

St Olaf Lutheran Church
239 North 11th Street
Fort Dodge, IA 50501

Nonprofit Org
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Fort Dodge, IA

To:

The Visitor Newsletter

March 2025



**Mission Statement: We at Saint Olaf Lutheran Church exist to
Worship, Proclaim, Serve God and Teach His Word.**

*Deadline for the articles for the visitor
newsletter is the 15th of every month.*

Worship Schedule

Sundays

9 am Traditional
10 am Fellowship
11 am Contemporary

Wednesdays

6pm

Sunday services live streamed
on our Facebook page:
St. Olaf Lutheran Church, ELCA
and

www.stolaffd.com
10:30 am 1400 KVFD AM

Office Hours

Mon - Thurs
8:00 - 4:00 PM
Fridays - Closed

Note From The Pastor



In Psalm 141:2 we read, *“Let my prayer be counted as incense before you and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice.”* These words may be familiar. Perhaps you’ve heard them read in worship or sung them in various hymnody. They are sung every time we participate in Holden Evening Prayer. King David wrote these words while he was a fugitive from King Saul. Since he was **“on the run”** he couldn’t go publicly to the tabernacle and share in the act of worship. He was worshipping in **secret**. He wasn’t **free**. Like much Scripture, these words have a deeper meaning. The smoke and smell of incense was a representation of his prayers to God. His posture of prayer—lifting his hands—was a gift to God even as the evening sacrifice was a gift to God. Prayers from us to God are like incense. That’s powerful image. Prayers rise to heaven just as smoke of incense rises upward. Prayer pleases God even as incense has a pleasing smell. Prayer needs some fire to be effective. Incense is activated with fire.

When our hands are **lifted to praise God**, we can’t point fingers. We can’t hurt others. We can’t self-destruct. When our hands are **lifted to praise God**, we can’t get sucked down into the mire. We can’t use our old ways or addictions to self-soothe our broken hearts. When our hands are **lifted to praise God**, we can see that everything is between you and God. Worship gives you an opportunity to explore this truth more fully. It begins with our arms outstretched to our Father and Heaven with the prayer—*let my prayer be lifted. Hear me, O God. Create in me a clean heart, O God. Let my prayers be enough, Lord.* Lent gives us a set amount of time of 40 days and nights to do some housekeeping on our hearts. It gives us an intentional time to have our hands **lifted to praise God**. We have a lot of things that put us in the same place as King David. We feel like fugitives. Not from King Saul, of course. But from God. We’re on the run. For some of us—that happens repeatedly. We don’t always feel free. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.

My invitation to you this Lent is this: **lift up your hands**. Find intentional ways to do that. Look inside. Your prayers matter. Your spiritual health matters. Lift up your hands to God in worship at St. Olaf. I invite you to our Wednesday Evening Lenten Services at 7pm. This begins on March 5th with Ash Wednesday. The subsequent Wednesdays to follow will have reflections on Martin Luther’s Small Catechism. We will sing together *“Let my prayer be counted as incense before you and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice.”* We will do this during Holden Evening Prayer. (ATTACH picture of Holden Evening Prayer booklet) The Holden Evening Prayer worship service was written in 1985-1986. Marty Haugen was the musician-in-residence at Holden Village, a Lutheran retreat center in Washington State. This lovely setting of vespers follows the traditional form while using contemporary and inclusive language. Contents include "Service of Light," Evening Hymn-"Joyous Light of Heav'nly Glory," "Evening Thanksgiving," "The Annunciation," "The Magnificat," "Litany and Prayers," and "Final Blessing. It gives us an intentional place and space to **lift up our hands to God as an evening sacrifice**. Light some incense. Pray together. Reflect. Take a deep breath and know that God is greater than anything we face on this side of Heaven.

Those Holden Evening Prayer 7pm worship are as follows:

March 12: 10 Commandments

March 19th: Apostles Creed

March 26: Lord's Prayer

April 2: Holy Baptism

April 9th: Holy Communion

Peace as we begin our 40 days,

Pastor Emily

Blessing the Dust – A Blessing for Ash Wednesday (by Jan Richardson)

All those days
you felt like dust,
like dirt,
as if all you had to do
was turn your face
toward the wind
and be scattered
to the four corners

or swept away
by the smallest breath
as insubstantial –

did you not know
what the Holy One
can do with dust?

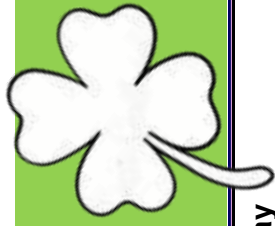
This is the day
we freely say
we are scorched.

This is the hour
we are marked
by what has made it
through the burning.

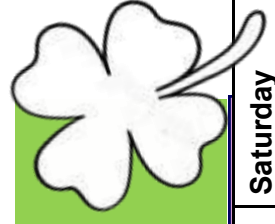
This is the moment
we ask for the blessing
that lives within
the ancient ashes,
that makes its home
inside the soil of
this sacred earth.

So let us be marked
not for sorrow.
And let us be marked
not for shame.
Let us be marked
not for false humility
or for thinking
we are less
than we are

but for claiming
what God can do
within the dust,
within the dirt,
within the stuff
of which the world
is made
and the stars that blaze
in our bones
and the galaxies that spiral
inside the smudge
we bear.



March 2025



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Office Hours Mon-Thurs 8a-4p						1
2 First Communion 9 & 11 9am Traditional Worship 10am Fellowship Hour/First Communion Cake Celebration 11am Contemporary Worship	3 Adult Bible Study 9am 6-7pm AA Meeting Boy Scouts 6:30-8:30pm	4 OLES 9am Adult Bible Study 6-7pm Boy Scouts 6:00-8:30pm	5 Better Choices 8am Ignite 5:15pm-7pm Ash Wed 7pm service HS Youth 7:15-9pm @ First United	6 Lifeworks 1pm	7 Office Closed	8
9 9am Traditional Worship 10am Fellowship Hour 10 am Adult Sunday School 11am Contemporary Worship	10 Adult Bible Study 9am Book Club 1:30pm 6-7pm AA Meeting Boy Scouts 6:30-8:30pm	11 Committees 6pm Council 6:30pm Boy Scouts 6:00-8:30pm	12 Better Choices 8am Prayer Shawl 1pm No Ignite/HS Youth Holden Evening Prayer 7pm	13 Lifeworks 1pm	14 Office Closed	15
16 9am Traditional Worship 10am Fellowship Hour 10 am Adult Sunday School 11am Contemporary Worship	17 Adult Bible Study 9am 6-7pm AA Meeting Boy Scouts 6:30-8:30pm	18 OLES 9am Beacon Meal - Property Adult Bible Study 6-7pm Boy Scouts 6:00-8:30pm	19 Better Choices 8am Ignite 5:15pm-7pm Holden Evening Prayer 7pm HS Youth 7:15-9pm @ First United	20 Lifeworks 1pm	21 Office Closed	22
23 9am Traditional Worship 10am Fellowship Hour 10 am Adult Sunday School 11am Contemporary Worship/ Kids Singing 6-8 Grade Youth Group 6:30pm-8pm	24 Adult Bible Study 9am 6-7pm AA Meeting Boy Scouts 5-9pm	25 OWLS Party 1:30pm Boy Scouts 6:00-8:30pm	26 Better Choices 8am Ignite 5:15pm-7pm Holden Evening Prayer 7pm HS Youth 7:15-9pm @ St Olaf	27 Lifeworks 1pm Peace Circle 1:30pm	28 Office Closed	

LOOKING AHEAD

April

10th - Blood Drive @ St Olaf

17th - Maundy Thursday

18th - Tenebrae

20th - Easter Sunday

May

6th - Last bible study until Fall

11th - St Olaf Grad Recognition, Women's Blessing, Kids Singing

14th - Last Ignite

21st - Baccalaureate @ St Olaf



BEACON MEAL

April 15 - Music & Worship/ Janet Meyne

Upcoming

May 20 - OWLS/ Linda Junkman, Viv Nore

June 17 - St Olaf

July 15 - Life and Growth - Jenni Szalat



WINTER WEATHER REMINDER

Just a reminder that the office follows the school for winter weather. If the schools start late/dismiss early/close due to inclement weather the office will too. We will send out an email and text alert letting you know.



If the office is closed, *we ask that there are no gatherings* such as Ignite, Oles, bookclub, etc.

We want you to stay safe!

The graphic features a green background with white daisies and butterflies. The word "Spring" is written in a large, purple, cursive font. Below it, "INTO THE" is in small grey letters, and "DONOR CHAIR" is in large, bold, blue letters. Below that, "ST. OLAF LUTHERAN CHURCH" is in blue, and "BLOOD DRIVE" is in large, bold, red letters. The LifeServe Blood Center logo is in the top right corner.

Fellowship Hall
Thursday, April 10th
2:00pm - 6:00pm
239 N 11th Street



The footer features the LifeServe Blood Center logo on the left, which consists of a stylized red and blue 'S' shape. To the right of the logo, the text "APPOINTMENTS ARE ENCOURAGED" is in blue and red. Below that, contact information is provided: "Text: LIFESERVE to 999-777 | Call: 800.287.4903 | Visit: lifeservebloodcenter.org". At the bottom right, the slogan "YOUR BLOOD. YOUR HOSPITAL. YOUR NEIGHBORS." is written in blue and red. The background has a blue and white wavy pattern.



March Birthdays

Dean Getting	3/1
LuAnne Pavel	3/1
Lincoln Castro	3/1
Wilder Williams	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
Joey Brown	3/8
Adyson Bork	3/8
Douglas Egli	3/9
Bonnie Miller	3/9
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
Brynlee O'Brion	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
Pat Grove	3/23
Shealler Springer	3/24
Allie Berg	3/24
Darlene Winingger	3/24
Keely Draper	3/24
Jason Lumsden	3/25
Brady Morud	3/25
Melvin Schroeder	3/25
Trinity Scott	3/25
Kris Kalvig	3/26
Allison Zuspenn	3/26
Ayden Johanson	3/26
Bev Davis	3/26
Kade Hovey	3/27
Jo Schroeder	3/27
Dalton Urelus	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

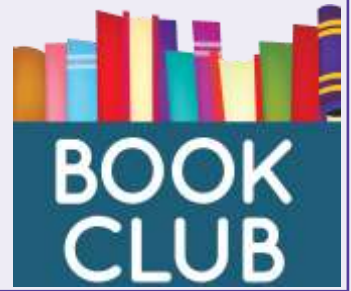


BOOK CLUB

The St. Olaf Book Club will meet on Monday, March 10th at 1:30 in the Gather Room. Our book for this month is *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon. Set in Maine in 1789, the main character is a midwife who sets out to solve a murder mystery. This was an Oprah Book Club pick and an NPR Book of the Year.

Books are available at the church.

Everyone is welcome to come to book club.



OLES

OLES Meetings are on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 9am. Join them March 4 and 18 for coffee and fellowship. Please feel free to join them, they only meet twice a month.



LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!

SEW SISTERS



We need your help and talents cutting and sewing.

They are in the basement sewing on most Wednesdays from 2:00pm to 4:00pm if you would like to join us.

You may want to call the office to make sure we are there before you come.

OFFICE HOUR CHANGE

The office is open
Monday - Thursday 8am-4pm.



Peace Circle

Peace circle will meet on March 27 at 1:30pm in Room 100. Jane W will lead and Linda J is bringing treats.

Bible Study

Join Emma on Mondays at 10am or Tuesdays on March 4th and 18th from 6-7pm. The focus is on the book of Matthew.

IGNITE/YOUTH GROUPS

Ignite Schedule
Wednesday Night
Dinner at 5:15pm
Worship at 6pm
Classes at 6:20pm

HS Youth Group - Wednesdays
7:15-9pm
Partnering with First United!

6-8th Grade Youth Group
Once a Month - March 30
Sunday 6:30-8pm

HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER

We will be having a weekly Wednesday evening service at 7pm throughout Lent.

PRAYER SHAWL

This is a good time to try a new project if you enjoy knitting or would like to learn how to crochet Prayer Shawls. We have patterns and yarn available and someone will help you get started. The Prayer Shawls and Baptismal Shawls are a unique way to share Gods love. Anyone (whether a member of St Olaf or not) who is in need of prayer, hope, and encouragement may receive a beautiful Prayer Shawl.

If you know of someone who would be blessed by a soft, lovely shawl please call the church office or ask Vera Hartman or Jane Wallestad. We need your help to share a shawl. Thank you to all who contribute and help in any way with the St Olaf Prayer Shawl Ministry.



EASTER DONATIONS



We are in need of medium/large sized Easter eggs and individually wrapped candy for our annual Easter Egg Hunt. **If you can turn in donations by Sunday, March 23, that would be appreciated!** Please put your donations in the box outside of the office. Thank you!



OWLS

Come see the presentation of the Discovery Center that shares the beauty of the outdoors that Matt himself has always enthusiastically championed the concept and the environment and education facility that is now open. There will be time for questions.

Come and enjoy a talk about FD nature, refreshments, and fellowship.

March 25th at 1:30pm in the Fellowship Hall.

Special Speaker: Matt Cosgrove with River's Edge Discovery Center



FD CHORAL SOCIETY

The Fort Dodge Choral Society presents Heartfelt Harmonies featuring Jive for Five! Join us for an afternoon of jazz, standards, musical theater, and pop songs! Sunday, March 2nd at 3pm at First United Methodist Church. \$12 at the door, students are free.

Lyric Granahan Baptism



Charlotte Schorzmann



PANCAKE BREAKFAST FUNDRAISER



THANK YOU!!

Thank you to everyone who helped cook, serve, and everyone who joined us for our breakfast fundraiser for our Youth! We were able to raise \$1274 for them.

“I love it when a whole classroom of middle schoolers run down the auditorium hallway for an LSI class shouting ‘April!’ with excitement, ready to learn about healthy relationship skills and self-esteem,” said April Howe, a Program Supervisor for LSI’s Clinical Services team.

Our LSI Clinical Services team provides various local community programs in schools across Iowa. Whether it’s mental health therapy or programs providing teen pregnancy education, they all share the goal of wrapping care around adolescents at a local level.

Specifically, April and her team conduct two community programs in nine northwest Iowa counties: Community Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (CAPP) and Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP).

CAPP supports and educates Iowa youth by providing sexual health and pregnancy prevention classes for healthy and successful relationships. PREP helps youth build social, emotional, and life skills to develop a positive sense of self and to connect with peers in their community. PREP utilizes the Teen Outreach Program and Wise Guys evidence-based curriculum.

“Thank you for teaching our class and taking time out of your day to come to our school. I learned a lot about healthy relationships and how to handle my anger and other emotions. You opened my eyes to my family’s habits and what I want to take with me when I have a family of my own.”

– High school student to LSI staff member

“The letters that high school students write to our staff about what they learned in class and how they will use the knowledge in their everyday life shows the programs’ tremendous impact,” said April. “We meet the youth where they are at, but also encourage healthy decision-making along the way, which plays a huge role in making prevention education successful.”

Furthermore, April’s team encourages conversation and participation by providing incentives in the classroom, such as packaged snacks and other LSI materials. “When it comes to engagement in the classroom, I always say, ‘When their stomachs are full, their brains are full,’” shared April with a smile. “Some students would skip school all day, but they show up to the last class of the day, taught by LSI. That, right there, is a win for my team.”

April’s team has seen significant success in response to their CAPP and PREP community programs. Based on a post-program evaluation, 96% of students in the CAPP program reported that they learned “some” or “a lot” that they didn’t already know about sexual health topics, and 53% agreed that they are now more likely to start conversations about these topics with others.

“Pregnancy rates have dropped over the last four years in many of our counties served, proving our services are making a difference in our communities,” said April. “Reaching the youth on their level and prioritizing prevention makes our program successful.”

For more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI’s Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.

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 and facebook.com/LSI.iowa.



ST. OLAF FOUNDATION

I am currently a member of the St. Olaf Foundation and have been since 2020. Over the years we have helped many organizations. I feel fortunate to be able to be a part of a group that helps others reach their goals. Most recently, the foundation just approved:

*A raised bed garden for the Kingdom Kids of St. Olaf so that the children can be apart of raising fruits and vegetables for the daycare and St. Olaf members.

*New Christmas trees for the sanctuary

*Sending 10 youth to the Urban Plunge Mission Trip

*Lutheran World Relief Emergency Request

*St. Olaf Sound for upgrades and new equipment for recording/streaming services.

If you or your organization has a project that would like to request Foundation funds to assist with, please fill out a Foundation application. We meet in January, April, July and October.

God's Blessings~

Jill Matthes



PASTORAL CARE OR PRAYERS

If you or someone you know wants pastoral care or prayers, please call the office at 515-576-2103. You can choose 0 to reach the office directly during business hours. You are also welcome to send an email to office@stolaffd.com



ONLINE GIVING



The Lord's Cupboard

Just wanted to send everyone an update on the Lord's Cupboard. We are currently serving around 1200 people a month, that is up from an average of 930 a month last year. We are truly blessed and have no major needs at this time. We can always use personal hygiene, household cleaning and paper products (toilet paper, paper towels). I do want to let everyone who drops off donations know that our office manager Lindsay has taken a new job. FUMC is currently looking for a replacement so someone is not always here.

Best time to drop off would be Monday 8-12pm
Tuesday 8-2:00pm
Thursday 8-12:00pm
Someone from the Lord's Cupboard will be here and can help.

You can always call and arrange a time with us if those times don't work. Shari and I would be glad to help
515-227-3337.



Monthly Treasurer's Report

January

Operating Balance 12/31/2024.....189,805.20

Receipts:

Offerings.....20,737.02
Campaign Gifts.....20,567.00
Misc. Receipts.....22,243.86
Total Receipts for January.....63,547.88

Disbursements:

Benevolence.....0.00
Pastoral Ministry.....30,153.09
Administration.....1,207.74
Worship & Music.....848.09
Christian Education.....523.90
Our Church Home.....16,288.40
Congregational Life.....1,304.63
Youth Ministry.....25.66
Social Ministry.....0.00
Stewardship.....440.65
Daycare.....0.00
Building Improvements.....72,499.53
Misc. Campaign Expense.....57.78
Total Disbursements for January.....123,349.47

Operating Balance 1/31/2024.....130,003.61

PASTORAL ACTS & STATISTICS

WORSHIP

ATTENDANCE

Service Times

Day	Date	9am	11am	6pm	WEATHER	Totals
Wednesday	1/29	-	-	65	-	65
Sunday	2/2	68	27	-	37 and Fog	95
Wednesday	2/5	-	-	60	-	60
Sunday	2/9	89	23	-	Cloudy	112
Sunday	2/16	46	43	-	Very Cold	89
Wednesday	2/18	-	-	85	-	85
Sunday	2/23	66	66	-	Sunny	132

Welcome to the Lord's Family

Charlotte Schorzmann
2/9/2025

Lyric Granahan
2/23/2025

Lord Welcome into Your Kingdom

Johnna Friesth
December 25, 1930 -
January 1, 2025

Robert O'Connor
February 23, 1941 -
February 6, 2025



CHURCH STATISTICS

Weddings: 0
Baptisms: 2
Funerals: 2

ST. OLAF LUTHERAN CHURCH— COUNCIL MEMBERS

Carey Bligard - President
Richard “Butch” Forbes - VP
Pamela Bygness - Treasurer
Amanda Warren - Secretary
Doug Seltz - Property
Chris Dutcher – Youth
Vera Hartman - 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
Monica McCullough
Linda Ulstad
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.



KINGDOM KIDS - BOARD MEMBERS

Kathy Dencklau
Sheri Morud
Doug Seltz
Sue Seltz
Emma Askildson

Carey Bligard
Keely Draper
Dawn Farr
Kim Peimann



St. Olaf Staff

Pastor Emily Sauer-Alvarez (515) 230-2078
Pastor Jim McColley (515) 571-4473
Jade Bedel, *Office Manager* 576-2103
Sheri Morud, *Financial Mgr/Asst Daycare Director*
Jason Swedlund, *Organist & Choir Director*
Matt Drees, *Contemp. Worship Coordinator*
Carey Bligard, *Council President*
Emma Askildson, *Youth & Family Director*
Anna Miller, *Bell Choir/Wedding*
Kathy Dencklau, *Daycare Director*

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daycare@stolaffd.com

A special thanks to our St. Olaf Visitor Newsletter Volunteers:

*Melba Shelby
Lucy Larson
Monica McCullough*

*Linda Cartee
Colleen Lynch*

*Eileen Carroll
Rae Nanninga
Vera Hartman*

To the Visitor readers:

***Please let us know if your address or phone number has changed
at 515-576-2103 or office@stolaffd.com***