

# Note From The Pastor



*“God wants us to pray and He wants to hear our prayers not because we are worthy, but because He is merciful.” ~Martin Luther*

One of my best friend’s texted a few weeks ago and it went like this: *“If you weren’t a pastor and, in another profession, do you think you would do well in carving out a time to hear from God?”* I told her probably not, I’m bad at it now. She said, *“when I try to listen to God I get so distracted and literally start thinking about everything else and then I lose focus. Do you start thinking about everything else when you’re trying to talk and listen to God?”* Often. Unless I’m in the sanctuary. Turns out she thinks of random “stupid” stuff as she calls it even if it’s nothing about what she feels should be thinking about or praying about. My suggestion, **“Keep praying & ask God’s Spirit to direct your prayers.”** I’m no expert in prayer. I don’t know how to pray most of the time, but I don’t feel I’m alone. Barbara Brown Taylor — professor, author, theologian, Episcopal priest and a woman TIME magazine once designated one of the world’s most influential people — seems to be challenged by prayer too. *“I’m a failure at prayer,”* she once confessed in her book, *“An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith.”* *“To say I love God but I do not pray much is like saying I love life but I do not breathe much. I have shelves full of prayer books and books on prayer. I have file drawers full of notes from courses I have taught and taken on prayer. I have meditation benches I have used twice, prayer mantras I have intoned for as long as a week, notebooks with column after column of the names of people in need of prayer (is writing them down enough?) I have a bowed psaltery—a biblical string instrument mentioned in the book of Psalms—that dates from the year I thought I might be able to sing prayers easier than I could say them. I have invested a small fortune in icons, candles, monastic incense, coals, and incense burners.”*

How’s your prayer life going? When do you pray? Is it in worship? Is it at home before bed? Is in the morning during devotions? Is it during the day as you go about your day? Is it immediately when another asks you to pray for so-and-so? **Are you praying?** In these next weeks as we continue on our Lenten Journey I invite you to consider prayer again. Start somewhere. None of us are experts. None of us are perfect. Jesus simply invites us, **“Come. Ask. Receive.”** I could use more of that: come, ask, and receive. **How about you?** Be encouraged. We are in this together, body of Christ. Ephesians 6:18 says, *“with all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.”* As Martin Luther put it so well: We do not come before God because we are worthy, we come because He is merciful. God is merciful and slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

We are gearing up for the busiest time of the church year! Lent continues, and we move into the Easter season. Our Wednesday evenings continue with 5:30pm dinner, 6pm worship, Ignite. This is a time to pray, reflect, and turn our hearts back to God. Our regular Wednesdays are as follows:

**March 6:** 5:30pm dinner, 6pm worship, Ignite

**March 13:** 5:30pm dinner, 6pm worship, Ignite

**March 20:** 5:30pm dinner, 6pm worship, Ignite

**March 24:** Palm Sunday 9am & 11am services

**March 27:** No worship/Ignite due to Spring Break & Holy Week

**March 28th:** Maundy Thursday with Holy Communion 6p.m.

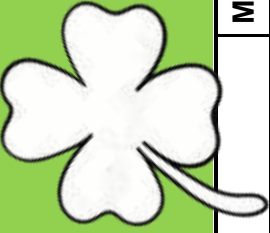
**March 29th:** Good Friday Tenebrae 6p.m.

**March 31st:** Easter with Holy Communion 9am & 11am

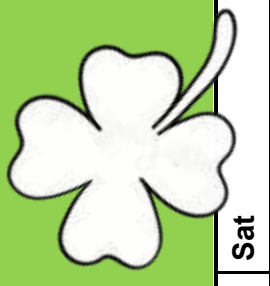
From the staff of St. Olaf Lutheran Church to your family we wish you a blessed Lenten Journey as we make our way to the table, to the Cross, and to the empty tomb on Easter morning!

Every blessing,

Pastor Emily



# March 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
25	26	27	28	29	1 Office Closed	2
3 9am Traditional Worship 10am Fellowship Hour 11am Contemporary Worship	4 6-7pm AA Meeting Boy Scouts 6:30-8:30pm	5 OLES 9am Boy Scouts 6:00-8:30pm	6 Better Choices 8am  IGNITE 5:15-7pm Worship 6pm HS Youth 7-8pm	7 Lifeworks 1pm	8 Office Closed	9
10 9am Traditional Worship 10am Fellowship Hour 11am Contemporary Worship	11 Book club @ 1:30pm  6-7pm AA Meeting Boy Scouts 6:30-8:30pm	12 Committees 6pm Council 7pm Boy Scouts 6:00-8:30pm	13 Better Choices 8am  IGNITE 5:15-7pm Worship 6pm HS Youth 7-8pm	14 Lifeworks 1pm	15 Office Closed	16
17 9am Traditional Worship 10am Fellowship Hour 11am Contemporary Worship	18 6-7pm AA Meeting Boy Scouts 6:30-8:30pm	19 OLES 9am Boy Scouts 6:00-8:30pm	20 Better Choices 8am  IGNITE 5:15-7pm Worship 6pm HS Youth 7-8pm	21 Lifeworks 1pm	22 Office Closed	23
24 9am Traditional Worship 10am Easter Egg Hunt/ Fellowship Hour 11am Contemporary Worship	25 6-7pm AA Meeting Boy Scouts 6:30-8:30pm	26 OWLS 1:30pm Boy Scouts 6:00-8:30pm	27 Better Choices 8am  No Ignite/HS Youth	28 Lifeworks 1pm Peace Circle 1:30pm Maundy Thursday 6pm	29 Office Closed Tenebrae Service 6pm	30
31 Easter Sunday 9am Traditional Worship 10am Fellowship Hour 11am Contemporary Worship	1	2	3	4	5	6



# March Birthdays

Dean Getting	3/1
LuAnne Pavel	3/1
Ryan Szalat	3/3
Connor Carver	3/3
Laurel Puls	3/4
Foster Krug	3/4
Carrie Jo Pearson	3/4
Daniel Wiseman	3/7
Carolyn Brandt	3/8
Kirby Smith	3/8
Joey Brown	3/8
Adyson Bork	3/8
Douglas Egli	3/9
Bonnie Miller	3/9
Sharon Maschino	3/10
Andrew Kendall	3/10
Brody Reimers	3/10
Tanner Kampen	3/10
Elizabeth Plautz	3/11
Larry Bickford	3/11
Jaxson Dencklau	3/11
Brandie Christensen	3/12
Anthony Larson	3/12
Pam Hollman	3/12
Marissa Dutcher	3/13
Dennis Plautz	3/15
Christian Smith	3/16
Darlene Hansen	3/17
Devin Ulstad	3/17
Jennie Haden	3/18

Ashlie Smith	3/18
Hank O'Brion	3/18
Betty Bowman	3/19
Willie Williams Jr	3/19
Janelle Carstensen	3/20
Jerome Burmeister	3/22
Amy DeLanoit	3/22
Jianna Alvarez	3/23
Shealler Springer	3/24
Allie Berg	3/24
Darlene Winninger	3/24
Keely Draper	3/24
Jason Lumsden	3/25
Brady Morud	3/25
Melvin Schroeder	3/25
Kris Kalvig	3/26
Allison Zuspahn	3/26
Ayden Johanson	3/26
Bev Davis	3/26
Kade Hovey	3/27
Jo Schroeder	3/27
Dalton Urelius	3/28
Erick Bygness	3/28
John Nanninga	3/29
Khloe Smith	3/29
Harold Wingerson	3/30
Brianna Ausborn	3/30
Joan Portz	3/31
Drew Callon	3/31
McKenna Kvale	3/31



## BOOK CLUB



The St. Olaf Book Club will meet on Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 in the Gather Room. Our book for the month is Drowning by TJ Newman. This is a thriller about an aircraft that crashes to the bottom of the Pacific Ocean and the efforts to save the passengers. Critics say it reads like Apollo 13 underwater. Books are available at the church and everyone is welcome to attend.

## OLES

OLES meetings are on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 9 a.m. Join them March 6 and 20 for coffee and fellowship. Men of all ages welcome. Please feel free to join them, they only meet twice a month.



## SEW SISTERS



**We need your help and talents cutting and sewing.**

If you are interested, please call Nancy Hamilton.

## ALTAR GUILD

**WHO:** Willing servants of the Lord. Some of you may be receiving a phone call!

**WHAT:** Set up/clean up communion, set up for baptisms, and change altar cloths as a member of Altar Guild.

**WHEN:** Serve on a team with one or two other workers one or two months a year. Prepare for all Sunday communion services during your service month, set up for baptisms as needed during your month, and change altar cloths if the church season changes during your month.

**TRAINING PROVIDED**

**BENEFITS:** Serving God and St. Olaf.

For more information contact Claudia Harms or Mary Kuhlman

**HELP  
WANTED**

## PEACE CIRCLE

The next meeting will be March 28 at 1:30pm in the Fellowship Hall. Anyone is welcome to join.

Jane Z is doing refreshments and Eileen C is doing bible study.

**BIBLE  
STUDY**



## Easter Egg Hunt

We need (individually wrapped) candy for the Easter egg hunt. If you're able to help, please put your donation on the white table in the Narthex by March 13. Thank you!



## OWLS

The OWLS will be getting together for a coffee klatch on March 26 at 1:30pm in the Fellowship Hall.



## MILITARY VETERANS WALL

We are going to update our veterans wall for those who served Post WWII. If you know a member who has served, please let us know their name, where they served and the years they served and we will have a plaque made for them.

You can email us the information at [office@stolaffd.com](mailto:office@stolaffd.com)



## LOOKING AHEAD

There is a sign up for Easter flowers on the bulletin table. Daffodils/Tulips are \$18 and Hydrangeas are \$32.

*Deadline for signup is Thursday, March 7.*



# First Communion

Congratulations to Daniel Mericle, Ember Fair, Joseph Alvarez Jr, Jianna Alvarez, Caden Carr, Izzy Flores, TayLeigh Smith, and Marissa Dutcher on their First Communion celebrated on February 18.



## SERVICE PROJECT

Our confirmation classes went to Friendship Haven with Pastor Jim to bring Valentine gifts to our members who live there.



## Baptism



**Tayleigh Smith**



**Our new baptism banner**



## Church Council

**Church of Damascus Road**—as you likely saw on social media platforms, CoDR was interested in purchasing the blue house across the street from our church. Our council met with Pastor Kelli Glasgo on January 9<sup>th</sup> and through much conversation our leaders voted to NOT support that endeavor. We felt with the start of our new daycare center it was best to not have this housing project in such proximity to our property. We will, however, continue to support the CoDR ministries by having office space here at St. Olaf.

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### 2024 Council Members

Carey Bligard, Brady Pearson, Pam Bygness, Amanda Warren, Doug Seltz, Chris Dutcher, Zac Felch, Juli Springer, Kim Peimann, Mason Liska, Janet Meyne, Jenni Szalat, Jessica Mericle, Bev Davis, Monica McCullough, Pastor Jim McColley and Pastor Emily Sauer-Alvarez

### ST. OLAF PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Here's a great 2024 opportunity to serve St Olaf! Would you like to learn a new skill or refresh your current one? Young or older members of the congregation are welcome to join the St Olaf Prayer Shawl – we will help you to create beautiful shawls to bless others who are going through a difficult time. Don't have much extra time? You are also needed to help create smaller baptismal shawls.

There is always someone to help you get started to knit or crochet. This is the time. We need you! All supplies are provided.

Please reach out to the office (515-576-2103) if you or someone you know can help and we will get you in contact with Jane Wallestad.

# ST. OLAF FOUNDATION

Greetings from the St. Olaf Foundation

Two years ago the foundation helped the church purchase video equipment that has allowed St. Olaf to stream our church services so individuals unable to attend the service in person can watch the service live online. The services continue to be streamed online and individuals that are unable to make it to church or individuals living out of state continue to log in weekly to worship.

Recently, the foundation, again, helped the church purchase additional sound equipment to support service recordings and distribution of services via online.

Helping the church stay up on technology so St. Olaf is able to provide a quality sound worship experience either in the sanctuary or online is a satisfying feeling.

Again, our thanks to the sound guys in the back who give of their time and talents each week! Thanks Marc, Mark and Bob! We appreciate you!

God's Blessings~

Jill Matthes



JOIN "BY THE BOOK"  
EVERY MONDAY FROM 6-7PM  
AT ST OLAF LUTHERAN CHURCH  
IN THE FIRESIDE ROOM DOWNSTAIRS

## LOOKING AHEAD

April

April 1 - Office Closed

April 7 - ONE SERVICE - 10am  
(tentative-keep eye on announcements)

May

May 20 - Memorial Day - Office Closed

## March is National Professional Social Work Month

March is National Professional Social Work Month, a time to recognize social workers and thank them for all they do. At Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI), we are grateful for the many social workers who have dedicated their lives to serving our communities across the state!

At LSI, we believe every lowan deserves the independence they need to thrive. LSI's Host Homes is an innovative way LSI is serving adults with disabilities. Through this program, an individual moves from Supported Community Living into a private family home with a carefully selected mentor. This program is built entirely around an individual's goals and interests, and LSI's extensive matching process ensures the mentor and mentee are a great fit.

Take a moment to read the following story from a Host Homes mentee:

"My journey with LSI's Host Homes started in early 2023. I've known my mentor for a few years while he provided hourly services to me. We learned about Host Homes and thought it would be a good fit for us. I moved into my mentor's home where he helps me maintain a daily routine with schoolwork, household tasks, daily living skills, improving independence, and more.

I attend a college nearby and go to classes a few days a week. I am able to navigate the local bus system to access my community to attend classes and visit friends. My mentor is always available to transport me into the community as needed.

This summer, I went on a trip across the country with one of my classes. While on this trip, I was able to maintain my independence with limited support, but I knew my mentor would be available by phone to assist me with my coping skills and problem solving. This trip was a big success for me knowing I had support only a phone call away.

I like LSI's Host Homes Program because my mentor supports me in the way I want to be supported, assists me with some daily tasks I struggle with, and understands me."

If you are interested in becoming a Host Homes mentor and helping a fellow lowan achieve independence, please visit [LSIowa.org/HostHomes](http://LSIowa.org/HostHomes) for more information.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at [LSIowa.org](http://LSIowa.org) and [Facebook.com/LSI.Iowa](https://www.facebook.com/LSI.Iowa).



# PASTORAL ACTS & STATISTICS

## MONTHLY TREASURER'S REPORT

Operating Balance 12/31/2023..... 113,519.24

### Receipts:

Offerings..... \$134,686.41  
Misc. Receipts ..... 783.38  
Total Receipts for January .....135,469.79

### Disbursements:

Benevolence ..... 0.00  
Pastoral Ministry ..... 26,755.42  
Administration..... 15,941.44  
Worship & Music ..... 3,457.86  
Christian Education..... 480.14  
Our Church Home ..... 6,239.36  
Congregational Life .....1,012.42  
Youth Ministry- ..... 0.00  
Social Ministry ..... 642.44  
Stewardship .....-16.16  
Previous Year Adjustments..... 0.00  
Daycare..... 0.00  
Building Improvements..... 36.31  
Architect ..... 0.00  
Walsh & Assoc ..... 0.00  
Misc Campaign Expenses ..... 57.78  
Loan Repay – Foundation ..... 0.00

Total disbursements for January.....54,607.01

**Operating Balance 1/31/2024 .....194,382.02**

# **ST. OLAF LUTHERAN CHURCH— COUNCIL MEMBERS**

**Carey Bligard - President**

**Brady Pearson - Vice President**

**Pamela Bygness - Treasurer**

**Amanda Warren - Secretary**

**Doug Seltz - Property**

**Chris Dutcher – Youth**

**Zac Felch - Stewardship**

**Juli Springer – Long Range Planning**

**Kim Peimann – Social Concerns**

**Mason Liska – Youth Rep**

**Janet Meyne – Music & Worship**

**Jenni Szalat – Life & Growth**

**Jessica Mericle - Education**

**Bev Davis**

**Monica McCullough**

**Jim McColley**

**Emily Sauer-Alvarez**

**Because of scammers contacting our council members this information will remain private.**

**Please contact the office if you need contacted by a council member and they will connect you with them.**

## WORSHIP

### ATTENDANCE

### Service Times

Day	Date	9:00	11:00	6:00	WEATHER	Totals
Sunday	1/28	52	34	-	Very Foggy	86
Wednesday	1/31	-	-	68		
Sunday	2/4	76	46	-	-	122
Wednesday	2/7	-	-	83	-	83
Sunday	2/11	78	38	-	Sunny	116
Wednesday	2/14	-	-	120	-	120
Sunday	2/18	66	76	-	Sunny/Cold	142
Wednesday	2/21	-	-	85	-	85
Sunday	2/25	67	-	-	Sunny 41	67

*Welcome to the Lord's Family*

*TayLeigh Smith*

*2/7/2024*

*Lord Welcome into Your Kingdom*

*Duran Barlow*

*9/21/1982 - 1/28/2024*



#### CHURCH STATISTICS

Weddings: 0

Baptisms: 1

Funerals: 1