

St. John's Journal

Volume 52, Issue 2

LENT: TIME FOR DEVOTION IN OUR LORD'S PASSION

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Ash Wednesday is February 18 this year. Once again we have special Vespers services planned for the Wednesday evenings in Lent, in large part for devotion in our Lord's passion. These Lenten mid-week services provide us opportunity to listen to the reading of Jesus' passion – the narrative of His suffering and death – from one of the four Gospels (this year, Matthew), to reflect on His passion and its blessings for us in the sermon and hymns, and to respond to His passion with prayers of petition and thanksgiving.

By why pay all this attention to the passion of our Lord Jesus? What is so significant about His sufferings and death that causes us to hear this story year after year? Why do we set aside one evening each week for six weeks to ponder in depth that one week (and mostly, that one day!) in the life of our Savior? Here are two general answers.

First, we devote this attention to the passion of our Lord Jesus, because that is what God does in the Holy Scriptures. The Gospels in particular, and the rest of the Bible more generally, direct our thoughts to the sufferings of the Savior. The Old Testament Scriptures predict, foreshadow, and anticipate the passion of the coming Christ. The New Testament Scriptures describe, proclaim, and reflect on the passion of the Christ who has come.

In fact, the teachings and works of Jesus in the days from His triumphant entry into Jerusalem through His death and resurrection are so momentous in His story that the Holy Spirit led all four Evangelists to devote major portions of their writings to the events of that one week. In Matthew about 35% of the book is devoted to the passion week; in Mark about 38%; in Luke about 25%; and in John about 38%. Considering that the story of Jesus spans fully 3 years in Mark, over 30 years in Matthew and Luke, and all the ages from eternity in John, the fact that the Evangelists give such attention to that single week is nothing less than extraordinary! Clearly the Holy Spirit wishes to im-

press upon us firmly that the passion of Jesus Christ is very, very important!

Second, and this is really an extension of the first answer, we devote great attention to the passion of our Lord Jesus because of *why* it is so very important. The Spirit of Christ led the Gospel writers to emphasize the passion of Christ *because it is the heart of His work for the salvation of the world!* “He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed.” *Isaiah 53:5* “Jesus suffered outside the gate to make the people holy through His own blood.” *Hebrews 13:12* “Christ died for our sins once for all, the Righteous One for the unrighteous ones, to bring you to God.” *1 Peter 3:18*

Since the passion of the Lord Jesus brings us peace and healing, makes us holy, and brings us to God, it is entirely proper and beneficial for us to listen carefully to the reading of His passion and meditate on it with our fellow believers in these special Wednesday services. This is what these Lenten mid-week service are set aside for. This is our unique opportunity for this type of sacred devotion.

May Jesus richly bless us all this Lent in our devotion together in His passion!

- Pastor Bishop

Christian Education

Sunday School

Sunday School

Perfect Attendance

December 2025

Nurse/Pre-School/Kindergarten
Collette Hill

4th/5th/6th Grades
Aiden Harms

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS



Feb 01

Joseph Hillman
Edward Hodgkins
Vincent Thomason

Feb 02

Nathan Barth
David Justi
Stephen Webb

Feb 04

Ryan Hansen

Feb 07

Jamie Hoover
Danny Jones

Feb 08

Emma Jones

Feb 09

Loretta Newman
R. Michael Thompson

Feb 10

Lorelei Huber
Lia Huber
Sarah Huber
Sandy Morgan

Feb 12

Victoria Hillman

Feb 13

Emma Canterbury
Carrie Schmidgall

Feb 14

Steven Depew
Belinda Frankel
Barbara Thompson

Feb 15

Lori Sego

Feb 16

Karen McCammon

Feb 17

George Andrae

Feb 18

Michael Becker
Jeremy Garmon
Emma Hicks
Barry Pool
Gregory Swibold
Shantel Tackmann

Feb 20

Dean Cooper
Marcille Frevet
Shirley Williamson

Feb 22

Susan Waddell

Feb 23

Alison Burris

Feb 24

David Sego

Feb 25

Tyler Widby

Feb 26

Lea Ann Becker

Feb 27

Christina Herold
Christine Neumann

Feb 28

Ava Friedinger
Sandra Gay
Linda McGuire
Carl Whitlatch

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Feb 02

Gerald & Paula Norman

Feb 14

Colby & Ashley Jones
James & Julie Widby
Barry & Katherine Wright

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LENT - The Lenten Season will begin with Ash Wednesday on Feb. 18 We will again have Lenten midweek services the six Wednesdays in Lent at 7:00 p.m. each week.

We would like to furnish a Supper this year before the service starting at 5:30 p.m. Sign-up sheets are up throughout the church for any committees and organizations who wishes to help furnish a meal to sign up.

Thank you in advance for your help.

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LENT AND HOLY WEEK

Preaching Series:
“Symbols of Jesus’ Suffering”

Feb 18: Ash Wednesday
Sermon: “Jesus Willingly Went to Be Crucified... for Us” John 10:11 & 18

Feb 25:
Sermon: “They Pierced My Hands and My Feet” Psalm 22:16

Mar 4:
Sermon: “They Divide My Garments Among Them” Psalm 22:18

Mar 11:
Sermon: “They Gave Me Vinegar to Drink” Psalm 69:21b

Mar 18:
Sermon: “Jesus’ Side Was Pierced” John 19:34-34, 36a, 37b

Mar 25:
Sermon: “Buried for Us to Give Us Hope” Matthew 27:57-60
Apr 2: Maundy Thursday
Sermon: “The Cup Jesus Drank; The Cup Jesus Gave” Matthew 26:27-28, 39

Apr 3: Good Friday
Sermon: “This Is Jesus, the King of the Jews” Matthew 27:37



PARISH NOTES



Church Attendance

Dec 2025— **673**—**18** services
 Dec 2024— **881**—**21** services
 Dec 2023— **901**—**19** services

Sunday School Attendance Year-to-Date

Dec 2025: **1,549**
 Dec 2024: **1,551**
 Dec 2023: **1,644**

Videographers

Jim Lonergan

Worship Committee

Sandy Tennell

February Ushers

8:00

Jerry Bohannon
 Randy Couch
 Steve Kesselmayr

10:30

Ross Gould
 Jacob Gould



A big thank you to all our Service Volunteers.

We appreciate the time and dedication you give to our Church community.

Acolytes

Feb 01 10:30 Silas Gould
Feb 08 10:30 Aiden Harms
Feb 15 10:30 Kenna Donovan
Feb 18 Ash Wednesday
 7:00 Aiden Harms
Feb 22 10:30 Silas Gould
Feb 25 7:00 Kenna Donovan

USHERS ARE NEEDED : If you would like to volunteer to be an Usher please let anyone on the Worship Committee know. Thank you.

GREETERS: It is always nice to have someone greet us as we come into church. So we have put up sign-up sheets for February, March and April are on the bulletin board in the Narthex. Please consider being a greeter.

The Flower Chart for 2026 is posted in the Narthex. Please sign-up for the Sunday(s) that you would like to provide flowers for the altar and **call the church office, 347-2136**, and let us know what you want in the bulletin.



We are now using Greenhouse Flower Shop 347-5921. Cost of the flowers are \$40 plus \$10 for delivery, unless you have a special order and that could have an additional cost.

Remember you can pick up your flowers after the 10:30 service (please leave the green liners) or Mon. to Fri. from 8:00 a.m. to 12 Noon.

What kind of music did the Pilgrims like to listen to? **Plymouth Rock!**

TREASURER'S REPORT DECEMBER, 2025

	<u>December</u>	<u>Y-T-D</u>
<u>INCOME</u>	23,245.90	647,072.73
<u>EXPENSES</u>	41,482.37	425,537.83
<u>INCOME</u>	13,541.43	(221,534.90)
<u>EXPENSE</u>		
<u>General Fund Accounts</u>		
General Fund		11,263.83
General Fund CD #1192280		40,000.00
General Fund Schwab		<u>218,449.53</u>
General Fund Total		270,713.36
<u>Educational Fund Accounts</u>		
Educ. Grant Fund Checking		1,948.56
Ed Grant CD LCMS 03/26		51,863.96
Ed Grant CD LCMS 03/26		51,835.93
Ed Grant Fund #2 Vanguard		<u>65,170.17</u>
Educational Fund Total		169,818.62
<u>East Bluff Property</u>		
East Bluff Property Vanguard		39,679.96
East Bluff CD LCMS 03/26		53,741.35
East Bluff CD LCMS 03/26		53,770.40
Cat Stock at FMV		<u>211,389.03</u>
		358,580.74
<u>Memorial</u>		
Memorial Fund Checking		28,029.62
Memorial Vanguard		97,532.51
Memorial - Busey CD #1192299		<u>20,000.00</u>
Memorial Fund Total		139,562.13
Building Fund Checking		28,083.33
Sunday School Fund Checking		8,499.55
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>975,257.53</u>
Checking Acct Balance		<u>71,824.69</u>
		71,824.69
<u>LIABILITIES</u>		
Payroll Liabilities		2,836.55
Misc. LCMS Orgs Fund		<u>152.90</u>
Total Liabilities		3,591.41
<u>Fund Balance</u>		
Net Income (Loss)		326,249.01
Capital Accounts		<u>645,714.11</u>
Total Fund Balance		971,666.12
TOTAL LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCE		<u>975,257.53</u>

VOTERS ASSEMBLY is in need of a Recording Secretary. It would take approximately 2 hours a month to attend meeting and then type up notes. You can call the office (347-2136) if you are interested in helping. Thank you.

HI-LITES OF ST. JOHN'S VOTERS ASSEMBLY January 12, 2026

Ross Gould called the meeting to order. A quorum was present. Pastor Bishop opened with devotions.

The December Parish Report was reviewed. Ross Gould noted that the Elders Fund helped a member with funeral expenses for their mother. A motion was made by Dave Kesselmayer, seconded by Vince Tennell, to approve the December Parish Report. Motion carried.

The December meeting minutes were reviewed. Val Ferguson inquired about other options for using some of the money that was bequeathed to the church. Val asked as to whether some of the funds could be used to update our audio and visual systems so we can post music on YouTube and use more modern technology to evangelize. Val noted that Allison Harley is working on a proposal. Several other questions were asked about how the money is or could be used. A motion was made by Diane Gould, seconded by Julie Wagner, to approve the December meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – Rod Bollinger reviewed the December Treasurer's Report. In December, expenses exceeded income by \$5,143.14. While we show a large surplus for the year, that is solely due to the special bequests that we received last year. Rod noted that money to update the audio/visual equipment could possibly also come from the Memorial Fund. Rod noted some items on the check register, including, two payments to A & B Hunter for work done to clean out the grease traps, a payment to Preston-Hanley Funeral Home for expenses for a funeral (from Elders Fund), and payments to members to cover expenses for communion wine, Sunday School supplies, gift cards for the share program, and office supplies. The payment to the Waldinger Corporation was for maintenance and repairs on the heating system. Rod also supplied a graph that shows the operating revenue and expenses over the past 3 years. The chart shows that revenue is trending down while expenses have increased dramatically. If this continues, spending may need to be adjusted. If we had not received one of the bequests last year we would have had an approximately \$80,000.00 deficit. Building expenses are increasing due to higher utility rates as well as steep increases in insurance premiums. Nancy Drockelman motioned, seconded by Cheryl Ivey, to approve the December Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

Board of Trustees – Dave Kesselmayer reported that the year hasn't started off well. We have had to have maintenance done on the grease traps, the blower coil, and the furnace at Ewe's Home Furnishing. The

Trustees have contacted two companies, T.C.I. and Hoerr Construction to look at the sewer lines to see what the next steps are in the process of getting the issues resolved.

Board of Elders – Ross Gould reported that the Elders did not meet last month. Their only business was approving providing help with funeral expenses for a member.

Board of Finance – Rod Bollinger reported that the board did not meet. Rod indicated that the board would review investment opportunities during their next meeting. Donation statements should be available next Sunday.

Board of Christian Education – Laura Dobbelaire reported that their next event for the youth is a game day along with a hot dog meal.

John Neumann had no updates for Good Shepherd School.

Board of Worship – Diane Gould reported that the board met last Thursday. The members have decided which months each member will take. The board needs two more people. The committee took down the rest of the Christmas decorations. Diane thanked those that helped.

Board of Evangelism – Tracy Glass reported that the board met and reviewed the church's constitution to determine what their official duties are to help them plan their evangelism efforts for 2026. They will be meeting again in early February to continue that discussion. The board is happy to announce that the updated St John's brochures are ready to use. Emilie Kesselmayer donated her time and talents to design the brochure. The board appreciates her contribution. In addition, another church member managed the printing process and paid for the cost of the printing. The board extended their sincere thanks to that wonderful individual. The board plans to use the brochures as a way of informing non-members about our church services, our Christian beliefs, our activities and classes, and provide our contact information. Val Ferguson gave an update on the church survey. She has been reviewing the material regarding next steps and will talk with Pastor, Ross, and the Evangelism committee as to how we proceed. Val will keep us updated.

Board of Stewardship – No report.

Long Range Planning Committee – No report.

Educational Grant Fund Committee – No report.

East Bluff Property Committee – No report.

Constitution By-laws Committee – Ross Gould noted that they have had copies of the constitution printed if you need a copy. Ross reiterated that if you feel changes need to be made, that request for those changes should come from a committee and then voted on by the Voters Assembly. From there the changes would have to go to the synod for approval.

Unfinished business – Ross Gould noted that we are still in need of officers and committee members. Dave Drockelman has

has volunteered to serve as an Elder. Bob Oliverius motioned, seconded by Nancy Drockelman, to approve Dave Drockelman as Vice President and Dan Doblelaire as Elder. Motion carried.

New business – Ross Gould indicated that for the upcoming election for the president of the synod, we need to nominate synodical electors from our congregation. These would include Pastor Bishop as well as Dave Drockelman as he is a delegate to the convention. A motion was made by Gary Pool, seconded by Diane Gould, to approve Pastor Bishop and Dave Drockelman as electors. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Bob Oliverius, seconded by Cheryl Ivey, to close the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Wagner

Women in Faith–LWML

St. John’s LWMLSociety is collecting items for the Ronald McDonald House in Peoria for our February meeting project. If you would like to donate any of the following items, please place them in the boxes in the elevator addition.

Cleaning wipes, Swiffer pads, mini hand sanitizer (unscented if possible), trial size shampoos and body wash, toilet paper, Kleenex, napkins, zip lock bags (all sizes), and parchment paper.

Their next meeting is February 7 at 9:00 a.m.. All women are welcome.

St. John’s Rummage Sale will be held April 10 & 11 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. You can start bringing your items and please put them on the stage. If you have any questions, you can call Kathy Heisel @ 309-346-7066. Thank you.

GSLS Annual Spaghetti Dinner & Talent Show will be held on Friday, February 20. This is a free will donation event. Cracked Pepper will be serving Spaghetti, salad & garlic bread. They are asking for dessert donations for this even such as cookies, cakes, etc. If you are interested in helping with this event, please Contact Katie McDonough in the school office for more infor-

FEBRUARY LIBRARY CORNER
By Eileen Tiona



“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests.”

I haven't any new books to report on this month, but would like to invite everyone to come into the library and check out all the wonderful books that are available.

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We received a thank you letter from Lutherans for Life for our donation.



Received a letter from Children’s Home Association of Illinois.

For more than 159 years, Children’s Home has provided community support services to at-risk youth, the people who love and care for them, and the people who no longer can.

Each month, our staff provides counseling, education, crisis intervention, community support and prevention programming to more than 1800 children and families to help them overcome obstacles and work toward a stable, successful future.

We recognize the continuous need to enhance the care and treatment we can give these children, as well as the growing demand for our services. Because of the tremendous generosity and support of special friends, like you, we are able to respond to that need.



We thank you for your recent gift of 25 Christmas gifts for children and 12 food baskets to feed families in our communities. Your generosity helps us fulfill our mission of helping the kids and families who need it most.

Also received a thank you card from Children’s Home: Dear Friends, Your toy donations brought joy to families in Faye’s Program. Thank your for caring so deeply for children and parents who needed encouragement this season.

Received a letter from Immanuel Lutheran Church & Student Center in Macomb thanking us for our donation from the funds we collected at the Music for Missions on November 16.

YOUNG ADULT FELLOWSHIP (for ages 20-35) will meet @ Trinity Lutheran Church, 135 NE Randolph Ave., Peoria on Saturday, February 21, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Fellowship includes: food, games, movies, etc. For more information regarding this, please see bulletin board in gym.

SCHOLASHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The Alumni Scholarship Chairman for the Alpha Alumni Chapter of Beta Sigma Psi - National Lutheran Fraternity is contacting high school seniors to inform you of scholarship opportunities our organization has to offer Lutheran high school seniors. If you'd like to learn more about our organization, please check out <https://www.betasigmapi.org/>.

Our Alumni Chapter is offering a \$3,000 scholarship given out to a Lutheran male freshman attending the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in Fall 2026. There is no obligation to join Beta Sigma Psi to receive this award. Runner-ups may be eligible for \$1,000. Our scholarship application may be found online at <https://forms.gle/6Ey69wMutiSX8Y9VA>. All applications are due February 28th, 2026.

The Beta Sigma Psi Educational Foundation also offers additional scholarships and grant opportunities for members of the Lutheran community. These opportunities can be found here <https://www.betasigmapi.org/scholarships-for-high-school-students/>

SUNDAY SCHOOL MISSION PROJECT: Remind-er that the Sunday School will be collecting funds to help buy song books for the children in Africa. Their goal is to reach \$500 by the end of summer or before. Every \$5 we give provides a song book for children or Lutheran teachers in countries like Kenya & Tanzania!

OFFERING ENVELOPES are available in the gym on a table under the bulletin board.

SHUT-INS for the MONTH: Even though some of our members cannot attend church, we want to keep them in our thoughts and prayers and let them know they are not forgotten. Please send a card or pay a visit to these shut-ins this month.

Shut-ins for February are: Melvyn & Shirley Gentry, 509 N. Ohio Ave., Morton 61550; Elaine Hapke, (Elaine is at Bickford Senior Living on Heartland Dr. in Bloomington) mailing address is 1092 Hershey Rd., Normal, IL 61761-2521 and Horst Hupke, 1923 Liberty Ct., Pekin.

Thank you from your St. John's Ladies Guild.

CHURCH DOORS: If you unlock one of the doors to the church, please check to make sure it is locked before you leave. Thank you.

In Our Prayers

If you know of anyone who needs to be added, please let the church office know.

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Pastor Niemann | Sandy Morgan |
| Robert Rilea | Peggy Farlin |
| Debbie Miller | Addie Burling |
| Julie Rilea | Eileen Tiona |
| Keith Gleason | Paula Jensen |
| Gabriella Kesselmayr | Suzanne Reising |
| Kellen Norman | Joyce Barnes |
| Lee Morgan | Ray Garber |
| Roy Dagit | John Durdle |
| Shirley Williamson | Bobby Gregory |
| Scott Ruschmeyer | Marilee Gregory |
| Megan Gould | Rosetta Turner |
| Melvyn Gentry | Bob Hurst |
| Michelle Watson | Pam Woolsey |
| Shirley Gentry | Tom Lappie |
| Cameron Conway | Honor Deiss |
| Marcille Frevert | Tina Williams |
| Vicki McKinley | Sandy Tennell |
| Donna Hansen | Bryan McGrath |
| Marlana Montgomery | Bob Oliverius |
| Janet Lawson | Don Dobbelaire |

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN SCHOOL

- Feb 9—15 National Lutheran School Week
- Fri. Feb 13 School Improvement Day, Early Dismissal
- Mon. Feb 16 No School — President's Day
- Fri. Feb 20 Spaghetti Dinner & Talent Show—4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.— Free will donation
- Thurs. Feb 26 Parent Teacher Conferences 3:30 to 6:30 p.m.
- Fri. Feb 27 No Student Attendance due to Parent Teachers Conferences

“Did You Know?”

by Peoria Area Lutherans for Life: Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel motivated voices for life.



How are your New Year's fitness goals coming along? By week 9, a baby's muscles are growing and forming. He'll be using them around week 17 to stretch, kick, punch, and swim in his mother's womb. He'll be flipping and rolling until his size limits him in the womb. Baby's muscles are being exercised and strengthened. By God's design, it takes a lot of work for a baby's body to develop all of the intricacies needed for a healthy, functioning body.

(Address Service Requested)

Bible Wordsearch

Wordsearch 185

Solomon's Temple

I	R	S	A	N	C	T	U	A	R	Y	P	D	E	I
N	S	C	V	E	S	S	E	L	S	C	I	N	C	H
C	E	L	U	E	S	F	D	H	M	O	L	A	A	E
E	N	R	W	R	L	N	E	O	L	T	L	T	L	Z
N	P	T	U	O	T	W	E	S	A	A	A	S	P	N
S	E	A	W	T	B	A	G	V	P	B	R	P	Y	O
E	E	E	R	R	I	N	I	C	A	E	S	M	L	R
F	R	C	E	T	I	N	H	N	B	R	S	A	O	B
S	I	A	I	R	I	E	R	M	S	N	G	L	H	C
I	D	G	E	F	R	T	A	U	I	A	N	T	D	O
U	N	F	U	U	I	H	I	S	F	C	A	A	R	U
E	F	N	B	R	C	R	A	O	E	L	F	R	O	R
O	R	I	E	E	E	B	C	D	N	E	V	E	K	T
S	M	O	O	R	R	S	A	A	G	O	L	D	E	N
T	A	E	S	Y	C	R	E	M	S	H	C	R	O	P

ALTAR	CHAMBERS
ARK	CHERUBIM
BASINS	CURTAINS
BOWLS	FIGURES
BRONZE	FLOWERS
CEDAR	FURNITURE
COURT	HOLYPLACE
GOLDEN	INCENSE
GRAVEN	LAMPSTAND
INNER	MERCYSEAT
PALMS	OFFERINGS
PILLARS	PARTITION
PORCH	SACRIFICES
ROOMS	SANCTUARY
VESSELS	SHEWBREAD
TABERNACLE	



After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

Prov.27

MORE PUZZLES AT:
<http://biblewordgames.com>

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