

THE CALLER

AMERICAN LUTHERAN
CHURCH
CASTLEWOOD, SD

Volume 31, Issue 4, April 2026

The Preacher's Ponderings

"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God". 1st Corinthians 1:18

"What is your favorite memory of church, past or present, here or elsewhere"?

The answers to the above question were a powerful way of seeing the varied ways in which "church" made a powerful and lasting impact on each of us. As one who has been in church as long as I can remember, there are many favorite memories of church, but, with my mind in the Lenten mode, I believe that Good Friday services are my favorite memories.

I'm not usually a morbid guy, but there is just something so incredibly powerful about being in worship on Good Friday. The solemnity of the service, the slow and somber movement of the hymns, and the drama of entering once again into the passion story hits me with as much, if not more, power than the serene scene of a Christmas Eve candlelight service, or the joyous hymns of Easter.

It's the cross! It's the cross that transfixes me on Good Friday. It is that cruel instrument of death upon which Jesus was lifted up for my sake. On that night, of all nights, with the altar having been stripped of its finery, it is the cross that we are to view, and the one who hung there on Calvary is the one we are to reverently remember.

The Apostle Paul knew the truth about the power of the cross as he wrote to the believers in Corinth. He said: "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God". For what the world may view as only an instrument of death, Christians believe the cross to be the sign of our salvation. What the world may view as a foolish way for one sent by God to die, Christians embrace the cross as the sign of God's deep and abiding love.

So, join us as we continue our Lenten journey that will take us to the cross of Good Friday. Then come and celebrate the vindication that Christ won for himself and for all believers on Easter!

Thanks be to God!!

"In His Service",

Pastor Tom



HOLY WEEK

Maundy Thursday Worship – April 2, 7:00 pm

Join us for worship as we retell the story of Jesus' life-giving Sacrament. For all who in faith partake in this meal receive the promise of forgiveness of sins, life and salvation in His name.



MAUNDY
Thursday

Good Friday Tenebrae Worship – April 3, 7:00 pm

Be with us as we gather at the foot of the cross to reflect on the Passion of Christ. This worship will feature a *Tenebrae* ending. *Tenebrae* is a Latin word that means "darkness" or "shadows". In the *Tenebrae* portion of our service, candles will be extinguished after each scripture is read. The increasing darkness symbolizes the flight and denial of the disciples and friends of Jesus. The moment of complete darkness recalls the death of Christ. Hamlin Reformed will be sharing in this service with us.



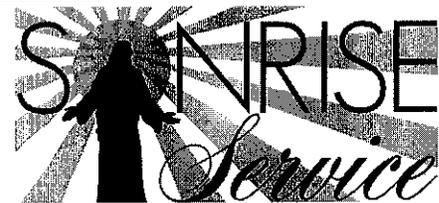
GOOD
Friday

Easter Sunday – April 5, 2025

7:00 a.m. - Sunrise Service led by our Youth

7:45 a.m. - Easter Breakfast

(Free-will offering for Youth Programs)



8:30 a.m. Sr. High/Adult Choir Practice

9:00 am - Festival Worship with Holy Communion

ALC Easter Memorial Garden

Bring an Easter Lily flower, or spring plant to beautify the sanctuary. Please deliver to the Fellowship Hall by the morning of Saturday, April 3. Complete this form and return it to the church office or put in Janell's mailbox by Thursday, April 2, 2026. Thank you!

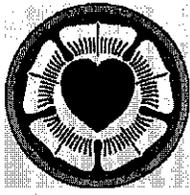


Given By: _____

In Memory: _____

In Honor: _____

To the Glory of God: _____



American Lutheran Church
 311 South Fourth Avenue
 P.O. Box 132
 Castlewood, South Dakota 57223-0132
 Church Office: (605) 793-2444

April 2026

Dear American Lutheran Church Family,

As we move forward in ministry, we're facing a financial reality that requires our collective attention. The work of our church—our worship, our outreach, our care for one another and our community—depends on consistent, faithful giving. And right now, we are not meeting the level of support needed to sustain that work.

As we look ahead, we need to be transparent about the financial challenge before us. Over the past four years, our expenses have risen by 7.24%, reflecting the real costs of sustaining the ministries and programs that define our mission. At the same time, a special commitment of \$60,000 annually for four years, concluded in 2023. This gift helped stabilize our budget during that period, but its absence now leaves a noticeable gap.

To fully support our ministries and keep our budget healthy, we must increase our annual giving by roughly \$20,000, or about 20%, to reach a break-even point. This increase is essential for us to continue operating at the level our mission requires.

Scripture reminds us of the importance of stepping forward together in faith. In Malachi 3:10, God calls His people to *"bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house... Test me in this,"* and then He offers a remarkable promise: that He will *"open the windows of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it."* It is a bold invitation—God urging us to trust Him, to give faithfully, and to expect His provision.

We are asking every household to prayerfully consider how you might help close this gap. If each of us leans in a little more, together we can ensure our church remains strong, stable, and able to carry out the mission God has entrusted to us.

Thank you for your faithfulness, your generosity, and your commitment to our shared mission.

With gratitude,

ALC Council

2025 ALC Offerings per Envelope/Family

Yearly Offerings	Number of Envelopes
Over \$5,000	7 Families
Between \$2,500 and \$5,000	8 Families
Between \$1,000 and \$2,500	13 Families
Between \$500 and \$1,000	11 Families
Less than \$500	18 Families

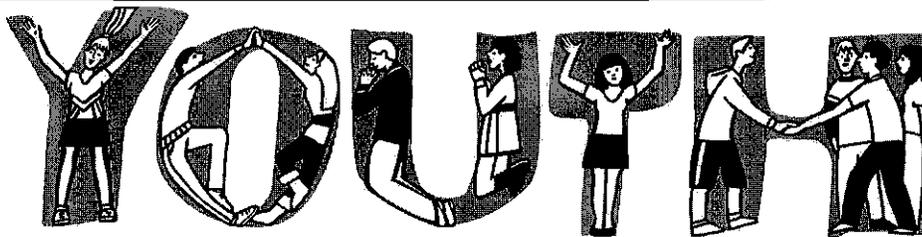
Donate ONLINE to the American Lutheran Church

Giving online allows you to give anytime from anywhere making it more convenient than writing a traditional check.

Various payment methods are offered including credit/debit cards, ACH bank transfers, and digital wallets like Apple Pay and Google Pay.

Make a one-time donation or easily set up automatic weekly or monthly recurring donations.





Attention American Lutheran Youth!

Wednesday in the Word!

On Wednesday, April 1st 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. *Guest devotional leader will be Travis Uthe.* 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!



Rite of Confirmation – Sunday, April 12th



During the morning worship, the following will confirm their Baptismal Faith in the Rite of Confirmation:

Huxley Craig, son of Lance Craig & Hillary Plucker

Lincoln Pribbenow, son of Kevin & Amanda Pribbenow

Youth Summer Mission Trip – June 13-20 – Destination Nashville!

Pastor Tom and Brenda Almos will be leading a group to serve with Group Ministries in Nashville, TN. This trip is partially funded through your generous support of the youth fundraisers such as the Castlewood Days Pancake Feed, the Lenten Suppers and Easter Breakfast!



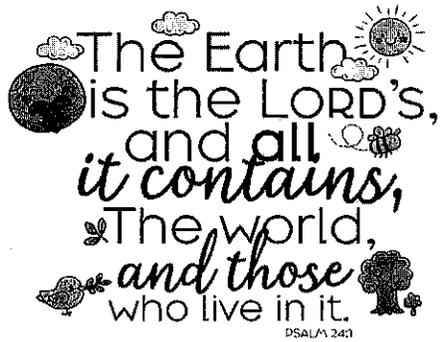
April Acolytes:

- 5th Lane Foster
- 12th Lane Foster
- 19th Lane Foster
- 26th Lane Foster

CELEBRATE THE
EMPTY TOMB

Are there any kids going to a Bible Camp this summer?

If you are planning to send your son or daughter to a Bible Camp this summer, please contact Pastor Tom as there will be some Campership monies from our congregation. If you are looking for a solid camping program, Pastor Tom suggests Byron Bible Camp, which is between here and Huron. See their website: byronbiblecamp.com



Earth Day April 22, 2026

April 2026

Sun	Mo	Tue	We	Th	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		

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

1st 7:00 a.m. Wednesday in the Word Youth Breakfast

2nd 7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday with Holy Communion

8:00 p.m. 1st Communion Reception

3rd 7:00 p.m. Good Friday Worship at ALC with Hamlin Reformed

5th 7:00 a.m. Youth-led Sunrise Worship

7:45 a.m. Easter Breakfast

8:30 a.m. Choir Practice

9:00 a.m. Worship Service with Holy Communion

12th 8:30 a.m. Choir Practice

9:00 a.m. Rite of Confirmation Worship

10:00 a.m. Confirmation Reception

10:15 a.m. Sunday School

12:30—1:30p.m. Blessing Center Open

17th Mission District Convocation in Fargo

18th Mission District Convocation in Fargo

19th 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

10:15 Church Council

26th 9:00 a.m. Worship Service

10:00 a.m. Fellowship

10:15 a.m. Sunday School

12:30—1:30p.m. Blessing Center Open



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.



Robert Ronne	4-03
Bob Miller	4-08
Neda Ries	4-11
Carmen Jankord	4-12
Phyllis Selchert	4-17
Lindsey Ching	4-24
Easton Carter	4-24
Tristan Nielsen	4-26
Tracy Laue	4-26
Duane Laue	4-30

Tanner Hanson	4-05
Collyns Ruml	4-07
Cora Pewe	4-14
Bonnie Top	4-19
Londyn Pribbenow	4-19
Brent Bass	4-20
Emerson Carter	4-21
Sawyer Craig	4-22
Richard Tvedt	4-22
Bryce Wittnebel	4-22
Liyah Vetter	4-24
Kalee Jackson	4-26
Karen Lund	4-27
Jonah Wiersma	4-27
Hadley Severson	4-30



Russell & Lorie Mack
April 24

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.

April: Diane Koosman & Paula Grupe
May: Neda Ries & Carmen Jankord

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.



You can watch a rebroadcast of American Lutheran church service on our **YouTube** channel and also with **ITC television**'s

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

Pastor Tom Christenson
605-956-0130



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.

Open Sunday April 12th & 26th from 12:30—1:30 p.m.
Main Street, Castlewood

Wish List: Deodorant/antiperspirant, feminine hygiene products, razors, shaving cream & nail clippers



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

The best mathematical equation ever given: 1 cross + 3 nails = 4 given.

**Church Council Meeting Minutes
American Lutheran Church
February 15th, 2026**

Members Present: Dan Davis, Jess Ruml, Amanda Pribbenow, John Bucher, Doug Strait, Joanne Fischer, Pastor Tom, and Mark Larson.

Call to Order: President Bucher 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 January 11th, 2026. Motion by Pastor Tom, second by Amanda to approve the minutes as written. **MC**

Financial Report: Doug Strait presented the January 2026 financial report. The charge for TriStar includes two (2) months. Motion by Jess Ruml and a second by Mark to approve the report. **MC**

Pastor's Report: Pastor Tom shared a Thank-You card that was received by the family of Breanna Mack. He also advised that the continuing education time that he recently spent in the Twin Cities went well.

Old Business:

Gerhold Brothers submitted a bid in the amount of \$1,652.08 to re-roof the parsonage shed with corrugated steel roofing. This bid includes all labor and all materials. Doug Strait made a motion to approve the bid a second was received from Joanne. **MC**. John Bucher will reach out to Gerhold's with authorization to begin the work. It was agreed that the color of the steel should match the parsonage roof as closely as possible.

Communion Schedule: March 1st, 2026: John Bucher March 15th, 2026: Joanne Fischer

New Business:

Stewardship: A discussion was held concerning the need for additional stewardship and ideas on how to achieve this. Mark had previously sent out an email with information from the NALC on this subject. It was agreed that prior to engaging the NALC that we do our own research to see where the need is. Treasurer Strait will compile some information on this for review at the next council meeting.

Review of ALC Scholarship Application(s): Pastor Tom presented the council with the scholarship form that he intends to send to the seven (7) graduating seniors. The date(s) on this form will be updated by Pastor prior to sending them to the students.

Election of Council Positions for 2026:

A motion was made by Mark L. to nominate Al S. as President with a second by Danny Davis. **MC**

A motion was made by Jess Ruml to nominate the current Vice Present, Lindsey Vetter, for another term as VP with a second by Danny Davis. **MC**

Mark Larson agreed to another term as Secretary. No opposition.

Doug Strait agreed to another term as Treasurer. No opposition.

Good Friday Service:

Pastor Tom asked for permission to hold a community worship service at American Lutheran Church for Good Friday. Pastor will be making an invite to Hamlin Reformed Church as well as the Presbyterian Church. No opposition.

Next Meeting: Scheduled for March 15th, 2026, following Worship.

Adjournment: Motion by Jess, second by Joanne to adjourn. **MC**

Closing Prayer: The council ended the meeting with The Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted, Mark Larson, Secretary

**American Lutheran Church Financial Report
February 2026**

General Account

Balance on hand 2-1-2026		\$	32,484.09
Receipts			
Offerings	\$	8,844.60	
Thrivent	\$	406.00	\$ 9,250.60
Disbursements			
Thomas Christenson (Pastor Salary)	\$	4,905.50	
Thomas Christenson (Social Security)	\$	310.34	
Thomas Christenson (Housing Equity)	\$	200.00	
Thomas Christenson (Mileage - 202 Miles)	\$	146.45	
Matrix Trust Co (Retirement Contribution)	\$	500.55	
EBSO NALC (Health Insurance)	\$	2,575.00	
TRISTAR Benefit (Ancillary Benefits)	\$	598.71	
Janell Bemis (Secretary - 27 hrs)	\$	398.96	
Dawn Mickey (Custodian - 15 hrs)	\$	214.71	
Roxanne Bass (Organist - 2 Svcs)	\$	140.00	
Marsha Kurtenbach (Organist - 3 Svcs)	\$	210.00	
City of Castlewood (Ch: \$71.00, Pars: \$102.59)	\$	173.59	
ITC (Phone & Internet)	\$	129.63	
NorthWestern Energy (Ch: \$274.27, Pars: \$85.25)	\$	359.52	
Otter Tail Power (Ch: \$112.78, Pars: \$110.86)	\$	223.64	
North Star Mutual Insurance Company	\$	598.95	
NALC	\$	50.00	
Office Peeps (Office supplies & Copier)	\$	331.67	
Thomas Christenson (continuing education)	\$	345.76	
Hurley's Religious Goods (worship supplies)	\$	7.84	
Upper Room Ministries (Jan/Feb print)	\$	55.33	
Concordia (weekly inserts)	\$	111.48	\$ (12,587.63)
Balance on hand 2-28-2026		\$	29,147.06

*** Thrivent Choice Balance \$ 2,941.49

Building Account

Balance on hand 2-1-2026		\$	28,539.65
Receipts			
Offerings for Building Fund	\$	10.00	\$ 10.00
Disbursements			
	\$	-	\$ -
Balance on hand 2-28-2026		\$	28,549.65

Mission Account

Balance on hand 2-1-2026		\$	4,586.12
Receipts			
Offerings for Mission Fund	\$	470.00	
Children's Offering	\$	30.00	
Offerings for Blessing Center	\$	35.00	\$ 535.00
Disbursements			
Castlewood Blessing Center	\$	35.00	\$ (35.00)
Balance on hand 2-28-2026		\$	5,086.12

Memorial Account

Balance on hand 2-1-2026		\$	4,369.36
Receipts			
	\$	-	\$ -
Disbursements			
	\$	-	\$ -
Balance on hand 2-28-2026		\$	4,369.36

Account Summary

	Current Balance	Change February 2026	Change Year to Date
General Account	\$ 29,147.06	\$ (3,337.03)	\$ (8,432.10)
Building Account	\$ 28,549.65	\$ 10.00	\$ 15.00
Mission Account	\$ 5,086.12	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,156.00
Memorial Account	\$ 4,369.36	\$ -	\$ -



The Servants of our Lord

	<i>Organists</i>	<i>Ushers</i>	<i>Audio-Visual Technician</i>
April 2 Maundy Thursday	Roxanne Bass	Kendal & Alisha Nielsen family	
April 3 Good Friday	Marsha Kurtenbach	Lance & Calona Craig family	
April 5 Easter Sunday	Roxanne Bass	Tyler & Tess Jankord family	Chuck Juntti
April 12 Confirmation	Marsha Kurtenbach	Dustin & Danielle Foster	Chuck Juntti
April 19	Roxanne Bass	Darin & Traci Laue family	Doug Strait
April 26	Marsha Kurtenbach	Carmen & Haley Pewe family	Rod Fischer

Sign-up SHEET for

LECTORS

(Scriptures sheets available)

&

FELLOWSHIP SERVERS

in the narthex

Check out the **NEW BOX CARDS & NAPKINS** for sale in the narthex by American Lutheran Church Women

Our Faithfulness in Giving

	General	Building	Mission	*Children	*Blessing Ctr
February 22	\$1,815.00	\$5.00	\$136.00	\$11.00	
March 1	\$2,668.00		\$171.00	\$11.00	\$60.00
March 8	\$2,040.00		\$265.00	\$15.00	\$125.00
March 15	Church	Cancelled	Snow	Blizzard	Wind
March 22	\$1,297.00	\$5.00	\$197.00	\$2.00	50.00

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

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

Congratulations! In 2025, American Lutheran Church received \$532 through the Thrivent Choice® program — and that's worth celebrating! Thank you for being part of the Thrivent Choice program and for the work you do in your community.



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