

THE CALLER

AMERICAN LUTHERAN
CHURCH
CASTLEWOOD, SD

Volume 31, Issue 3, March 2026

Pastor's Ponderings: *Lord of Lent, Lord of Easter!*

*O Lord, throughout these forty days, you prayed and kept the fast;
inspire repentance for our sin, and free us from our past.*

*You strove with Satan, and you won; your faithfulness endured;
lend us your nerve, your skill and trust in God's eternal word.*

*Though parched & hungry, yet you prayed and fixed your mind above;
so teach us to deny ourselves, that we may know God's love.*

*Be with us through this season, Lord, and all our earthly days,
that when the final Easter dawns, we join in heaven's praise.*

The above are the verses from a 19th century hymn entitled, "O Lord, throughout These Forty Days", written by Claudia Hernaman. It's one of those dour hymns, that is reflective in both its lyrics and melody....so it fits for the church season of Lent. For Lent is a forty-day season that lends itself to introspection and repentance.

Lent is a penitential season that begins with the ashes of Ash Wednesday and ends with the sealed tomb of Holy Saturday. If you are an overly analytical type, you may count the days on your calendar and find out that there are 46 days from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday. Which might leave one to wonder if the early church fathers were mathematically challenged! But, please know, that even though the Lenten season spans over six Sundays, these six "Lord's Days" are not included as the 40 days of Lent.

Why? Well, quite simply, each Sunday is to be a celebration of Easter! Jesus died on Good Friday, but rose from the dead on the third day.....Sunday! Easter! The Lord's Day!

Yes, in part, we are a Lenten people. We will do our best to walk with Jesus during his journey to Jerusalem. We will remember the sinfulness in our lives that caused him to journey to Jerusalem. We will remember his sacrifice in the giving of the Last Supper and we will gather at the foot of the cross, where the world called for his very life.

That is our Lenten journey...and even though the hymns may be dour, the sermons may be more accusatory than celebrative; we are still a people who knows how the story ends! Note once again the direction in which the hymn writer takes us. She does not leave us in mourning, but lifts us into praise. Because, even though we honor the penitential nature of Lent, the season is one that points beyond itself. The story of Jesus does not end with the defeat of death, but with the triumph of new life!

May God bless you in your Lenten journey, so that "*when the final Easter dawns, we join in heaven's praise*".

In His Service,
Pastor Tom



Midweek Lenten Services - Walk by the Spirit!

Mid-Week Lenten Suppers & Services

This year's theme will come from Galatians 5, as Paul writes: "Walk by the Spirit, for the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." Galatians 5:16, 22-23



Meal: 6:15 Served by Youth of ALC (Free-Will Offering for Youth Mission Trip)

Worship: 7:00 pm

For the Brave: Pastor Tom will be looking for 1-2 volunteers each week to help lead us in these dramas. No memorization required! Please talk to Pastor Tom about your availability to serve.

For youth: Please see Pastor Tom for the Sign-up to help with the Lenten Suppers!

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| March 4: Peace & Patience | Drama – Offering Grace, getting Peace |
| March 11: Kindness & Goodness | Drama – Counting on Good Deeds |
| March 18: Faithfulness & Gentleness | Drama – Faithful Heros Monologue |
| March 25: Self-Control | Drama - "Will" Needs a Gardener |

Lenten 2nd Offering—Donation of "KitchenKits" for NALC Disaster Response. See the table at the back of the Sanctuary. Kits need to be turned in by Palm Sunday.



World Day of Prayer
 A global ecumenical movement
 of informed prayer
 and prayerful action
 March 6th, 2026

Lenten Devotionals are available in the narthex. "The Unshaken Cross" is the theme for this season, with devotions written by our North American Lutheran Church staff and select pastors.



Attention American Lutheran Youth!

Wednesday in the Word!

On Wednesday, March 4th we encourage our youth in grades 7-12 to invite their friends to join us from 7:00-8:10 for a breakfast at American Lutheran. There will be a full breakfast, a special devotional, guided meditation and prayers. Please bring a Bible and a friend! We will ensure that any Jr. High student who is dropped off to attend, will get a ride to the school!



TACOS & TALK: March Youth Group Meeting: On Sunday, March 1st, right after Sunday School, (11:00) youth in grades 7-12 are invited to meet in the lower level for a "tacos", some games and some "talk" about a possible summer mission trip. Please bring your calendars so we can decide the best time to schedule our trip as well as our location.



Youth Group – 2026 Youth

Gathering or Mission Trip

Pastor Tom and Brenda are looking for input from our youth and their parents as to what kind of Summer Faith Trip would be of interest. Our denomination will be holding the Continental Youth Gathering in Roanoke, VA July 7-10. Other possibilities could be week-long mission trips such as we have done to Cheyenne River or Colorado Springs. Nashville could also be a possible servant site. Or, if those trips are too long in length we can hatch another shorter-term mission trip as we did last year. Please let us know of your interest!!



March Acolytes:

- 1th Reese Rawsthorne
- 8th Ruml
- 15th Ruml
- 22nd Reese Rawsthorne
- 29th Lincoln Pribbenow

Easter Lily Dedications

Help fill our sanctuary with the beauty of Easter lilies or flowers! Dedicate a lily or a flower in memory, honor, or thanksgiving for a loved one. Dedications will be in the Easter bulletin. Forms will be in the Narthex soon.

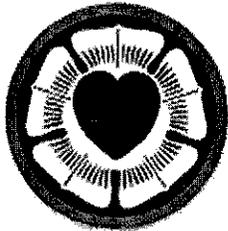


Council Update

The following Church Council members were installed on February 22nd. Your council looks forward to honorably serving the mission and ministry of American Lutheran Church in the coming year.

President – Joann Fischer
Secretary – Mark Larson
John Bucher
Amanda Pribbenow
Al Schochenmaier

Vice President – Lindsey Vetter
Treasurer – Doug Strait
Danny Davis
Jessi Ruml
Andy Smith



**NORTH AMERICAN
LUTHERAN
CHURCH**

NALC Constitution Changes were ratified.

At our annual meeting, we had a vote on whether or not to ratify proposed changes to the NALC Constitution. These changes were proposed at the 2025 Convocation, but would the changes would not be made unless ½ of the congregations voted to ratify them.

As of February 13, 2026, 62% submitted their votes to the NALC. The changes were ratified by an overwhelming majority:

Amendment One: Scrivner’s Errors – passed 334-1

Amendment Two: Articles on the NALC Seminary – passed 325-10

Amendment Three: Articles on legal & financial matters – passed 334-1

Joint Mission District Convocation – *“Renewed, Refreshed, Ready!”*

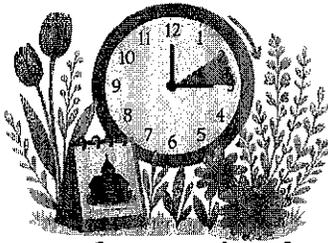
April 17, 7:00 pm – April, 18, 3:00 pm at Atonement Lutheran in Fargo.

Please consider joining us for the annual Convocation of the Eastern South Dakota and Minkota Mission Districts of the NALC. We are honored to have Bishop Selbo scheduled to join us. Posted on the narthex bulletin board are copies of the Agenda, Registration Form, and a NALC Disaster Response Flyer. Please talk to Pastor Tom if you can attend or have any questions.

Special In-Kind Offering for NALC Lutheran Disaster Response! At the Convocation a representative from our church’s Disaster Response team will be present for us to “stuff the trailer” with items to be distributed in areas affected by natural disasters. Grab a flyer from the bulletin board and be ready to bring your items to the Convocation or arrange with Pastor Tom for them to be delivered.



March 2026



Spring forward in faith!
CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS and
join us on time for worship.

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	30	31				

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

1st 8:30 a.m. Sr, High/Adult Choir Practice
 9:00 a.m. Worship Service with Holy Communion
 10:00 a.m. Fellowship
 10:15 a.m. Sunday School
 11:00 a.m. Youth "Taco Talk"
 12:30—1:30p.m. Blessing Center Open



4th 7:00 a.m. Wednesday in the Word Youth Breakfast
 6:15 p.m. Lenten Meal
 7:00 p.m. Mid-Week Lenten Worship

8th **Spring Forward!**
 8:30 a.m. Sr. High/Adult Choir Practice
 9:00 a.m. Worship Service
 10:00 a.m. Fellowship
 10:15 a.m. Sunday School



11th 6:15 p.m. Lenten Meal
 7:00 p.m. Mid-Week Lenten Worship

15th 8:30 a.m. Sr. High/Adult Choir Practice
 9:00 a.m. Worship Service with Holy Communion
 10:00 a.m. Fellowship
 10:15 a.m. Sunday School
 10:15 Church Council
 12:30—1:30p.m. Blessing Center Open



17th ESD Pastor's Meeting in Hudson
18th 6:15 p.m. Lenten Meal
 7:00 p.m. Mid-Week Lenten Worship

20th **Spring Equinox**
22nd 9:00 a.m. Worship Service
 10:00 a.m. Fellowship

25th 6:15 p.m. Lenten Meal
 7:00 p.m. Mid-Week Lenten Worship

29th 9:00 a.m. Worship Service—Palm Sunday
 10:00 a.m. Fellowship





Kalee Jackson	3-02
Barbara Cozad	3-04
Tom Christenson	3-05
Arianna Bemis	3-06
Karen Lund	3-08
Jonah Wiersma	3-09
Brenda McKee Almos	3-10
Bonnie Top	3-10
Lorie Mack	3-12
Hunter Smith	3-14
Bryce Wittnebel	3-17
Maddox Nielsen	3-17
Carson Borer	3-19
Russell Mack	3-19
Sawyer Craig	3-22
Richard Tvedt	3-22
Angela Larson	3-26
Duane Selchert	3-26
Sarah Smith	3-29
Vienna Smith	3-31



Russell Mack	3-01
Lynn Borer	3-02
Asher Davis	3-06
Gareth Hamen	3-10
Hannah Mickey	3-10
Eric Aderhold	3-14
Lacey Severson	3-14
Carrie Henrichsen	3-16
Carter Larson	3-16
Kabren Jackson	3-19
Lorene Tvedt	3-27
Thomas Christenson	3-29
Brody Bass	3-30

If there is a need for pastoral care please contact ...

Pastor Tom Christenson
605-956-0130



Let's stay connected



Duane & Phyllis Selchert	March 26
Wayne & Carmen Jankord	March 26

Please notify the church with your...



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.

Gracious God, as we spring forward into a new season, awaken our hearts to your presence. Even when our bodies feel weary, renew our spirits with your joy. Help us to use every moment you give us for your glory, trusting that your light shines brighter than any lost hour of sleep. AMEN

Church Council Meeting Minutes
American Lutheran Church
January 11th, 2026

Members Present: Amanda Pribbenow, Doug Strait, Al Schochenmaier, Mark Larson, Lindsey Vetter, Jess Ruml, Andy Smith and Pastor Tom.

Call to Order: Lindsey called the meeting to order declaring a quorum present.

Prayer: Led by Pastor Tom

Meeting Minutes: Review of December 21st, 2025, meeting minutes. Motion by Pastor Tom and a second by Amanda Pribbenow to approve. **MC**

Financial Report: Treasurer Strait presented the December 2025 financial report for review. Motion by Jess, second by Mark to approve the report as presented. **MC**

Doug also presented a proposed budget for 2026 which was reviewed by all. An amendment will be required to include the increases for staff listed below. Jess Ruml made a motion to approve the amended budget, and Lindsey Vetter provided a 2nd. **MC.**

Pastor's Report: Pastor Tom commented on the fact that the Youth Prayer Breakfast has been a success thus far. There are some upcoming school activities that may interfere with this although the plan is to continue. Pastor also commented that he will be leading an afternoon Worship Service at the Estelline Care Center for three (3) Sundays in 2026 as he was asked to do so.

Communion Schedule for February 2026:

February 1st: Mark

February 15th: Jess

February 18th (Ash Wednesday): Amanda & Lindsey

Old Business:

The parsonage storage shed roof will be completed when Gerhold Brothers are available.

New Business:

The annual meeting was discussed to include the ratification of the constitution. The changes being made are SPAG (Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar) type of changes. Lindsey agreed that she would be willing to present / read the changes to the Congregation and that the Council would assist with any questions or concerns that members may have.

It was confirmed that the audit and nominating committees are aware of their participation at the annual meeting.

Council will be providing coffee and doughnuts for the annual meeting. It was agreed that a case of doughnuts would be purchased from Kevee's Grocery and Amanda will make sure they are delivered and ready for the meeting.

A discussion was held concerning the payment cancellation for Pastor Chuck Stanga who was scheduled to lead us while Pastor was away. Due to the weather, Church was cancelled and Pastor Chuck did not make the trip. Pastor Chuck had mailed the original payment of \$225.00 back to the Church. Council members discussed whether payment for this and possible future weather cancellations should be honored. Pastor Tom made a motion to send Pastor Chuck a check for \$175.00, and Mark Larson provided a 2nd. 5 members provided a yea and 3 provided a nay. **MC**. Doug will send a check to Pastor Stanga for \$175.00.

A discussion was had concerning wages / bonuses for Church Staff, and the results are as follows:

Organist:

Mark Larson made a motion to increase the current per session pay of \$65.00 to \$70.00 per session. Lindsey Vetter provided a 2nd. **MC**

Janitorial:

Doug Strait made a motion to increase the current hourly rate of \$15.00 per hour to \$15.50 per hour. Jess Ruml provided a 2nd. **MC**

Secretarial:

Doug Strait made a motion to increase the current hourly rate of \$15.25 per hour to \$16.00 per hour. Jess Ruml provided a 2nd. **MC**

Pastoral:

A discussion was had concerning the current base salary as well as benefits being allowed. Doug Strait had previously provided information from the NALC on "average" base salary and benefit amounts based on a Congregation of our size. Following this discussion, a motion was made by Mark Larson to allow for a \$1,250.00 bonus to be paid to Pastor Tom with no increase in salary or benefits for 2026. Jess Ruml provided a 2nd. **MC**.

Next Council Meeting: The next council meeting will be the Annual Meeting scheduled for January 25th, 2026, following worship.

Closing: With no further matters at hand a Motion by Mark to adjourn. Second by Andy. **MC**.

Pastor led us in the Lord's Prayer, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Larson, Secretary



Our Faithfulness in Giving

	General	Building	Mission	*Children	*Blessing Ctr
January 25	\$1,272.00		\$183.00	\$3.00	
February 1	\$2,957.00	\$5.00	\$135.00		
February 8	\$1,685.00		\$98.00	\$13.00	
February 15	\$1,718.00		\$166.00	\$6.00	\$35.00
February 22	\$1,815.00	\$5.00	\$136.00	\$11.00	

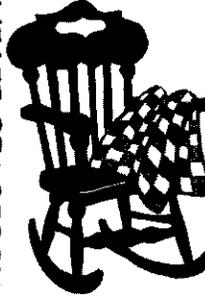


*Childrens and Blessing Center amounts are included into the Mission account totals.

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 pastortlc@gmail.com

ASSISTED LIVING Residents



Castlewood Assisted Living

Lorene Tvedt
Estelline Care Center

Carrie Henrichsen
Geraldine Gantvoort
Lake Norden Care Center
Richard Tvedt



ROOSTER — The rooster reminds us of Peter's threefold denial of Jesus on the night of his trial (Matthew 26:34, NIV). Because of this, it often symbolizes human weakness and faithlessness—

especially when faith is tested. Yet, the rooster also calls to mind watchfulness. Its early-morning crowing echoes Jesus' words about being alert for his return: "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn" (Mark 13:35, NIV).



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

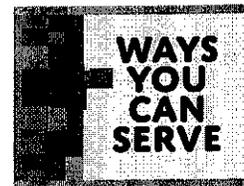
Blessing Center Collection

We remind the congregation that there is a collection box in the narthex, and ask that each ALC family bring in a few non-perishable items each month to support this local ministry.





The Servants of our Lord



**SIGN -UP SHEET
FOR**
**Lectors—(Scriptures
sheets available)**
&
**Fellowship
Servers
IN THE
NARTHEX**

	<i>Organists</i>	<i>Ushers</i>	<i>Audio- Visual Technician</i>
March 1	Roxanne Bass	Kendal & Alisha Nielsen family	Chuck Juntti
March 4 Lent		Lance & Calona Craig family	
March 8	Marsha Kurtenbach	Tyler & Tess Jankord family	Chuck Juntti
March 11 Lent		Dustin & Danielle Foster	
March 15	Roxanne Bass	Darin & Traci Laue family	Doug Strait
March 18 Lent		Carmen & Haley Pewe family	
March 22	Marsha Kurtenbach	Travis & Melissa Prohl	Rod Fischer
March 25 Lent		Andrew & Sarah Smith family	
March 29 Palm Sunday	Karen Lund	Jerrod Bass & Brody Bass	



ALTAR GUILD

Altar Guild takes care of the communion ware, change altar clothes, banners and fill oil candles when needed. Thank you for your service.

March: Carna Miller & Gail Nagelhout

April: Diane Koosman & Paula Grupe

ONLINE GIVING

Our congregational website: americanlutheranchurch.com now has a link on the home page for online donations: **DONATE NOW**. From that link, you can set One-time, Weekly or Monthly Offerings.

If you point the camera on your cell phone at the QR code it will take you to the donation page.



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

2026 Church Council Members

Joann Fischer, President

Lindsey Vetter, Vice President

Mark Larson, Secretary

Doug Strait, Treasurer

Jesse Ruml

Dan Davis

Al Schochenmaier

Andy Smith

Amanda Pribbenow

John Bucher