/2023 after Church for year end review in preparation for the annual meeting.

Council Membership: Rod, Dan, and Candi's terms are ending. Kari also requested a replacement due to her upcoming move from the area. Dan and Traci will notify the nominating committee and work on this.

NALC Convention: Pastor requested permission to attend a conference in Minneapolis instead of one in Florida. The cost is around \$250.00 for the Mpls. Convention. Motion by Traci, second by Carrie to approve. **MC**

Building/Personal Property:

The north fridge in the kitchen is no longer working and is quite old. Motion to purchase a new fridge by Mark Larson and seconded by Danny Davis. John will work on measurements and prices for the new unit. **MC**

Salaries/Wages: Discussion was had concerning salaries and wages for 2024 including year end bonuses.

John made a motion with a second by Traci for a 3% increase in Pastor Tom's salary as well as a \$1,000.00 bonus. **MC**

John made a motion with a second by Traci to increase the pianist's rate to \$65.00 per service and a \$250.00 bonus for each of the three (3) pianists. **MC**

Dan made a motion with a second by Traci to allow \$14.00 per hour for Charlsie & Tracy Laue for custodial work as well as one (1) \$100.00 bonus. **MC**

Dan made a motion with a second by Traci for a \$100.00 bonus to Amanda Pribbenow for her custodial work. **MC**

Lindsey made a motion with a second by John to increase Janell's hourly wage to \$15.00 per hour and a \$500.00 bonus.

MC

Mission Work: Council members discussed numerous areas of mission work and agreed on the following:

Motion by Mark and seconded by Traci for \$500.00 to The Beacon Center. **MC**

Motion by John and seconded by Rod for \$250.00 to St. Dismas. **MC**

Motion by Rod and seconded by Mark for \$500.00 to the NALC Mission District. **MC**

Motion by Rod and seconded by Traci for \$250.00 to the Blessing Center **MC**

Motion by Rod and seconded by Jessie for \$500.00 to Belleamy Sikkink. **MC**

Motion by Rod and seconded by Lindsey for \$500.00 to Vision 20/20 which is an NALC mission. **MC**

Next Meeting: Sunday, January 14th, 2024 following Church.

Motion to Adjourn: Motion by Jessie, second by Dan to adjourn. **MC**

Closing Prayer: The Lord's Prayer

Mark Larson, Secretary

**American Lutheran Church Financial Report
December 2023**

General Account

Balance on hand 12-1-2023		\$	197,862.61
Receipts			
Offerings for General Fund	\$	10,652.00	
Thrivent Grant	\$	91.00	
ITC - Capital Credits	\$	403.31	
Donation from Citizens State Bank	\$	250.00	\$ 11,396.31
Disbursements			
Thomas Christenson (Pastor Salary + \$1000 Bonus)	\$	5,472.80	
Thomas Christenson (Social Security)	\$	289.72	
Thomas Christenson (Housing Equity)	\$	200.00	
Retirement Contribution	\$	467.28	
Janell Bemis (32 hrs + \$500 Bonus)	\$	913.73	
Tracy Laue (12.25 hrs + \$100 Bonus)	\$	247.07	
Amanda Pribbenow (Bonus)	\$	100.00	
Roxanne Bass (3 svcs + \$250 Bonus)	\$	415.00	
Marsha Kurtenbach (1 svc + \$250 Bonus)	\$	305.00	
Karen Lund (1 svc + \$250 Bonus)	\$	305.00	
NALC (benevolence)	\$	50.00	
Registration for upcoming Pastor Conference	\$	125.00	
City of Castlewood (Ch: \$60, Pars: \$83.85)	\$	143.85	
ITC (Church Phone & Internet & Parsonage Phone)	\$	125.69	
Northwestern (Ch: \$127.97, Pars: \$47.64)	\$	175.61	
Ottertail (Ch: \$134.17, Pars: \$89.86)	\$	224.03	
North Star Mutual Insurance Company	\$	329.00	
Hamlin County Publishing (Ads for Thanksgiving Dinner)	\$	59.50	
Office Peeps	\$	62.39	
The Upper Room (Jan/Feb 2022)	\$	34.25	
Concordia Publishing (Worship Materials)	\$	257.06	
Open Five CDs	\$	130,000.00	\$ (140,301.98)

Balance on hand 12-31-2023		\$	68,956.94
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*** Confirmation Balance	\$	1,107.49	
*** Thrivent Choice Balance	\$	3,164.95	

Building Account

Balance on hand 12-1-2023		\$	52,515.23
Receipts			
Offerings for Building Fund	\$	150.00	\$ 150.00
Disbursements			
	\$	-	\$ -

Balance on hand 12-31-2023		\$	52,665.23
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Mission Account

Balance on hand 12-1-2023		\$	3,836.92
Receipts			
Offerings for Mission Fund	\$	180.00	
Offerings for Blessing Center	\$	160.00	
Children's Offering	\$	25.50	\$ 365.50
Disbursements			
China Service Ventures (children offering Oct - Dec)	\$	122.50	
CW Blessing Center (\$160 Dec. offerings + \$250)	\$	410.00	
NALC Eastern SD Mission District	\$	500.00	
NALC Vision 2020	\$	500.00	
St Dysmas	\$	250.00	
Beacon Center	\$	500.00	
Belleamy Sikkink Benefit	\$	500.00	\$ (2,782.50)

Balance on hand 12-31-2023		\$	1,419.92
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Memorial Account

Balance on hand 12-1-2023		\$	6,858.31
Receipts			
	\$	-	\$ -
Disbursements			
	\$	-	\$ -

Balance on hand 12-31-2023		\$	6,858.31
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Account Summary

	Current	Change	Change
	Balance	December 2023	Year to Date
General Account	\$ 68,956.94	\$ (128,905.67)	\$ (103,897.01)
Building Account	\$ 52,665.23	\$ 150.00	\$ (25,715.50)
Mission Account	\$ 1,419.92	\$ (2,417.00)	\$ (2,650.00)
Memorial Account	\$ 6,858.31	\$ -	\$ (285.80)



Kids Against Hunger

On **Sunday, February 25th** we have a service opportunity for young and old (er) alike! We have scheduled an afternoon food packing event in Sioux Falls with "Kids Against Hunger".


11:15 Carpool to Brookings where we will stop for Lunch

1:45 Be at the packing site for Orientation to the Ministry & Service Project.

5:00 Conclude and head back home (some carloads may choose to stay and hit the mall)

There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex. Kids Against Hunger asks that we provide financial support of at least \$30 per participant, which covers ½ of the cost of the food and packing supplies. We will take some of these funds from our Youth Account and if anyone else (participant or not) wishes to support this work, please see Pastor Tom.

The Servants of our Lord

	<i>Organists</i>	<i>Scripture Lectors</i>	<i>Fellowship Servers</i>	<i>Ushers</i>	<i>Audio-Visual Technician</i>
February 4	Roxanne Bass		Roxanne & Craig Bass	John & Bonnie Bucher	Chuck Juntti
February 11	Marsha Kurtenbach			Brenda Almos & Gail Nagelhout	
February 18	Roxanne Bass			Kendal & Alisha Nielsen family	Doug Strait
February 25	Marsha Kurtenbach	Liyah Vetter		Charlie & Jenn Carter family	Rod Fischer



	General	Building	Mission	Children	Blessing Ctr
Dec. 31	\$2,065.00	\$5.00	\$26.00	\$1.00	\$25.00
Jan. 7	\$2,409.00	\$130.00	\$157.00	\$7.00	\$25.00
Jan. 14	\$1,140.00		\$3.00	\$3.00	
Jan. 21	\$2,200.00	\$10.00	\$137.00	\$7.00	

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The American Lutheran Caller
P.O. Box 132
Castlewood, SD 57223
Address Service Requested



WATCH US ON YOUTUBE & ITC!

*American Lutheran
Church's
Mission Statement*

The mission of American
Lutheran Church is to

**welcome,
worship,
teach and
serve**

In the name of Christ our Lord
and Savior!



americanlutheranchurch.com

2024 Church Council Members

John Bucher, President

Doug Strait, Treas.

Mark Larson

Jesse Ruml

Danny Davis

Traci Bass

Lindsey Vetter

Lynn Borer

Andy Smith

Amanda Pribbenow