



*A long time ago in a land that doesn't feel so far away anymore...* Hopefully, after our deep dives into the patriarchy and the covenants, you are starting to feel like the Old Testament isn't so distant and isn't so bizarre.

Hopefully, its story is starting to feel more familiar *and* more important.

Having gained familiarity with some of the story's major themes, it's now time for us to appreciate how the story began. Obviously, there's no better way to do that than to enter the story *in the beginning*. The Bible begins with these words and it's important for us to understand that the Bible is introducing a story, and an epic one at that! It's not a *Once upon a time* story; it's a *When time (as we know it) began* story.

It's a story designed to answer certain specific questions about God and man and purpose. As such, our focus will be limited to these questions. We will leave the important, but secondary, questions for another time (questions like, *When were the dinosaurs created?* Day 6. *Is there a million+ year gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2?* No. *Are the days in Genesis 1 symbolic?* No. *Is the earth billions of years old?* No.).<sup>1</sup>

The Genesis narrative sets out to answer these primary questions: *Who is God? How is He related to us? And, given the clearly corrupted state of affairs in creation, what was His original intent?* The first and obvious answer is that God is the Creator. The story begins *In the beginning God created...* This is most certainly true, but

meditation on the creation narrative reveals something more. God is also the Orderer. He's not merely a crude Creator; He's an ordered Orderer. Consider what makes for a well ordered home: Everything has its place and like goes with like. In Genesis 1 we see God doing this with the cosmos. Everything is being put in its place and like is being placed with like.

We're all familiar with the six days of creation: Day 1: light, Day 2: waters below and above, Day 3: dry land and plants, Day 4: sun, moon, and stars, Day 5: birds and fish/swimming creatures, Day 6: land animals and man. Through this we're able to see that God is Creator.

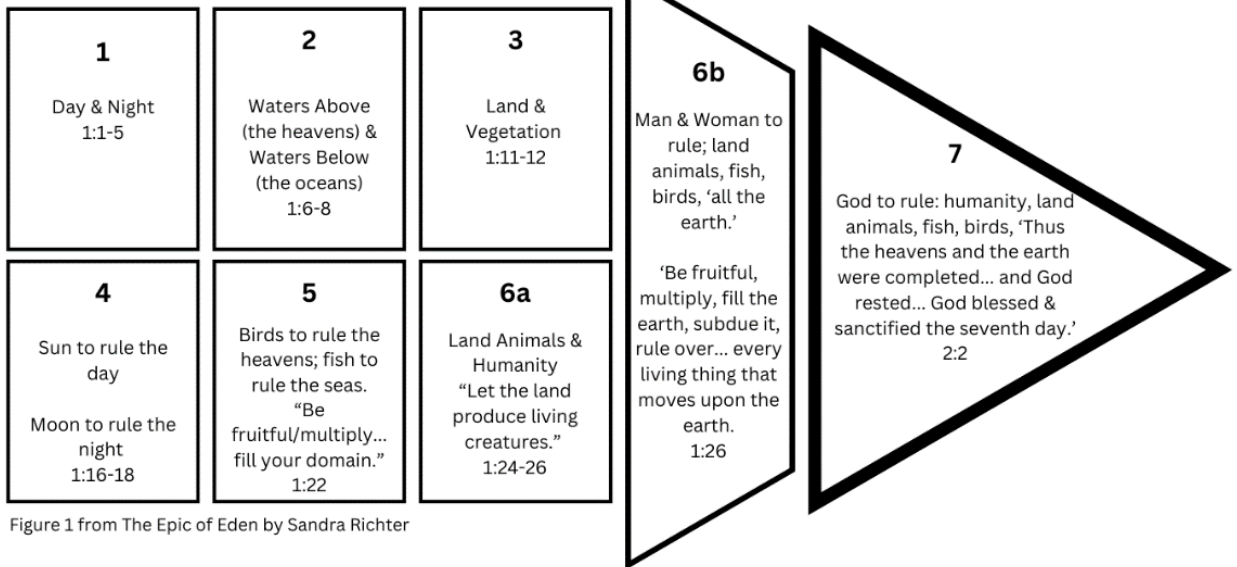
But if we present these days in a more visual way, God's role as Orderer becomes visible (See Figure 1 on page 2). On Days 1, 2, and 3, God creates the light place, the flying/swimming place, and the walking/crawling space. On Days 4, 5, and 6, He populates them (sun, moon, and stars in the light place; birds and fish/swimming creatures in the flying/swimming place; animals in the walking/crawling place). We might say that He forms then fills, that He creates domains and then fills them with their occupants.

As the creation narrative comes to a close we see, what Sandra Richter, author of *The Epic of Eden: A Christian Entry into the Old Testament*, calls,

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<sup>1</sup> If these sorts of questions interest you, I recommend the fine work and expert scholarship of The Institute for

Creation Research ([www.icr.org](http://www.icr.org)). There you will find these questions addressed in God-honoring detail.



...a flawlessly ordered world infused with balance and productivity. Here every rock, plant and animal had its own designated place within God’s design, a God-ordained space in which each could thrive (103).

There’s much to appreciate here and much to find beautiful. This verse from the 12<sup>th</sup> century hymn “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” captures the mighty ordering of God:

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,  
Who ord’rest all things mightily;  
To us the path of knowledge show,  
And teach us in her ways to go.

Appreciating God not merely as Creator, but as Orderer, imbues our lives with greater purpose. Above we mentioned the well-ordered home where everything has its place and like goes with like (admittedly, this is something we fall short of, but something we nobly aim for!). In this ordering is also a Divine imaging. In other words, when we

bring order to our world, we are living out the image of God in our lives. We’ll discuss the image of God we bear next month. For now it is enough to appreciate the Divine value and beauty in our role as sub-orderers. We can also appreciate our esteemed role as sub-orderers in our drive to classify everything from butterflies to corn hybrids, from tractors to tools, from finances to files. When they are well ordered we intuitively esteem it as good. This drive is a Divine drive. As such, it most certainly is good and this good imbues our lives with great purpose. Orderliness, whether on the farm, on the playing field, in the classroom, or in the office, is Godliness. The Apostle Paul surely understood this when he wrote, “All things should be done decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40).

Returning to the creation/ordering narrative, God, after filling the land and vegetation place with land creatures, creates governors for His created and ordered world: Man. God creates Adam and Eve as stewards, even little lords, to rule and govern

His newly created and well-ordered world. Appreciate this: We are little lords governing under the Lord of lords! Man's status as *little* lords is reinforced in the next chapter by the restriction God puts on them: "...of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat..." (Genesis 2:17). The point is clear: God is God; man is not. When this ordering is disordered, chaos ensues. Chaos isn't merely the opposite of God's beautiful order; it's the undoing of it. Man's sin, which Genesis will narrate in chapter 3, isn't merely a moral evil; it's a disordering evil, a chaos causing evil. Much of the Biblical narrative from Genesis 3 onward details the progressively disordering spiral of chaos man's sin will cause. The message is clear: Chaos is not good. Disorder is not good.

I recall a harrowing account my father-in-law has told of a state trooper's dash cam footage. The trooper was pursuing a violent criminal at excessively high speeds down a congested interstate, a chase that ended with the criminal violently crashing into my father-in-law's dear friend's vehicle. I quote it at length here:

We witnessed the surreal scene of the slow-motion disintegration of both her Toyota RAV4 and the young man's compact sedan. Parts of both cars flew at the officer's camera as he and 3 busy lanes of traffic all swerved to dodge the potentially lethal chunks of plastic, glass, and metal flying at them at great speed. Part of the trauma, I think, is that it's an existential moment when things disintegrate, and come apart violently. It violates the wholeness and design of the true, good, right, and beautiful. It goes against our nature and nature's nature, the way God built us before we humans brought the curse into the cosmos. And it is a violation of the plan for the new kingdom that Christ has begun to usher in.

The fleeing criminal didn't merely inflict permanently life-altering pain on my father-in-law's friend. He didn't merely cause thousands of dollars' worth of damage to numerous vehicles and hundreds of thousands of dollars of medical, insurance, and legal expense to my father-in-law's friend. He caused chaos. He undid creation. He disordered it. This is not good. But this is what sin does. This is why sin is not good. It undoes God's good order. It wars against what God has ordered as good. This is why God placed one tree off limits in the Garden. Would man honor God's order or attempt to wrest ultimate authority from God and claim the right to become the supreme orderers? You know their choice. You also know the result: chaos – chaos that ended in the ultimate disordering: death.

Our sin continues to cause chaos today, chaos in our marriages, chaos in our classrooms, chaos in our communities, our streets, our virtual/online spaces, and more. This is why the Bible's Gospel announcement of a restored (re-ordered) creation is such good news. We'll come back to this re-ordered creation in a moment. First, we need to appreciate the conclusion to God's creating and ordering on Day 7.

The Bible narrates,

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. Genesis 2:1-3

In short, God finished ordering what He had created and then He rested.<sup>2</sup> He rested, not because He was tired, but because everything was in place. Everything was ordered. As Richter writes, “This was God’s perfect plan: the *people* of God in the *place* of God dwelling in the *presence* of God” (104). God’s rest acknowledged this.

Further, God rested to remind, even to rescue, man from the temptation to claim sovereignty over His creation through work. One Biblical scholar put it this way,

Now what is the meaning of the Sabbath that was given to Israel? It relativizes the works of mankind, the contents of the six working days. It protects mankind from total absorption by the task of subduing the earth, it anticipates the distortion which makes work the sum and purpose of human life, and it informs mankind that he will not fulfill his humanity in his relation to the world which he is transforming but only when he raises his eyes above, in the blessed, holy hour of communion with the Creator.... The essence of mankind is not work!

Mankind was made *to* work, but not *for* work. He was created *for* God, for fellowship, for communion, with God. Work is good and imbued with Divine purpose, but man was created to know and fellowship with God. The Sabbath command to rest from work helped teach this. In fact, this is precisely what is echoed later in the story in the renderings of the Ten Commandments where Israel is commanded to honor the Sabbath in

order to remember God as the ordering Creator and as the Redeemer/Rescuer.

As the children of the new covenant, we find our rest in Christ (the Lord of the Sabbath) and in our weekly, rhythmic remembrance of Him as our Creator and Redeemer. When we commune with Him we discover what we have been created for. It should go without saying, but understanding this imbues our weekly worship gathering with deep significance (to say nothing of our celebration of the Sacrament of Communion!). We’re not simply “going to church;” we’re communing with the God we were made for.<sup>3</sup>

Further, we’re refocusing our lives on God’s promise to re-order His creation upon Christ’s return. This is what the Apostle Paul was getting after when he wrote,

The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. Romans 8:19-21

Do you see it? Creation is waiting on the edge of its seat for Christ to reveal the sons of God. Who are the sons of God? The inheritors of Christ’s kingdom. Why does creation care who inherits Christ’s kingdom? Because these are the ones who will reign with Christ over the renewed/re-ordered creation! So creation is eagerly longing for that day when it will be set free from its sin-cursed

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<sup>2</sup> The word for *rest* (shabat) is the root of the word for *sabbath*.

<sup>3</sup> Appreciate the assumptions built into our communing with God: It’s something done not as individuals, but as

the redeemed community of God! Communion assumes community.

corruption (disordering). That day will bring God's creation into freedom, into its right ordering, that is found in Jesus.

We will close our consideration this month with an extended summary from Sandra Richter:

Yahweh planned a perfect world in which the sons of Adam and the daughters of Eve would live eternally, stretching their cognitive and creative skills to the uttermost, building their civilization within the protective boundaries of their relationship with him. But treason bred tragedy – a broken covenant, a broken race. The end result was that God's people were driven from God's place and forever separated from his presence. The only hope in this wretched state of affairs was God's redemptive mercy. Indeed, redemptive history starts right here. For it is with [Adam's] choice that the saga of redemption begins. Who will pay the price for [Adam's] rebellion? How will [Adam's] race be held accountable and delivered all the same? How do we get Eden back? Although Christians too often think that the story of salvation begins with Jesus, the story actually begins with Adam and Eve... Because when we ask the salvation question, what we are really asking is, what did the first Adam lose? And when we answer the salvation question, what we are really attempting to articulate is, what did the Second Adam (i.e., Jesus) buy back?

In short, the end of the story (resurrection and re-ordering of creation) depends on the beginning, on God's work in the beginning. The journey continues next month! – Pastor Conner



THANK YOU, ZION, for your support of our missionaries who serve abroad and here in Iowa. Last year, 2024, ZION sent close to \$14,000 to the mission field to four missionaries that we supported. THAT IS AMAZING!

The first quarterly door offering for 2025 was on February 23 for Pastor Charles Ferry and family serving in Taiwan. We have supported them for a number of years. Thank you for your generous support of a little over \$1,056 to their ministry.

We are reminded regularly of how our missionaries appreciate Zion's support in prayer and in finances as they not only do their daily work, but they also need to raise their own financing. Please read their news updates in Zion's monthly newsletters.

Please if you want to know more or would like to sit in on a mission meeting (we don't meet often), please let me or any board member know or leave a note with Shannon.

Board members: Barb Page, Casie Eischeid, Warren Puck, Gary and Joyce Schroeder, Pastor and Paula Vogel, Lynn Kruse and Jean Hargens. Please reach out with any questions or information that you would like to have.

## The Prayer of St. Patrick

"I arise today through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity - Father, Son T, and Holy Spirit – through belief in the Threeness, through confession of the Oneness of the Creator of creation."

"I arise today through the strength Christ's birth and His baptism, through the strength of His crucifixion and His burial, through the strength of His resurrection and His ascension, through the strength of His descent for the judgment of doom."

"I arise today ... in hope of resurrection to meet with reward..."

"I arise today through the strength of heaven; light of the sun... firmness of the rock."

"I arise today through God's strength to pilot me; God's might to uphold me, God's wisdom to guide me, God's eye to look before me, God's ear to hear me, God's Word to speak for me, God's hand to guard me, God's way to lie before me, God's shield to protect me, God's hosts to secure me – from snares of the devil, from temptation of vices, from everyone who desires me ill whether afar or near, whether alone or in multitude..."

"Christ shield me today against prison, against burning, against drowning, against wounding..."

"Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me."

"Salvation is of Jesus!"

"May Your salvation, O Lord, be ever with us T, for all who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved! Amen."

Saint Patrick is considered to be the one who brought the Christian faith to the nation of Ireland. He is known to have used a three-leafed clover to describe the Holy Trinity of God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The four-leafed clovers were considered a sign of luck among the Celtic, pagan peoples. We do not see any sign of Saint Patrick asking for luck. Instead, all his prayers are asking for the continued and ever-present help from God and Christ our Lord.

We, too, may recognize that we are in need of help in many ways. Whether in sickness, in the face of evil, in hard times, in poor times, in difficulty or in danger, in response to bad news, or in any time in which we may need help... This prayer can be prayed.

For each new day, we too arise, in the ever-present grace of God who gives us each new day. He gives us each and every breath. If we were to count our blessings, they would be numerous. They all come from God who creates and sustains our lives from womb to tomb.

Not only do we arise each day from our beds by God's grace, but according to His mercy, we also shall arise from the dead by Christ. For as Saint Patrick proclaims, "Salvation is of Jesus!" and "all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!" Do not look for luck this Saint Patrick's Day. Instead, look for certain and sure salvation. Offer prayer to God and hope in Him rather than consider signs from created things. Look to the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier (The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) rather than to simple and uncertain luck. Now may the Lord bless you from this time forth and forevermore. – Pastor Staehr



## Longing for the next season

Maybe it's because this week has been so bitter cold and the snow has piled up, but I find myself longing for spring and summer. I find my mind wandering from the present season to the next where new life and hope awaits. What shall we plant this spring in the garden? Should I buy a new dress for Easter and have our whole family match again? When can I pack away the layers of clothes and outerwear and cast off the cold dark days of winter for the light airy days of spring?

New life is coming but it's not yet here, buds will pop up soon but not quite yet. The anticipation is growing but isn't anywhere close to its climax of spring colors of vivid greens, pinks, purples and more. Yet, oh how I long for it.

Our season is not yet turning to spring and seems nowhere close to turning, yet our church calendar is changing seasons. We are entering into the season of Lent. We

recognize this change in seasons of Lent before Easter not because God demands us to, or that we need to perfect ourselves before we are worthy of Easter. But we observe this Lenten season because it is good for us. Easter is coming but it's not yet here.

Tis Oxenreider writes in her Lenten Devotional entitled *Bitter & Sweet* about why Lent is good for us. She writes:

"Most of us are fine with an occasional indulgence of dessert, pizza for dinner, or a late night out with little sleep. If we miss a day of exercise or drink a bit too much wine for a few days, our surprisingly resilient bodies will recover. The deliciousness of food and the enjoyment of an evening celebration with friends are delights of life, and God saw fit to create the world with bountiful opportunities for joy and occasional indulgences. But we know well what would happen if those indulgences were mainstays, the normal daily practices of our ordinary lives. Our bodies would drag with the effects of our choices: bloating, headaches, sluggishness, crankiness, and worse. Keep up those choices, and eventually our bodies would become addicted to excesses and let us know when they demanded more—always more, and more, until we tell our bodies no.

These physical delights, which can so quickly spoil if overused, reflect the fragility of our souls as well; when we indulge our inner lives with sugars or

laziness, complacency or pride, our innermost selves start to atrophy. In his letter to the early Christians in Corinth, Saint Paul writes, “Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one. So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified” (1 Corinthians 9:25-27). Christ has not called us to a life of ease; we’re called to discipline.

As followers of Christ, if we’re athletes using our gifts, skills, and strengths to aim our lives toward an imperishable prize, a practice like Lent could be seen as a season of intense working out. Like Olympians before the worldwide games, we’re focused, determined, and ready to win. Lent doesn’t earn our place in the game of life, but it makes us more ready for it. As one writer puts it, “It’s the spiritual equivalent of choosing to pick up the kettlebell instead of the Chex Mix, and it will have similar benefits to your soul.”

In a world that celebrates indulging our whims whenever we want, to practice the traditions of Lent is countercultural. Welcoming the temporary suffering of Lent is swimming upstream in a culture that prefers to go with the flow. But as Chesterton quipped, to go against the current is to be alive. We choose to live the paradoxical Christian life because

we’ve been given new life in Christ, which gives us the faith, hope and strength to do so.” (T. Oxenreider, *Bitter & Sweet*, pg. 12-13)

So, as this Lenten season begins Christians traditionally use this season to reflect and may even decide to participate by fasting, giving more generously (or almsgiving), and by praying more. Maybe this is a seasonal discipline you have tried many times, or maybe this year can be the first. Lent this year can be a season to spend some time to prepare your heart and mind for Easter.

As we prepare for Lent let’s, take a few moments to reflect on these 5 questions (as taken from *Bitter & Sweet*):

1. Have I become overly dependent on a particular sustenance, substance, or practice lately?
2. Which appetites have a unique grip on my body or soul these days?
3. What would be a genuinely challenging (but not burdensome) fast?
4. What would be truly freeing to leave behind?
5. What do I sense God calling me to?

As you consider fasting remember you can fast from a sustenance, a substance, or a practice. A few examples of sustenance would be: coffee, chocolate, meat, alcohol, etc. A few examples of substances would be: social media, podcasts, your pillow, video games, tech devices, etc. And a few examples of

practices would be: speaking with sarcasm, swearing, taking hot showers, eating at restaurants, etc. Consider starting with Ash Wednesday and keeping a journal as you fast from sustenance, substance or practice throughout this season. Talk with your family and friends about it to help encourage each other. Remember you're not competing against anyone and will almost definitely fail at your fast at some point. This isn't about fasting from the hardest thing, or fasting the best out of those around you. Fasting is between you and God. Fasting isn't about proving ourselves or earning God's love, it's about reminding ourselves how utterly dependent we are on God. We are imperfect and are in need of a perfect Savior.

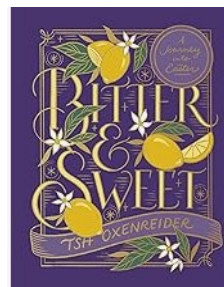
Consider using this season to give more generously. This may look different for each person and family. Consider volunteering a few times at the local food pantry. Tithe if you aren't already or consider budgeting more to give throughout Lent. Write letters to local assisted living or nursing home residents or consider going to spend time with them. Help serve at church or out in our community. Give a Hy-Vee or Walmart gift card to someone who seems like they might need it or to a family with lots of kiddos, or a college student. Be creative in how you could generously give during Lent.

And lastly prayer. Look for ways to incorporate prayer more into your daily life. Start a prayer journal to use at the start of the day or just before bed. Consider praying for three things you are grateful for before your feet hit the

ground each morning. Set an alarm in your phone to go off at the same time every day to remind you to stop and pray in the middle of your work day. Consider purchasing a book on prayer to learn more and help develop the discipline. I, Kathryn, recently purchased two books on growing in prayer I plan to read throughout Lent. One is about living a life of prayer and the other is praying scripture for you children. (I'll keep y'all posted and hopefully have some great prayer resources for you after Easter!) You can also use a Lenten devotional to help you in prayer and time in the Word.

There are so many great options for participating in the season of Lent. The trick is setting your intentions and giving yourself grace, knowing you will not be perfect throughout the 40 days of Lent. And that's okay. No one is perfect. Only Jesus is and that is the whole point of Lent. To prepare our hearts and minds for Easter. To take a season to grow in discipline through fasting, giving and praying. To know that in this season we will not be perfect. But that we have a Savior who is, Jesus. Who lived the life we cannot, who died the death we deserve, and who rose from the dead so that we could have the free gift of eternal life. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. – DCE Kathryn

"Bitter & Sweet: A Journey into Easter"  
by Tsh Oxenreider





## Zion Newsletter—March 2024 Fellowship Club Notes

### March's Fellowship Fruit: Gentleness

The March "Fruit of the Spirit" is GENTLENESS (Galatians 5:23). Join us at our monthly gathering on Monday, March 10 at 1:30 p.m. Jesus said of Himself, "I am gentle and lowly in heart," (Matthew 11:29). May the Spirit instruct and direct us in the gentleness of Jesus.

Thank you for your generous support of Lutheran Hour Ministries through your donations at the Feb. 2 fellowship. Thank you also for your commodity donations to the Manning Food Pantry. A pantry collection box is routinely located by the east entrance. Each month approximately 20 community households receive pantry food and other items.

A spring clothing drive for Orphan Grain Train will take place shortly after Easter! The Fellowship Club also supports the mission of Garuna Mission schools in Southeast Asia. The Fellowship Club is more than "fellowship." It is monthly Bible study and prayer and mission outreach.

### **Camp Okoboji @ Zion** campokoboji.org

**On March 16, Zion will welcome Adam Hengeveld, Executive Director of Camp Okoboji. He will share greetings and news from Camp.**



**All @ 5:45 p.m.  
Supper Following**

**3.5: in Forgiveness  
3.12: in God's Favor  
3.19: in God  
3.26: in Suffering  
4.2: in Vocation  
4.9: in Beauty**



## Iowa LCMS Pastors Stand for Life and Truth at the Capitol

Dear Brother Pastor,

On Tuesday, February 11, 2025, Lutheran Family Service hosted our annual LCMS Pastors' Day on the Hill, a tradition we have carried on for eight years. Our goal is always to strengthen an LCMS identity at the Iowa State Capitol, teach pastors how to engage with legislators and the government process, encourage and support the men and women of our church that serve as Representatives, Senators and other top state offices, and bring focus to the vital topic of life advocacy. I'm very thankful for the 50 pastors from across the state that journeyed to Des Moines to help us accomplish all those goals. You can see photos from the day below.

These ongoing efforts have been blessed with greater awareness on protecting life from conception to natural death. Our ongoing efforts and those of other Christians have given helpful support to these legislative priorities, and as a result, abortion statistics in Iowa have revealed a decline. Thanks be to God!

We continue to work for the protection of all children not yet born. In particular, there are gaps that need our attention, especially the elimination of exceptions such as fetal abnormality, those conceived through rape or incest, and of course, those whose heartbeats have not yet been detected. Lutheran Family Service continues in this work.

# IOWA LCMS PASTORS' DAY ON THE HILL



This year, the Iowa Legislature is considering several bills that could influence abortion law. Among them are proposals to classify abortion pills as a Class IV controlled substance, implement educational curriculum requirements that accurately portray the development of unborn life, and potentially allow for civil action in cases where the wrongful death of an unborn child occurs. Kim Laube, our Deputy Director will keep you informed about their progress and will hope that all of you stand ready to respond with your own advocacy when it is most needed.

Thank you to those who attended and to all of you who continue in your support of Lutheran Family Service. These efforts in the Kingdom of the Left, as well as our work in pregnancy counseling, adoption, mental health and marriage counseling, church worker wellness, and congregational education, need your congregation's prayers and financial support. If it would be helpful for us to come to your congregation and highlight the ministry and work of our LCMS Lutheran Family Service, especially as so many other 'Lutheran' agencies are under public scrutiny and often confused with our work, we would be anxious to do so.

May God bless each of you and your serving!

In Christ,  
Rev. Max Phillips  
Executive Director, Lutheran Family Service

***Pray for your LCSM Servants at the Capitol in Des Moines.***



REPRESENTATIVE  
**Samantha Fett**  
Holy Cross  
Carlisle

SENATOR  
**Julian Garrett**  
Mt. Calvary  
Indianola

REPRESENTATIVE  
**Thomas Gerhold**  
St. Stephens  
Atkins

SENATOR  
**Kerry Gruenhagen**  
Risen Christ  
Davenport

SENATOR  
**Tim Kraayenbrink**  
St. Paul  
Fort Dodge

SENATOR  
**Jason Schultz**  
Immanuel  
Schleswig

IA TREASURER  
**Roby Smith**  
Trinity  
Davenport

SENATOR  
**Annette Sweeney**  
St. Paul  
Buckeye

## LCMS Pastors' Day on the Hill Feb. 11th, 2025 - Des Moines, IA *Reflections from Pastor Staehr*

February is often called the month of love with respect to the famous holiday in the middle of the month. However, this month held a new meaning of the word love for LCMS pastors in the state of Iowa.

In a joint effort with Lutheran Family Service, Iowa District East under President Saunders and Iowa District West under President Turner were able to join for a common goal... To give a voice for you, the LCMS parishioners in the state of Iowa (a total of almost 100,000 people in this state).

The new definition of love that was accomplished in Des Moines this month was the ability to give voices to those who are the weakest among us. Each pastor stood together representing their congregations from across the state to encourage and strengthen both senators and representatives alike in regard to issues of life from womb to tomb. We believe that every life is precious and made in the image of God. "Knit together in the womb." (Psalm 139)

So, we stand:

- 1) in support of life instead of abortion,
- 2) in support of pregnant mothers to receive care for their full term,
- 3) in support of life instead of euthanasia or physician assisted suicide,
- 4) in support of education curriculum to give Iowa classrooms an accurate depiction of fetal development (as this shares how life begins in the womb - a miracle of God).

This goal was accomplished in-person on the 11th, but many of us do not always get the opportunity to make contact with our representatives to provide encouragement, prayer and support in the face of great opposition.

Our senators and representatives need your prayers and support to face struggles and voices which do not support life from womb to tomb. Consider contacting your senator and representative in support of the faith in which you also stand.

This day for pastors to be at the state capitol was a time for each of us to unite in one faith together as we petitioned the kingdom of the left to carry on boldly in protection of the weakest among us and to redefine that love is seen truly by Christ and His cross who died for the life of the world. - Pastor Staehr



## Preschool Praises for February

In February we celebrated community helpers. We read the story that Jesus told about the Good Samaritan and discussed how we should always remember to help others. God made us to be helpers and we appreciate all of our helpers throughout our own community. The preschoolers really enjoyed all the visits and had a lot of fun learning about different ways they could be helpers.

Not only did we have community helper visitors, but the preschoolers also got to share the day with their grandparents. Our preschoolers are blessed with some wonderful grandparents who were able to come in and listen to the preschoolers sing, eat a snack, and make a craft together. This year we were able to incorporate our visit from the Manning EMS to our celebration. Neeka and Mikasia Jacobsen rolled in a stretcher and different "machines" they use to help others. It was a wonderful opportunity to have the grandparents watch the excitement of the preschoolers during these visits. This is one of my favorite events we have and I think everyone enjoyed themselves!

A few other community helper visitors included Ernie Reinke (referee), Derrick Janssen & John Gordon (firefighters), Haylee Barsby (nurse), Scott Opperman (farmer), and Derek Schwartz (dentist). We are looking forward to rescheduling a few that missed during some of our snow days. We will continue welcoming community helper visitors in March along with starting our month of reading! If you would like to come into Zion Preschool to read a book to the class, we will gladly welcome you!

All the preschool slots for the 2025-2026 school year filled up quickly but we are still accepting registration forms to be put on the waitlist if an opening comes available. You can reach Amy at [zionmanningpreschool@gmail.com](mailto:zionmanningpreschool@gmail.com) or 712-790-6703 with any questions.

Blessings,  
Miss Amy & Miss Melanie







Your support allows us to share the love of Jesus with every single one of these children and their families. Thank you!

Crisis, Connected... Child Reached... Family Connected



# 2025 Iowa Life Advocacy Priorities

Preventing Physician-Assisted Suicide, which is when a physician helps someone kill themselves.

Lutheran Family Service has successfully worked to suppress the legalization of Physician Assisted Suicide (PAS) for nine years. Recent advancements of PAS in the nation have seen an expansion of eligibility in states where it is legal.



(PAS) is legal in New Mexico, Oregon, Washington, Montana, Vermont, California, Colorado, Hawaii, New Jersey, Maine, and the District of Columbia. This means 73.4 million people in the U.S. now have access to PAS. However, both Oregon and Vermont have removed state residency requirements. Now, people from any state can go there to legally commit suicide with the aid of a doctor. Technically then, everyone in the U.S. now has access to Physician Assisted Suicide.

Many of the states where PAS is legal are pursuing expansion bills. These expansion bills include things like reducing the waiting period before the deadly drug could be prescribed. California went from 15 days to 48 hours. Also alarming, are considerations to allow others to administer the poison for people with disabilities unable to do so themselves. We move ever closer to proving once again the axiom: assisted suicide always leads to euthanasia.

Preventing Abortion, which is the killing of a child before he or she is born.

The legal status of abortion in Iowa bans the abortion of unborn children whose heartbeat is detectable. That can be around six weeks gestation. There are exceptions to the law that include rape, incest, life of the mother, and fetal abnormalities. The ban was allowed to go into effect and enforcement in July 2024. There was nearly a 40% drop in Iowa abortions the month following the enforcement. That month saved 150 lives of unborn Iowa children.

Is there more to do for the protection of unborn life in Iowa? Yes! Those left unprotected are: children conceived from rape or incest; unborn children with abnormalities like Down Syndrome; unborn children who are transported to another state to be aborted; unborn children who are aborted illegally through medication abortion drugs sold to them despite Iowa law and embryos who are either destroyed or cryopreserved during In Vitro Fertilization.

Lutheran Family Service will continue to advocate for protection for all life. The appetite of the 91<sup>st</sup> General Assembly to move more legislation on the life issue is suppressed. There are opportunities to pass some legislation in support of life, but not necessarily life-saving in immediate terms.

Bills being considered in this session (regarding life) as of January 31, 2025 include:

- [SJR 1](#) is a bill that would change the Iowa Constitution to include a right to abortion. Lutheran Family Service is opposed to this bill. It is not expected to pass, but we must remain vigilant and work to educate all about the value of human life.
- [HF 103](#) - is a bill about the treatment of pregnant students in state colleges who should be given reasonable accommodations (LFS is in favor of this bill as it encourages pregnancy over abortion.)

*Continued on next page.*

- [HF106](#) is a bill that would give the right for civil action in cases of wrongful fetal death. (LFS is in favor of this bill).
- [SSB1028](#) is a bill that would secure an accurate depiction of fetal development for school curriculums. (LFS is in favor of this bill). There are companions to this bill in the House Chamber with a bit different language, but essentially doing the same things. The language contained in the SSB1028 bill is the preferred language.
- We are keeping watch on an additional bill to be filed that will make abortion medical a controlled class IV substance making it much more difficult to obtain.

### What Can You Do Today? Talk to your legislator:

- Remind your legislator that God gives value to every person no matter the circumstances of their conception. They deserve to be protected.
- Show them how God's word supports that.
- Pray for/with them to be rooted in God's word, protected from enemies, & to receive wisdom from the Holy Spirit.
- Encourage your fellow congregation members to make their voice known to legislators by calling, writing a letter, sending an email, or through an in-person appointment.

### What Can You Do to Support Life in Your Congregation and Community?

- EDUCATE
  - Become conversant on:
    - Legislative Priorities
    - Physician Assisted Suicide
    - LFS and Many Hearts working together with Pregnancy Resource Centers and women's health providers
  - Use this link: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find> in to find and contact legislators when needed.
- ACTION
  - Find your closest Pregnancy Resource Center (PRC). Bring the Many Hearts Unplanned Pregnancy Materials to them to make them aware of services that would greatly benefit their clients who are deciding between parenting and placing for adoption.
  - Encourage congregation members to run for public office, volunteer, support, or join the Board of Directors of your local PRC.

### How will Lutheran Family Service Support You and Your Efforts to Protect Life?

- You can register to receive "life issues" legislative updates via email on important actions taken by the courts or legislature. Email Kim Laube to register ([klaube@lutheranfamilyservice.org](mailto:klaube@lutheranfamilyservice.org)).
- You can schedule a life issues presentation or life Sunday at your congregation to touch on topics of abortion, ways to support women facing unplanned pregnancy and/or single mothers, physician-assisted suicide, hospice, advance directives, and more. Reach out to Cassie Beltz at [CBeltz@lutheranfamilyservice.org](mailto:CBeltz@lutheranfamilyservice.org).
- Together, Many Hearts Unplanned Pregnancy Support and Lutheran Family Service adoption ministry will be serving women and families in your community and beyond – including all of Iowa, Eastern South Dakota, Eastern Nebraska, and North & Central Illinois.



**Crossroads**  
of **Crawford County**

**FOR LIFE & THROUGH LIFE**

**Zion, Manning Friends,**

**I wanted to give a huge THANK YOU for wonderful helping to Crossroads Ultrasound Project. With the \$3,000 from you, plus \$7,900 combined from several other LCMS churches, we had over \$10,000 pledged, so we asked for the maximum match amount, \$10,000 of the Million Dollar Life Match, for a total gift of \$20,000.**

**This will be applied to the Ultrasound Campaign in the form of additional equipment and supplies needed performing ultrasound. These items include a HIPPA-compliant data storage and transmission system; pregnancy tests; ultrasound gel, warmers, probes, special covers and cleaners; disposable linens; viewing monitors and installation (1 for the ultrasound room and 2 for training area and reception); client information and resource; additional phones; office supplies, overhead.**

**We have been so blessed with the help of so many who entrust us with working with these young women and men to be an encouragement to CHOSE life though the pregnancy may be unplanned, untimely, and under difficult circumstances. Beyond that time of uncertainty, we are honored to also be there for them once they become parents by walking with them through healthy parenting, optimizing relationships, and offering practical supports.**

**We ask for your prayers-for those who need our services to be comfortable in coming, for the finances implicated in providing this life service, and those who are professionally responding to the clients in the early stages of their pregnancy and helping them realize the impact of their decisions.**

**If any other LCMS congregations still want to join in support of Crossroads Ultrasound program, the Life Match Grant can be applied for on behalf of Crossroads again for any different, yet related project. Please encourage any to talk with us on opportunities.**

**Thank you for your hearts in encouraging theirs!**  
**Janette Clausen & Crossroads Board of Directors**



Right:  
The whole  
LCMS Asia  
team  
assembles in  
Taiwan for  
our annual  
Family  
Retreat



Left: The Ferry girls sing as part of our church  
outreach events for the Christmas holiday.

Below: Members of our congregation, our  
building, and our neighborhood gather for a  
Thanksgiving community concert.



## THE FERRY FAMILY

Rev. Charles Ferry serves the LCMS as the Regional Director for Asia. He is responsible for all the LCMS missionaries and mission work in this part of the world.

He often represents the congregations and people of the LCMS to our partners as we work together toward the planting of Lutheran Churches.

Charles and Cheryl are the parents of seven children, three of whom were born overseas during Asia missionary service.

- Caleb (married to Katrina)
- Caitlin (15)
- Carissa (12)
- Cassandra (10)
- Chloe (8)
- Charlotte (6)
- Caylee (3)

Before moving to Taiwan in 2018, the Ferry Family was based in Indonesia for almost five years.

Right: Cheryl sets the example for church  
and family by singing for the Christmas  
events.



Left: Charles joins OIM  
colleagues and the  
delegation from  
Australia during a visit to  
Fort Wayne and St.  
Louis, including this  
meeting with our friends  
at CPH.



## Ferry Family Update



Right: The Ferry girls not only sing, but they also play hand chimes during a recent music event. Notice how ALL six of them are involved now!



### PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Those continuing to be affected by the frequent earthquakes in Taiwan during recent weeks.
- Caleb and Katrina as they end their time in California and prepare for the next chapter in their Air Force life

### GIVE THANKS FOR:

- Faithful Lutheran Christians speaking out for the truth of God's Word, including those in Australia
- Music being used as outreach and evangelism to bring many to the church in our Chiayi community

### PRAISE GOD FOR:

- The congregations and people of the LCMS who continue to support us with prayers, friendship, finances and trust as we work in Asia where we have been sent



Above: Carissa and the girls visit a local artisan in Chiayi and are given a lesson on traditional character calligraphy for the Lunar New Year.



Right: Caleb and wife Katina have found a Taiwanese restaurant in California where they can get authentic food and even boba tea while Caleb practices his Chinese!

*Even as our family grows and changes, we are so grateful for your enduring partnership.*

*Thank you for your trust, care, prayers and continued support.*

– The Ferry Family





# *Amigos en Cristo*

News from **La Iglesia Evangelica Luterana Amigos en Cristo:**

*Friends in Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church*

**Pastor Pedro Lopez**, Denison, Iowa

March 2025

Blessings to all mis amigos and prayer warriors! Such a joyous time to share the good news of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Looking forward to continuing to share the good news of Jesus with new families and friends as we start this New Year with our programs. Here we are sharing with you the latest about our Hispanic Ministry, your Hispanic Ministry.

We are excited to share that on March 18, we will open our newest ESL program in the Storm Lake area with the assistance of people from St. John and Grace Lutheran Churches. We are hoping to meet the needs of this community and create avenues to share about our churches in the area. We have been volunteering at St. John Lutheran Church at their swaddling clothes program. We have met the people who come to their program and have invited them to the ESL program. We have approximately 17 people registered to take the class. Several people have shown interest in our ministry there and a couple of families have asked about baptizing their children. If anyone from this area would like to be a volunteer, please contact me for more information.

At St. Paul-Hartley, we will begin our Spring ESL class in April. We will be calling on our great volunteers and partners in that area to make this possible again. We have made new friends and have been blessed to have a couple more people participating in our English worship services. Our Deacon Noel continues to help the new families by sharing the Word of God.

At St. Paul-Carroll, we continue with our Praise, Prayer and Bible Study on Saturdays at 6:30pm. We also offer individual Bible Studies at people's homes. Our ESL class will begin in April. We are hopefully on our way to continue with our Hispanic LWML in the area. My wife is leading the effort of getting some of our new members together.

We continue to serve the people of Denison with our Sunday worship services and family Bible studies. We meet on different days as they are available to continue learning about our Savior.

We thank you for your ongoing prayers and support. Please keep in mind that we are always ready to share with you about what God is doing among your Hispanic brothers and sisters in the Lord, gracias and Bendiciones. Pastor Lopez



Rev. Pedro Lopez, Asst. to the President  
Missionary at Large,  
[pedro@iowadistrictwest.org](mailto:pedro@iowadistrictwest.org),  
571-606-7600



# REV. DR. WALTER & ROBYN STEELE MUSINGS FROM MATONGO AND SOON TO BE THE PHILIPPINES

MARCH 2024



There has been a critical need for support of The Lutheran Theological Seminary located in Baguio City on the island of Luzon in northern Philippines. The Lutheran Church in the Philippines is one of our most important partner churches in Asia. Walter has been asked to assist in strengthening the curriculum and to provide teaching in subjects like Greek, Hebrew, and other areas of need. Our time in Kenya has been fruitful. We are happy we have been able to assist there in curriculum improvement and in other ways as needs arose. It has also been a privilege to work in the establishment of a new seminary in Tanzania. In fact, Walter will continue to assist them over the next few years. But the circumstances change and now is the time to answer the Lord's call in another region of his world—to make the Word of God fully known, so that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed everywhere. For more information, see our website (below).

In Christ,  
Walter



The Lutheran Theological Seminary and Training Center, in the Philippines is situated right outside of Baguio City. The environment will be quite a change for us. Matongo is set in the rural hill country of Kenya. Baguio is a thriving city of over one million people. Much like Matongo, students come to Baguio, not only from the Philippine Islands, but also from as far away as Mongolia. Being the only confessional Lutheran English-language seminary in East Asia, it is a magnet for those who want to learn the truth of God's Word, so they can faithfully plant Lutheran churches throughout the region.

Pray for us as we conclude our responsibilities and duties in Kenya at the end of April. In May our belongings will be shipped to the Philippines. We will transition to the USA for a few weeks. We hope to be in the Philippines sometime in July. Give thanks to God for the work he has done through us in Africa. It has been a joy and privilege. Remember our new, updated web site: [SteelesInMission.com](http://SteelesInMission.com).



REV. DR. WALTER & ROBYN STEELE  
**MUSINGS FROM MATONGO  
AND SOON TO BE THE PHILIPPINES**

MARCH 2024



## Thank you!

Dear Saints of Zion Lutheran,

Greetings in Christ Jesus. We give thanks to God, and to you, for your recent generous gift of support for our Lord's mission. We thank the Lord for your faithfulness. Because of your faithful prayers and support, you join with us in bearing witness to Christ in Africa and Asia. You stand with us, bringing the Word of God to those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death. You help us train pastors and deaconesses who will go as well and witness to the truth—some perhaps even to martyrdom.

We have been serving in East Africa for over five years. The work has expanded beyond Kenya to South Africa, Malawi, Zambia and Tanzania. This December it also brought Walter to The Philippines to address issues of concern there. And Robyn's work has expanded to the training of deaconesses. So that she might better be equipped for her work, Robyn is now training to become a called deaconess of LCMS. She is enrolled in the program at our Fort Wayne Seminary. She is there right now for her residential quarter.

We will soon be transitioning to serve the Lord in The Philippines at Lutheran Theological Seminary in the City of Baguio in northern Luzon. We appreciate your prayers as we complete our service in East Africa and begin the work in South Asia. More on that in upcoming newsletters.

May our Lord bless you in Christ Jesus.

In Christ's care,

Walter and Robyn Steele



## ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

### *Celebrating the Future... Lighting the way*

Zion endowments cross \$1,000,000 milestone, continue to support the ministry and move the mission forward.

## ENDOWMENT OPTIONS:

### Traditional

Disbursements from this endowment cannot be used for budgeted items, but help with special and building projects.

### Legacy

Disbursements from this endowment support Zion's budgeted needs.

### Preschool Legacy

Disbursements from this endowment assist the preschool with their budgeted needs, including providing scholarships to preschoolers.

Zion Family,

As our combined endowments reach the \$1,000,000 milestone, we pause to celebrate the generosity of those who have come before us and reflect upon our opportunity to sow generously for the future generations of Zion. We invite you to name Zion as a beneficiary of a portion of the earthly resources that God has entrusted to you to manage for Him. Through your will, trust, and/or beneficiary designations, you can support Zion's ministry and move our mission forward.

Celebrating the future with you!

- Congregation Chairman, Jeff Hargens
- Zion Endowment Committee



# GAME DAY



oard of Education!



## Snapshots of Zion



Jack R., Bode E.,  
Adam A., Robbie  
G., & Noah G.  
“manage” the  
refreshment line.



Weston S., Luke D., Wade R., &  
Rylan M. “supervise” the kitchen  
during fellowship time.



Naomi B., Vivian B.,  
Paisley L., Kendra A.,  
and Liv R. oversee the  
beverage line during  
fellowship time.



Drew G., Jase H.  
(above) and Bode  
E., Piper M., and  
Adam A. (below)  
assist with our  
Discipling Event.



## Blessing Donations for Tirzah



# Upcoming Events @ ZION & TRINITY

*Please Note! All times and events are subject to change*



Bible Study

Sunday mornings



March 5

Ash Wednesday

Zion: 5:45 Worship (Ashes & Communion), Supper Follows

Trinity: 5:30 supper, 6:30 Worship



March 9 & 23

Youth Group at Zion



March 12, 19, 26

Midweek Lent Services

Zion: 5:45 Worship, Supper Follows

Trinity: 5:30 Supper, 6:30 worship



March 16

Camp Okoboji @ Zion



March 20

Afternoon Communion Service at Zion (1:30 p.m.)

Silence for reflection (in the Divine Service) is meant for us to talk to God and confess our sin and be forgiven.

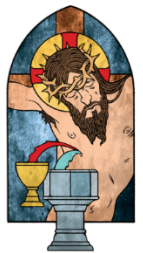
Trying to hide things doesn't help, it just eats you from the inside out. Confessing to God and asking for forgiveness gets the guilt out and pressure off.

I learned about The Office of the Keys, which is that special authority which Christ has given to His church on earth to forgive the sins of repentant sinners, and not to forgive unrepentant sinners

The whole liturgy comes straight from the Bible.

We don't need to punish ourselves for our sins. We have forgiveness. Jesus died for our sins. Our weight of sin is gone. We don't forgive ourselves - Jesus forgives us.

**Family Discipling  
Event 2.26.25**



**What's Your  
One Thing?**



# March Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

## *Birthdays* (T = Trinity)

2. Jennifer Behrens
- Jackson Ehlers
- Kaleal Hass
- Shelly Helmich
- Curtis Lingle (T)
- LeAnne Lingle (T)
3. Lori Genzen
- LeeAnn Musfeldt (T)
4. Katelyn Crawford
- Rebecca Vollstedt (T)
5. Jessie Blackford
- William Lueth (T)
- Kaleb Mandery
- Oliver Saunders (T)
6. Camden Alexander
- Maureen Bunker
- Josiah Conner
7. Larry Leslie
- Zachary Lorenzen (T)
- Errol Wegner
8. Lenus Borkowski
- Beverly Bruhn
- Bonnie Lorenzen (T)
9. Harlow Bieret
- Lynna Miller
- Craig Musfeldt
10. Stan Baack
- Randahl Peters
11. Curtis Grimm
- Jeff Hargens
- Kasie Sanford
12. Layton Lorenzen
13. Shannon Walters
14. Ronald Brus
- Justice Cornelius
15. Dean Grau
- Kora Pothoff
- Kelly Rutherford (T)
- Tyler Saunders
16. Julie Lamp
- Kam Nelson
17. Myra Luetje
- Laurie North (T)
- Katherine Vogel
19. Julianna Stribe
- Anna Belle Wegner
20. Cynthia Karsten
- Chloe Otto
21. Russell Ranniger
22. Kenneth Graves
23. Robert Nissen
- Linda Vinke
24. Travis Borkowski
- Leesa Christensen
- Nathanael Conner
- Claire Gore
25. Carla Backhaus
- Danielle Hargens
- Ember Jensen
26. Marjorie Jurgensen (T)
- Ginger Thorn
27. Noah Gore
- Dwight Gruhn
- Cade Jensen
28. Michael Alexander
- Rebecca Conner
- Tate Karsten (T)
- Rachel Stoberl
29. Beth Booth
- Judy Borkowski
- Brenda Ehlers
- Robert Lueth (T)
- Emily Staehr (T)
- Stephanie Steckelberg (T)
30. Beckett Bruck
- Lacey Hinners
31. Sharon Fast (T)
- Joelle Puck

## *Anniversaries*

4. Thomas & Susie Ulrickson
8. Nels & Stephany Olson (T)
29. Kenneth & Joelle Puck

*If we missed or misspelled  
your name, please inform  
the church office.*

## *Official Acts*

### Adult Confirmation:

Donna Porter, January 19, 2025

### Funeral:

Duane Elmer Otto; Died February 13, 2025, Funeral  
February 18, 2025; Pastor Jonathan Conner

## *In Our Prayers*

Kent Rutz, Bruce Rutz, Steve Rutz, Athena Bess, Kaui Jenkins, Jim Deevers, Rick Spack, Justeen Schwieso, Sherri Steffes, Judy Reinke (Ernie's sister-in-law), Paula Willett (Max Beck's sister), Audrey Grinhaus (Howard & Audrey Roe's granddaughter), Karen Vollstedt, Stacey Rolenz and Ashley Myers (daughters of Shelly Helmich), Myra Luetje, Dorothy Knudson, Mary (Bruce) Grimm, Becki Ehlers, Martin Wanninger, Denny Grimm, Howard Roe, Gary Schroeder