

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 2<sup>☘</sup>26



**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](http://www.stolaffd.com)  
10:30 am 1400 KVFD AM

### Office Hours

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

# Note From The Pastor



March 2026 Newsletter

The other day I was considering the usual question that looms around Ash Wednesday—**what will I “give up” this Lent?** I usually choose to give up sugar or carbs. My kids said I should try something different this year, but I don’t know that they fully understand the depth of my struggle to put down ice cream, sour patch kids, and Cheetos. Those 40 days can be brutal! That same day I came across these words from Pope Leo XIV. In his Lenten message this year he shared this: *“I would like to invite you to a very practical and frequently unappreciated form of abstinence: that of refraining from words that offend and hurt our neighbor. Let us begin by disarming our language, avoiding harsh words and rash judgement, refraining from slander and speaking ill of those who are not present and cannot defend themselves. Instead, let us strive to measure our words and cultivate kindness and respect in our families, among our friends, at work, on social media, in political debates, in the media and in Christian communities. In this way, words of hatred will give way to words of hope and peace.”*

Consider this “refrain from harsh words & judgement” as something we can all can “give up” this Lent. Often our world does not reflect God’s love, but we can as His followers. Here’s some food for thought:

Words can bring life or death (Proverbs 18:21).

Speak truthfully and avoid deceit (Ephesians 4:25).

Praise and worship should flow from your lips (Psalm 34:1).

Use your words to encourage and uplift others (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Pray and confess with your lips for spiritual strength (Romans 10:9).

Be mindful of your speech, as it reflects your heart (Matthew 12:34).

**What will you “give up” this Lent?** One thing that we can all consider is the words from our lips are an indicator of what’s going on in our hearts. What if we paused before we spoke? Are the words we are about to speak edifying to God? Am I loving my neighbor or judging them? Am I going to speak life over them? Or words that harm? Think before we speak. Withhold harshness. Respond in love. We can only do this with God’s help. Will our lives change if we do this one simple step? Perhaps. Only God knows!

Let’s give it a try.

Blessings,

Pastor Emily

This Lenten season you are invited to join in a powerful, 6-session study: **Finding I AM: How Jesus Fully Satisfies the Cry of Your Heart.** Filmed on location in Israel, Lysa TerKeurst walks us through the seven “I AM”; statements in the Gospel of John, showing us that Jesus cares about the struggles of our hearts and wants to see us through them. This study is a lifeline to help us stop living like slaves to our circumstances and start embracing the life-giving freedom God wants for us. Whether you are in a season of abundance or a season of famine, this study will help you lean in and see what Jesus wants to say to you.

- Study Starts: March 1 at 10am Room 100
- Books: Available in the office

**Adult Sunday School Schedule:**

March 1—I am intro

March 8—I am bread

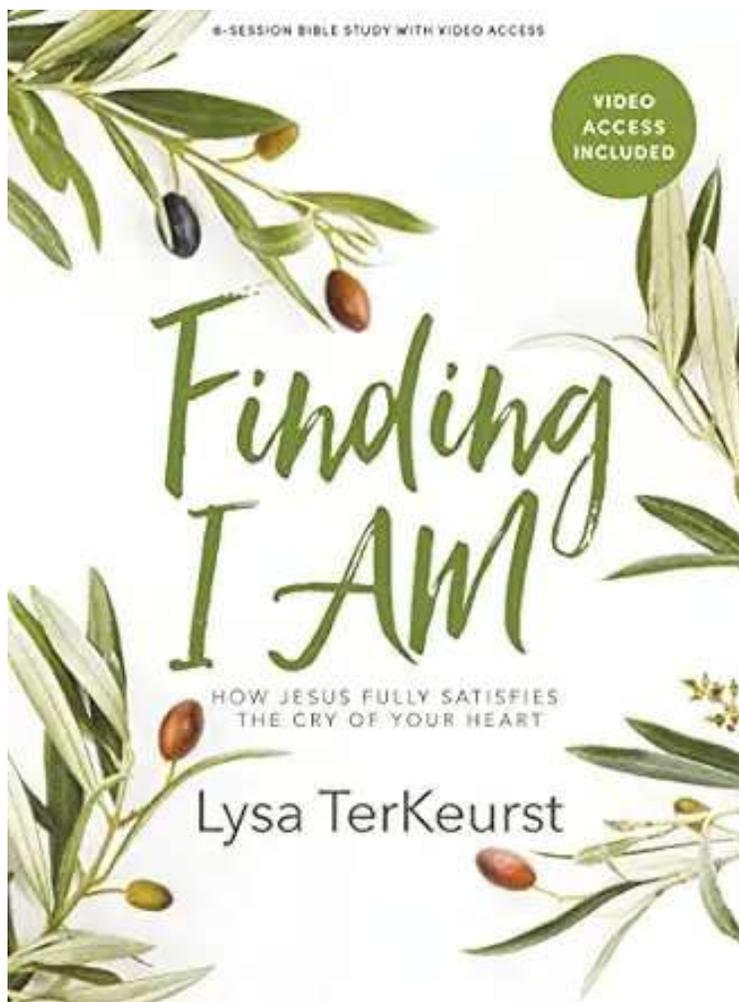
March 15—Light

March 22—Good Shepherd/Gate

March 29—Resurrection/Life

April 5 —Easter—no class

April 12—True vine



# March 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9am Traditional Worship 10am Fellowship Hour 11am Contemporary Worship	2 6-7pm AA Meeting Boy Scouts 6:30-8:30pm	3 OLES 9am  Boy Scouts 6-8:30pm	4 Better Choices 8am Noon - Ash Wed  Ignite Meal 5:15-6pm Worship 6-6:20pm Classes 6:20-7pm HS Youth 6:20-7pm	5 Lifeworks 1pm	6 <b>Office Closed</b>	7
8 9am Traditional Worship 10am Fellowship Hour 11am Contemporary Worship	9 Book Club 1:30pm  6-7pm AA Meeting Boy Scouts 6:30-8:30pm	10   Boy Scouts 6-8:30pm	11 Better Choices 8am Noon - Ash Wed  NO Ignite/HS Youth	12 Lifeworks 1pm	13 <b>Office Closed</b>	14
15 9am Traditional Worship 10am Fellowship Hour 11am Contemporary Worship	16 <b>Office Closed</b>  6-7pm AA Meeting Boy Scouts 6:30-8:30pm	17 OLES 9am Beacon Meal - Property Committees 6pm Council 6:30pm Boy Scouts 6-8:30pm	18 Ash Wednesday Noon - Ash Wed Service and luncheon Ignite Meal 5:15-6pm Ash Wed Worship 6pm Classes 6:20-7pm	19 Lifeworks 1pm	20 <b>Office Closed</b>	21
22 9am Traditional Worship 10am Fellowship Hour 11am Contemporary Worship	23 6-7pm AA Meeting Boy Scouts 6:30-8:30pm	24 OWLS 1:30pm  Boy Scouts 6-8:30pm	25 Better Choices 8am Lenten service - noon Ignite Meal 5:15-6pm Worship 6-6:20pm Classes 6:20-7pm HS Youth 6:20-7pm	26 Lifeworks 1pm Peace Circle 1:30pm	27 <b>Office Closed</b>	28
29 Palm Sunday 9am Traditional Worship 10am Fellowship Hour 11am Contemporary Worship 11am Children Singing Noon - Easter Egg Hunt	30 6-7pm AA Meeting Boy Scouts 6:30-8:30pm	31  Boy Scouts 6-8:30pm				

## Looking Ahead

### April

2<sup>nd</sup> - Maundy Thursday

3<sup>rd</sup> - Good Friday

5<sup>th</sup> - Easter

6<sup>th</sup> - Office Closed

### May

10<sup>th</sup> - Blessing of Women

10<sup>th</sup> - Grad Recognition

13<sup>th</sup> - Last Ignite Party

25<sup>th</sup> - Office and Daycare Closed

## BEACON MEAL

March 17 - Property Committee - Doug Seltz

April 21 - Music and Worship - Linda Ulstad

May 19 - OWLS - Linda Junkman and Viv Nore

June - St Olaf



## 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](mailto:office@stolaffd.com)



## SCAM ALERT

Please know that Pastor Emily, Pastor Jim, council members as well as anyone from St Olaf will NEVER text you asking for money, gift cards, donations. While we do occasionally ask for donations, those requests will come via printed announcements and newsletter articles.

**If you are unsure whether or not it may be a scam, please reach out to a pastor or the church directly if you have any questions before you give any money or buy any gift cards.**



## WINTER WEATHER REMINDER

With winter right around the corner, 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.

***The north side entrance (accessible entrance) does NOT get sun on Sunday mornings. Even with ice melt down, it will still be slick. If it is icy, please use the new accessible entrance. We realize that it is a longer walk to the sanctuary but it is safer for our congregation.***

**If you're not on the text/email list and would like to be added please let the office know.**

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

***We want you to stay safe!***



## KINGDOM KIDS - BOARD MEMBERS

Carey Bligard - President

Kim Peimann - Secretary

Kiley O'Leary - VP

Sheri Morud - Treasurer

Dawn Farr

Kathy Dencklau

Doug Seltz

Keely Draper

Pastor Emily Sauer-Alvarez





# April 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

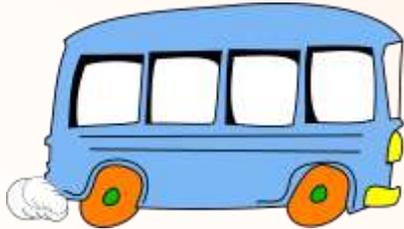
Ashlie Smith	3/18
Hank O'Brion	3/18
Betty Bowman	3/19
Willie Williams Jr	3/19
Janelle Carstensen	3/20
Jerome Burmeister	3/22
Amy DeLanoit	3/22
Jianna Alvarez	3/23
Pat Grove	3/23
Shealler Springer	3/24
Allie Berg	3/24
Darlene Winninger	3/24
Keely Draper	3/24
Jason Lumsden	3/25
Brady Morud	3/25
Melvin Schroeder	3/25
Trinity Scott	3/25
Kris Kalvig	3/26
Allison Zuspahn	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
McKenna Kvale	3/31



## BUS DRIVER NEEDED

We need an occasional bus driver. Driving the bus is not a requirement! It's super easy and only 1-2 riders. You're welcome to drive a church van or your own car.

This is an easy task and a great way to serve the church!



## Peace Circle

Join the ladies for Peace Circle on March 26.

Carol will lead and Jane Z will provide refreshments.



## BLOOD DRIVE

There will be a blood drive here at St Olaf on Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup> in the Fellowship Hall.

Time: 3-6:30pm

To sign up text LIFESERVE to 999-777 or call 800-287-4903.

You can also call the office at 515-576-2103

Reservations not required but recommended.

## NOISY OFFERING

We will be doing a noisy offering on March 29th. The funds will go towards the youth mission trip this summer.



## OLES

Join the Oles on March 3rd and 17th at 9am in the Fellowship Hall.

Please feel free to join them, they only meet twice a month.

Men of all ages are welcome!

**LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!**



## SEW SISTERS

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

The Sew Sisters have been busy sewing dresses, shorts and dolls for missions; fidget quilts for hospital patients; and baby and children's quilts for Kingdom Kids Daycare. Some of us sew at the church on Wednesday afternoons and others sew at home. We have lots of fabric and supplies but could use more help.



Please call Nancy if you'd like to be a part of our Sew Sisters family.

We enjoy it, and it's always good to help others.

## LENTEN SERVICES

*Wednesdays through Lent*

Throughout Lent we will be having a Wednesday service at noon with lunch (soup, crackers and dessert) immediately after in the Fellowship Hall.

We invite you to join us!

## IGNITE

### Schedule:

Dinner - 5:15pm  
Cleanup - 5:50pm  
Worship - 6pm  
Classes - 6:20pm



## FIRST COMMUNION

We will celebrate First Communion on March 1st at both the 9am and 11am service.

There will be a cake celebration at 10am in between services.

## CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Katie is starting up a children's chorus. They will practice on Sundays from 4:55pm until dinner starts around 5:15pm. They will plan to sing on March 29th at the 11am service. Kids of all ages are welcome!

## EASTER EGG HUNT

There will be an Easter Egg hunt on March 29th at noon. The eggs this year will not be filled, instead we will have a Bunny Shop with lots of different items to choose from!



## MISSION TRIP MEETING

Wednesday, March 4th at 7pm in the Fellowship Hall we will have a meeting about the mission trip in summer. The mission trip is open to 8th graders through high school.

## BOOK CLUB

The St. Olaf Book Club will meet on Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 in the Gather Room. Our book for this month is Distant Sons by Tim Johnston. Set in the 1970's in Wisconsin, this book is described as a crime novel, but also about friendship, love, and hard work. Everyone who loves good books is invited to our casual, no-host book club. Books are NOT available for checkout at the church this year. To get a list of upcoming books you can reach out to Mary Kuhlman.



## OWLS

Mark your calendar!

The Owls next gathering will be on March 24th at 1:30pm here at St Olaf in the Fellowship Hall.

Program: Golden Day Adult Day  
"Thank you for being a friend!"

Their mission is to provide safe and caring adult services that will offer meaningful programs to enhance the dignity, independence, and quality of life of Older persons and individuals with disabilities.

They will share ways to assist and how it is run.

Cheryl Franklin will be the presenter and is on the board and a volunteer. Beth Plautz—key leader and founder.

All are invited to the informative program and there will be refreshments. What an Awesome Golden Day Adult Day.

-Linda Cartee, Viv Nore,  
Linda Junkman

To learn more you can visit  
[www.goldendayadultday.com](http://www.goldendayadultday.com)



## Shining a Light on Disability Support

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, Brain Injury Awareness Month and Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month making it the perfect time to highlight LSI's services for individuals with disabilities.

LSI provide respite care for those caring for loved ones with mental and developmental disabilities along with 24 hour care, hourly options and host homes. In total LSI provided over 366,000 hours of services to those living with disabilities last year.

For families caring for a child or adult with disabilities, the demands of around-the-clock care can be overwhelming. That's where respite support makes a meaningful difference. Respite care offers caregivers a personalized break while ensuring their loved one continues to receive quality care. A trained respite provider can step in for a few hours or up to an entire weekend to support children and adults with disabilities. Services can be provided in the individual's home, the provider's home, or within the community.

As one parent put it, "Respite helped me step back and rethink things, breath and start over again with a better mind set! I truly believe that respite has changed my family and my life."

LSI's thorough matching process and ongoing oversight help ensure the success and quality of respite services. One of our respite providers, met her client and his family when they moved into a new neighborhood. This provider and client had an instant connection during this visit, and the provider knew that she wanted to provide respite services to him. The family worked with LSI, after being introduced to our respite program by the provider, to enroll the client in services. They started out with small amounts of time, and as the years went by, the amount of respite increased.

This provider has now been providing respite services to this client for over 10 years. Their relationship has continued to grow, and is stronger than ever, as the provider has supported both the client and his family.

This client has become a part of his provider's expended family, and sees her at least once a week. The client enjoys spending weekends once a month at his provider's home. This also allows the client's parents to have a scheduled break each month. One of this client's favorite activities during his weekends at his provider's home is to visit his provider's parents, and discuss the latest book that he has read with them.

"I became a respite provider because it offered me an opportunity to earn some extra income around my family's busy schedule. What I was not expecting was the learning opportunities that occurred for both my children and the respite children on our home. It has been an amazing experience to see the children grow. I love when I run into them out in the community and they come over and tell me everything they are now doing. Through respite care you are able to make a difference!" -Respite Provider

If you are interested in learning more about respite services or becoming a respite provider, contact Kay Baker.



*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://facebook.com/LSI.iowa).*

**Confirmation students took Valentines to our Friendship Haven Members.**



# ONLINE GIVING



venmo

@STOLAFFD



STOLAFFD

## The Lord's Cupboard

The Lord's Cupboard continues to be blessed by the support of our local churches as we work together to serve those in need. Thanks to your prayers, generosity and partnership we are helping over 1,000 people every month with emergency food assistance. The need in our community continues to grow, and we could not meet it without your help.

As the holiday season approaches we are asking our church partners to help by donating pie fixings for Thanksgiving and icing, cookie and cake mixes for Christmas so every family can enjoy a holiday treat. The Lord's Cupboard has purchased some other holiday items like stuffing, gravy mixes, cranberry sauce, ham, pork loin, instant potatoes for families this season.

Donations can be dropped off at 127 N 10th Street First United Methodist Church Office doors Monday - Thursday 8am-12pm. Every contribution large or small helps make the holidays brighter for those in need.

Thank you for your continued partnership and generosity in serving our community.

You can always call and arrange a time with us if those times don't work.

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# 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 approved:

- Youth Fall Recharge. Funds were used for 14 confirmation students and 2 pastors to attend a fall recharge at Ingham Okoboji in November 2025.
- Blanket Ministry. Funds will be used to make blankets for FD Rehab residents and St. Olaf members in nursing homes and individuals living at home.
- Pancakes with Santa. Funds were used for food and to give a book that tells the Christmas story of Jesus' birth to all who came to visit Santa.
- Wheelchair ministry. Funds will be used for parts to repair, clean and rebuild wheelchairs.
- Elderbridge Agency on Aging. Funds will be used for Aging Client Assistance Program.
- FMSC/FD Mobile Pack. Funds will be used to purchase food to be shipped overseas to feed hungry children. Excess funds go to local ministries with food programs.
- St. Olaf Organ Jive for Five Concert for Advent/Christmas Concert.
- St. Olaf Organ Concert in October 2025.
- Greater Iowa Youth for Christ.

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



## **Meeting Dates 2026:**

January 27, April 28, July 28, October 27

**Next month article: Carey Bligard**

## **Foundation Board Members**

Aaron Peimann - *President*

Karine Feddersen - *Secretary*

Bob Younie - *Treasurer*

Carey Bligard

Jerry Burmeister

Keely Draper

Darlene Hansen

Jill Matthes

Mark Oester

Laurel Puls

Megan Ruzicka

Doug Kinseth

Pastor Emily Sauer-Alvarez

Pastor Jim McColley

# Monthly Treasurer's Report

## January

**\*\*Church Account Only, NO Campaign\*\***

Operating Balance 12/31/2025.....136,546

Receipts:

Offerings.....96,065  
Misc. Receipts.....5,016  
Total Receipts for January.....101,081

Disbursements:

Benevolence.....200  
Pastoral Ministry.....29,672  
Administration.....2,520  
Worship & Music.....853  
Christian Education.....194  
Our Church Home.....6,086  
Congregational Life.....5,466  
Youth Ministry.....0  
Social Ministry.....29  
Stewardship.....495  
Total Disbursements for January.....45,515

**Operating Balance 1/31/2026.....192,112**

**Capital Campaign**

Campaign Balance 12/31/2025.....56,858  
Receipts: .....7,259

Disbursements:

Building Improvements.....14,884  
Misc Campaign Expense.....157  
Total Disbursements for January.....15,041

**Campaign Balance 1/31/2026.....49,076**

# PASTORAL ACTS & STATISTICS

## WORSHIP

### ATTENDENCE

#### Service Times

Day	Date	9am	11am	6pm	10am	WEATHER	Totals
Sunday	2/1	70	20			Snowy, 22	90
Wednesday	2/4			85			85
Sunday	2/8	75	21			sunny	96
Wednesday	2/11			90			90
Sunday	2/15	72	35			nice	107

*Lord Welcome into Your  
Kingdom*

*June A Igoe*

*April 10, 1923 - January 31, 2026*

#### CHURCH STATS

Weddings: 0  
Baptisms: 0  
Funerals: 1

## ST. OLAF LUTHERAN CHURCH— COUNCIL MEMBERS

**Kim Peimann - President**

**Linda Cartee - VP**

**Richard “Butch” Forbes - Treasurer**

**Amanda Warren - Secretary**

**Doug Seltz - Property**

**Juli Springer – Youth**

**Stewardship**

**Logan Ulstad – Long Range Planning**

**Vera Hartman – Social Concerns**

**Makayla Liska – Youth Rep**

**Claudia Harms– Music & Worship**

**Chris Dutcher– Life & Growth**

**Jessica Mericle - Education**

**Monica McCullough**

**Linda Ulstad**

**Craig Hamilton**

**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.**



# ST. OLAF STAFF

Pastor Emily Sauer-Alvarez  
Pastor Jim McColley  
Jade Bedel, *Office Manager*  
Sheri Morud, *Financial Mgr/Asst Daycare Director*  
Katie Bills, *Youth and Family Director*  
Jason Swedlund, *Organist & Choir Director*  
Matt Drees, *Contemp. Worship Coordinator*  
Carey Bligard, *Council President*  
Regina Rapple, *Custodian*  
Anna Miller, *Bell Choir/Wedding*  
Kathy Dencklau, *Daycare Director*

*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](mailto:office@stolaffd.com)***

