

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
229 11TH AVE W
GRINNELL IA 50112-8217

March Newsletter

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH LC-MS

229 11TH AVENUE WEST

GRINNELL, IA 50112

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REV. DR. JOEL G. KOEPP

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**ALL SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS ARE ON OUR WEBSITE
SERVICES ARE LIVE STREAMED ON OUR FACEBOOK**

LET US KNOW...

If you have a change in address, phone or email, have a loved one who is or hospitalized, have a new baby, would like a pastoral visit, or if you would like a special prayer during the prayers of the church on Sunday, please contact Pastor Koeppe or the church office.

DO YOU...

have an announcement for the bulletin or newsletter?

Have a prayer request? Birth/Anniversary/Graduation announcements?

If so, please submit the information as you want it to appear in the bulletin or newsletter by the deadlines listed below to the church secretary at lcms.immanuelgrinnell@gmail.com

Deadline for submitting in the weekly bulletin is Thursdays by noon.

Deadline for the monthly newsletter is the 15th of each month.

For those of you without email access, please call or submit your written request to the church secretary.



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Pastor's Message

This year, March begins the Season of Lent. Many think of Lent only as a depressing season of death and lamentation. While it is true that we focus upon the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, why do we walk through this time every year? Life! St. John writes, ***“Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.”*** (John 20:30–31). When we believe that Jesus is the Christ, God gives us life—abundant life, forgiven life, eternal life.

Historically, the Fourth Gospel is likened to an eagle—an image that suggests John soars to heights of glory and grandeur. That’s because the evangelist paints a stunning portrait of Jesus, who is the bread of life, the resurrection and the life, and the way, the truth, and the life. Life in Jesus. That’s God’s gift to you!¹

This Lent, our life in Christ will be strengthened as we hear the witness of those in John’s Gospel who journeyed to the cross. Along the way, we’ll meet many people throughout the Gospel of John. Some may be considered saints, but not all of them. We will reflect on villains, such as Barabbas and Pontius Pilate, as well as sinners, such as Peter (who denied Jesus three times), Mary Magdalene (who was possessed by seven demons), and Judas Iscariot (who betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver). Each week we will ponder God’s Word in the Passion of Jesus in Lent through the lens of important people recorded in John’s Gospel.

¹ Also read, “the bread of life” (John 6:35); “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25); and “the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

Please join us for worship as we hear the witness of these people in John's Gospel:

Ash Wednesday: John the Baptist, John 1:29–34

Midweek of Lent 1: Mary, the Sister of Lazarus and Martha, John 12:1–11

Midweek of Lent 2: Malchus, John 18:1–11

Midweek of Lent 3: Peter, John 18:12–27

Midweek of Lent 4: Barabbas, John 18:33–40

Midweek of Lent 5: Pontius Pilate, John 19:1–16

Maundy (Holy) Thursday: Judas Iscariot, John 13:21–30

Good Friday: John, the Gospel Writer, John 19:25–37

The Vigil of Easter: Nicodemus, John 19:38–42

The Resurrection of Our Lord: Mary Magdalene, John 20:1–18

Hymn Saints, See the Cloud of Witnesses

LSB 667



1 Saints, see the cloud of wit - ness - es sur - round us;
2 These saints of old re - ceived God's com - men - da - tion;
3 They call to us, "Your tim - id foot - steps length - en;
4 Come, let us fix our sight on Christ who suf - fered,



Their lives of faith en - cour - age and as - tound us.
They lived as pil - grim - heirs of His sal - va - tion.
Throw off sin's weight, your halt - ing weak - ness strength - en.
He faced the cross, His sin - less life He of - fered;



Hear how the Mas - ter praised their faith so
Through faith they con - quered flame and sword and
We kept the faith, we shed our blood, were
He scorned the shame, He died, our death en -



fer - vent: "Well done, My ser - vant!"
gal - lows, God's name to hal - low.
mar - tyred; Our lives we bar - tered."
dur - ing, Our hope se - cur - ing.

5 Lord, give us faith to walk where You are sending,
On paths unmarked, eyes blind as to their ending;
Not knowing where we go, but that You lead us—
With grace precede us.

6 You, Jesus, You alone deserve all glory!
Our lives unfold, embraced within Your story;
Past, present, future—You, the same forever—
You fail us never!

Text: Stephen P. Starke, 1955. Tune: Dale Wood, 1934–2003. Text: © 1997 Stephen P. Starke, admin. Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110001879. Tune: © 1974 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110001879

+ Soli Deo Gloria +
Rev. Dr. Joel G. Koeppe

President's Piece for Peace

March 25

March 5th the Church Year brings to us again the penitential season of Lent. On Ash Wednesday the church gathers and receives ashes upon the forehead with the words spoken to her, "from dust you have come; and to dust you shall return." These are sobering words to hear, and ashes are a sobering mark upon our heads. It is a time of reflection and repentance, thus the liturgical color of deep purple.

Repentance was a major theme for the Lutheran Fathers during the time of the Reformation. Rome had turned repentance into a work of man and contrition was considered worthy of God's forgiveness. The result of such teaching was that forgiveness was predicated on man's contrition rather than on the shed blood of Jesus on the cross. The tragedy of such teaching is that no one can be sure if they are contrite enough to have earned forgiveness. It leaves the broken heart in a state of doubt and uncertainty.

Repentance is of two parts, says Luther in his Small Catechism. Part one: contrition, or sorrow over sin. Part two: trust (faith) in the atonement offered up to God the Father by Jesus Christ, God's Son. In and only in His sacrifice for our sakes do we have assurance our sins are forgiven. The Day of Atonement is the Day of Jesus crucifixion. During this penitential season of Lent, I would like to instruct a little concerning the first part of repentance: contrition. Contrition, by definition, is a broken and sorrowful heart over the sin one commits against God and against our neighbor.

I want to focus on what contrition looks like. I am not trying to give a snapshot of contrition as though we can know the discernment of anyone's hearts. At the same time the Lutheran Confessions do speak of what contrition says. In the Apology to the Augsburg Confession, article XII (penitence) quotes Psalm 38:4,8 "For my iniquities have gone over my head; they weigh like a burden too heavy for me. I am utterly spent and crushed; I groan because of the tumult of my heart." This is the experience of a broken and contrite heart.

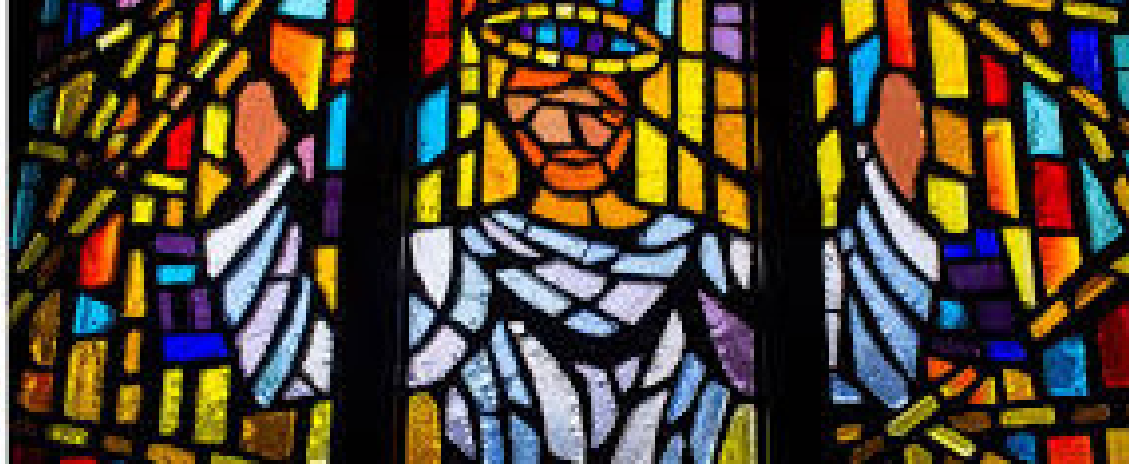
Contrition recognizes the sin in one's life whether by action or inaction. Contrition is ashamed to be known as one who sins in the way that is being called to repentance. It wants to be rid of the shame and out from under its conscience burdening weight. Contrition does not look to escape from responsibility or ignore that which continues to haunt the conscience. It is ashamed of itself.

Contrition recognizes the sin in one's life whether by action or inaction.

What questions does contrition answer? **First:** What Word of God did I violate? When identified it can only cry "sin is my fault, I can blame no one else." **Second:** Who did my sin hurt? Every sin is a defiance of God. At the same time sin often hurts our neighbor in one way or another. Contrition wants to confess to God and the neighbor their sorrow. **Third:** Since I cannot count on myself to atone for my sin, where do I go for forgiveness? To Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, and to Him only. It is He who paid the price for our debt. **Fourth:** What temptations am I prone to fall for and what can I do not to fall in that direction again? Go to your pastor for Holy Absolution. The Holy Spirit works through the Means of Grace to strengthen faith. Go to the one you sinned against and ask for forgiveness. Forgiveness is the mark of the Church. It is the bond that holds us together in the Body of Christ. Surround yourself with strong fellow Christians who support you along your way of a holy life.

Keep in mind, repentance looks like something. To repent is to "turn around" from that which shames us- to that which glorifies God. May this season of Lent be a time of reflection and repentance. May it prepare us rightly for the Day of Atonement where hangs the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Rev. Dr. Brian S. Saunders
District President



**The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
LCMS Stewardship Ministry – lcms.org/stewardship
Newsletter Article – February 2025**

God's Instruments, God's Stewards

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:10)

Some pastors refer to these words as “the most forgotten words in the Scriptures.” They are forgotten because they follow the familiar and critical words before it. The preceding two verses that overshadow Ephesians 2:10 are words of justification: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph. 2:8–9). These are words preached regularly. They are assigned as confirmation verses. They carry with them the very heart of what it means to be a redeemed child of God!

Precisely because the previous verses are so central to salvation, they often overpower our practice of stewardship! We have been saved by grace. This is certain and sure because of Jesus. Works play no role in our salvation. No credit taking for us! Grace is freely given. Faith is miraculously created by the Spirit and joyously received. This truth is so wonderful and so encompassing that we often miss out on WHY we are redeemed.

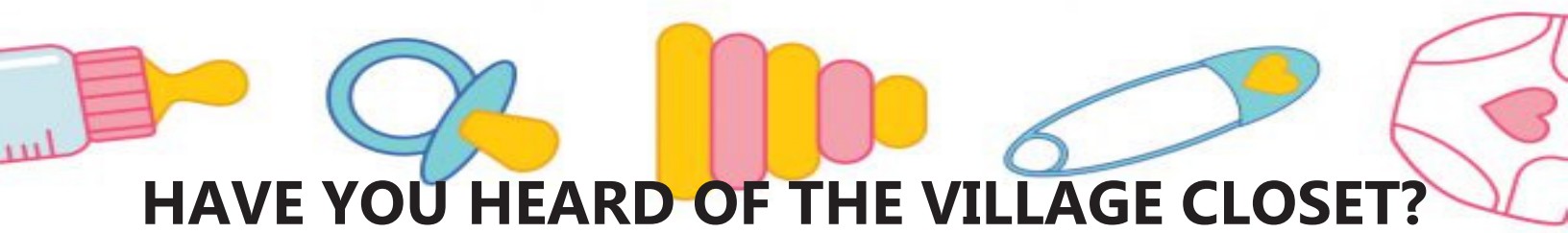
The grace of God revealed in Jesus calls us to faith. But St. Paul doesn't stop with grace and faith. He continues to the logical conclusion. Just like the creation declares the handiwork of God, the redemption of sinners like you and me declares His greatest handiwork! Redeemed stewards are created to reflect the grace and mercy God showers on us to others.

As Lutherans, we understand that good works flow from faith in Jesus Christ. They are the fruit of the tree of salvation into which we have been grafted by grace. Sanctification and stewardship are both on-going and active confessions of what the Lord has done in us. These works are not always spectacular. Many times, they are simply parents showing Jesus to their children. They are compassionate actions that live out the truth of the Gospel to co-workers and even complete strangers. While they can be grand endeavors, more likely they are simple, beautiful works which highlight what Jesus has done in us.

These works aren't random either. They have been planned by God. God planned to use you as a faithful steward as you walk the road that leads you through your daily life. There are no chance

encounters or coincidences. They have been planned by the Lord of the universe for the benefit of His creation. Good works are what point to God's greatest work: Jesus!

He calls you and me to walk in this faith, which flows from this grace, which has been poured out on us in Jesus. But even this is not to our credit. We are simply called to be faithful stewards of God's grace so that we may share it with those who need it as much as we do. God's Spirit carries us along in this. We are just the steward — the instrument in His hand to accomplish His plan and glorify Him!



HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE VILLAGE CLOSET?

IT IS A NEW PROGRAM STARTED IN DECEMBER OF 2024 BY THE GRINNELL PUBLIC HEALTH (UNITY POINT) HERE IN GRINNELL. IT PROVIDES ESSENTIAL BABY ITEMS TO SUPPORT EXPECTANT MOTHERS AND CHILD CAREGIVERS THROUGHOUT PREGNANCY AND THE FIRST YEAR OF A CHILD'S LIFE.

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN WILL START COLLECTING ITEMS FOR THIS NEW VENTURE. ITEMS BELOW MAY BE PUT IN THE PLASTIC BIN LOCATED IN THE CHURCH HALLWAY UNDER THE INFORMATION TABLE.

BABY ITEMS NEEDED

NEWBORN - 12 MONTHS

*3 - 6 MONTHS MOST NEEDED

- DIAPERS
- WIPES
- BOTTLES
- HOODED BATH TOWELS
- WASH CLOTHS
- BURP CLOTHS
- BREAST FEEDING ITEMS
- TOYS

IN GOOD CONDITION

- BABY SWINGS
- CAR SEATS
- BATH TUBS
- OTHER BABY EQUIPMENT
- MATERNITY CLOTHES

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!
BOARD OF EVANGELISM***





Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc.

Poweshiek County Family Development Center

Immanuel Lutheran Church
229 11th Ave. W
Grinnell, IA 50112

February, 2025

Dear Friends at Immanuel Lutheran Church,

We are extremely grateful for your January, 2025, donation of **14 pounds** to Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc. (MICA) Poweshiek County Emergency Food Pantry. From your help, we were able to provide food and other necessities to 382 households (297 in December) and 499 food boxes (419 in December). This equaled 17,107 pounds (15,607 in December). THANK YOU for your donation to help make these food boxes possible.

Head Start is one of the programs housed in the Poweshiek County office. According to the micaonline.org website, "Head Start is a comprehensive early childhood program. In Head Start, children don't just learn how to count or identify letters (though that's certainly an important part of the curriculum). Many people don't know that our preschool experience also includes health services and screenings, teaches good nutrition and social skills, supports parents, and promotes physical activity, so children improve their motor skills. It is a safe learning environment where children are encouraged to explore their world and learn the essential skills they will need to succeed later in life."

Head Start in the Grinnell/Poweshiek County MICA office is led by Megan Polzin. Do you know someone who might be interested in the Head Start program? If so, contact our office at 641-236-3923.

We truly appreciate your contribution because every donation helps MICA fulfill its mission: Helping People. Changing Lives. Building Communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mandy Clayton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, prominent "M" and "C".

Poweshiek County Family Development Center
Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc.

Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca



March 2025

Before We Know It

Before we know it, summer will have arrived, and camp will be in session! We are excited and preparing for another wonderful summer! Registrations have continued to pour in, and we look forward to receiving more! With great demand comes great need. We are once again in need of male and female counselors. We are looking for counselors who have a desire to serve others, share the Christian faith, and be a role-model for all the kids who attend camp! Serving as a counselor is also a great way to develop professional skills such as working and communicating with people of all ages, being able to adapt, and making quick and sound decisions in a variety of situations. We're primarily looking for college-aged, LCMS young adults to serve as counselors in overnight and day camp settings. To get started with the application process, head over to www.nloma.org, or scan the QR Code below, and complete a summer service profile. Be sure to list Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca as your first-choice camp!



Registration



Summer Service Profile

Pastors' Wives Winter Social



For the first time, Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca will be hosting a winter retreat for wives of pastors serving in the Iowa District East. This weekend presents a wonderful opportunity for rest, refreshment, and fellowship. The Pastors' Wives' Winter Social will take place on March 7-8, 2025. The registration cost for the retreat is \$45/ person and includes the overnight fee, bedding, and meals from Friday supper through Saturday lunch.



PWWS Info & Registration

3271 Sandy Beach Road NE, Solon, IA 52333

phone 319.848.4187

web www.campiodiseca.org

email office@iodiseca.org

DEPARTING IN PEACE



Theological and Practical Aspects at the End of Life

When: Saturday, March 8, 2025
Where: Redeemer Lutheran Church
1600 S. Center
Marshalltown, IA 50158

12:00pm: Lunch
1-2:45pm: Rev. Dr. Jim Lamb: "Theology of Dying and Living Forever: Advanced Directives Workshop"
2:45-3pm: Coffee and Cookies
3-3:45pm: Rev. Alex Post: "Preparing to See Jesus: Working on my Funeral Plan"
3:45-4:30pm: Wrap Up and Q & A Panel

RSVP to alexpost1226@gmail.com
(641) 758-1915



Confirmation

MEMORY WORK SCHEDULE FOR MARCH

6th & 7th Grade Memory Work

March 5: 3rd and 4th Petitions and Meanings

March 12: 5th and 6th Petitions and Meanings

March 19: No Class

March 26: 7th Petition and Conclusion and Meanings

8th Grade Memory Work

March 5: Lord's Prayer: 7th Petition, Conclusion and Meanings

March 12: Questioning Books

March 19: No Class

March 26: Questioning Books

Lenten Meal & Services



Midweek Lent Evening Prayer Service

Wednesday, March 12 at 6:30pm

Wednesday, March 19 at 6:30pm

Wednesday, March 26 at 6:30pm

Wednesday, April 2 at 6:30pm

Wednesday, April 9 at 6:30pm

5:00pm Meal will be served before each service

God's Work in Eurasia

A Mock Family Newsletter

Return to Prague

It is so good to be able to sit down and write an update about what The Mocks have been up to these past few months. We apologize that it has been so long as there has been much in motion. Thankfully, things are settling down and we can now give you a proper update.

Due to unexpected visa complications and unforeseen medical circumstances, we have relocated from Riga back to Prague. Unfortunately, the clear path for our visas was met with unexpected documentation requirements that we were unable to provide. While work was being done to appeal this requirement, I (Cody) discovered that the medical landscape was not configured for my medical needs. We began discussions with regional leadership and it was decided to execute our backup plan of renewing our visas for the Czech Republic. Thankfully, these visas were approved (for a full two years!) and we were on the move again. We are so thankful for our leadership, those with the Latvian church and Luther Academy, and fellow missionaries in Riga and Prague for their support over the past few months.



Before leaving Riga. In front of the House of the Blackheads.

So what impact does this have on our work in Latvia—specifically when it comes to Luther Academy in Riga? Thankfully, while our location has changed, our work does not. We continue in our labors with Luther Academy and the Eurasia region as we did before by helping others proclaim Christ and Him crucified for the sins of the world.

What is going on in the region?

Lots! Luther Academy recently finished up their Fall 2024 term and just started the Spring 2025 term. Much work is done in between terms both administratively (grading) and technologically (high-impact updates). One such project is that of course feedback. At the end of the term, students are asked to electronically submit feedback for their courses. This feedback is then aggregated, formatted, and shared with our theological educators. In the past, this has been a manual and very time-consuming process. But now, thanks to my background in programming, this task has been delegated to code. What used to take days now takes mere seconds. This is a huge boon to Luther Academy as it frees up our limited human resources to do more important tasks. Not only is this type of work being done at Luther Academy, but in the Eurasia region as a whole. One such place that we are using technology is surrounding communication around projects. As you can imagine, there are many projects going on in the vast expanse of Eurasia. Many of these projects are between missionaries in the region but many are also shared with our local partner churches. We are in the process of utilizing existing project management tools and practices to better collaborate with one another. This is especially helpful when we are working across multiple countries in the region. Keeping everything organized in e-mail only works for so long! In addition to being able to better collaborate with one another, another benefit will be increased visibility into what is going on in the region—both for us but also for you, too!

What else have we been up to?

We are making good progress on getting settled into our new apartment and adjusting to life in Prague. It has been a joy to reconnect with our church family and friends here in Prague and the Czech Republic.

We continue to visit various government offices as we settle the final things for our visas and begin to put down our roots. These are tasks that can now be met with much joy since we are able to rest in having secured our long-term visas. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for your prayers and support over the last year and a half as we have walked through the visa applications and renewal processes in both the Czech Republic and Latvia.

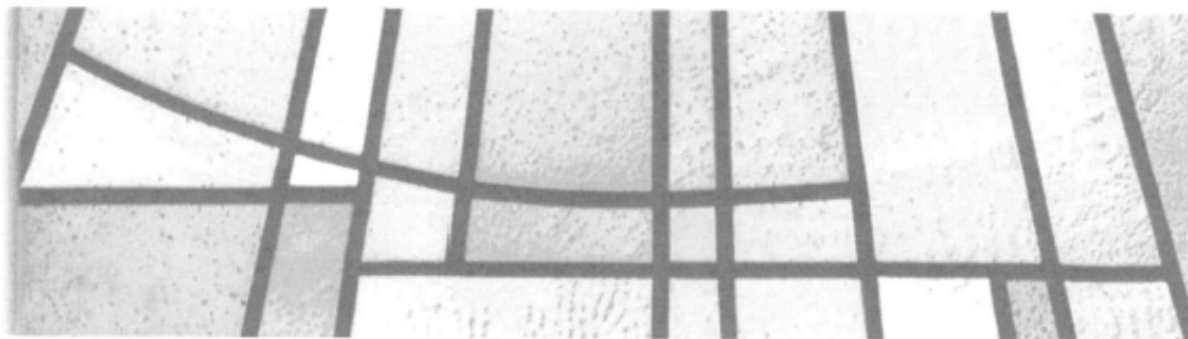
Thank you so much for your prayers as we continue in the work that God has set before us, that the Gospel of Christ and Him crucified for the sins of the world may be proclaimed.

– Cody, Aurélie, Eva and Moriah

LCMS President Harrison letter about U.S. immigration and Lutheran organizations

reporter.lcms.org/2025/lcms-president-harrison-letter-about-u-s-immigration-and-lutheran-organizations

February 7, 2025



Feb. 6, 2025

Some facts and reflections about the confusing and complex situation surrounding Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and LCMS Recognized Service Organizations

Dear Saints of the LCMS,

Grace and peace in Jesus!

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Eph. 1:15–23)

As many of you are aware, General Mike Flynn (retired) publicly took to task Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) and several other Lutheran social ministry agencies for receiving large federal grants for work with immigrants. That got the attention of Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). I was surprised at the dollar amounts involved. The post on X accused LIRS and the other agencies bearing the name Lutheran of “money laundering.” I am writing to provide you with some facts about this complex and confusing situation.

The LCMS is a law-abiding and patriotic church body. We don’t invite or support illegal immigration. We don’t say much to or about the government. We don’t have government contracts. Not one. We leave issues of government to our 1.8 million members and 5,700 active pastors, who act in the civil realm according to their Christian consciences as good citizens. We have spoken as a body to certain issues. The Bible and reason teach us that the unborn have the God-given right to life (Luke 1:39–45). The government has no right to infringe upon religious freedom, including the free exercise of religion. “Thoughts are tax free!” said Martin Luther. All our people are trained from Sunday school and catechism class, and every Sunday sermon, to be good citizens and advocate for just laws, punishment for evildoers and mercy for those in need. Specific views on the details of how the government is involved in this are left to the individual as a citizen.

The LCMS uses legal means to fight for First Amendment rights when those rights are under attack. We have suffered formal legal action and much more as we have watched as DEI philosophy (formally rejected by our church body along with white supremacy) has pervaded nearly every aspect of government activity, even as the U.S. government has

burgeoned beyond all ethical and rational propriety, in effect stealing the future from our children. We've been inundated with government attacks on those First Amendment rights. This subjects us to anxiety in the workplace, fear and lack of promotion in the military, and constant attacks at public schools and universities for merely following the Bible and sound reason on matters of sex. Our children are subjected to coercion at public schools. Millions of fellow Lutheran saints around the globe are chagrined at U.S. embassies and programs preoccupied with LGBTQ issues in their many different countries, as this program has been carried out globally.

The LCMS loves all people. We believe "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). We are sinners loved by Christ. And Christ bids us, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 19:19). When our congregations, pastors and people come into contact with individuals who are not legally in the U.S., particularly when such individuals find themselves in our churches, we welcome them. We tell them about Jesus' forgiveness. We also always urge and often assist them in doing the right thing, that is, becoming legal residents. The LCMS is officially pro-immigrant. Our church was founded by German immigrants.

The LCMS is no longer part of LIRS. At its inception, LIRS assisted with the resettlement of many Europeans suffering the devastation of WWII. We still have many people in our church who were children in the late 1940s and early 1950s, who were resettled in the U.S. by LIRS in partnership with our local congregations. They are eternally grateful. That partnership happened again in a remarkable way in the 1970s with many southeast Asians in the wake of the Vietnam War. LIRS was at one time officially related to a number of American Lutheran church bodies, with specific board positions reserved for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and LCMS representatives. As the ELCA wandered away from the clear biblical teachings on sexual morality, this and other intersections of the ELCA and the LCMS (such as Lutheran Disaster Response, institutional chaplaincy, military chaplaincy, Lutheran World Relief and so on) became ever more challenging. As LIRS secularized, it hired a non-Christian, Hindu person to serve as president and CEO. The agency reorganized to become fully independent of its former partner church bodies. This diminished Lutheran identity is reflected in its new name, Global Refuge. For the past five years, the LCMS has provided no funding to LIRS and has provided no official representation on the board.

The post-WWII push within the LCMS toward one Lutheran church body in America that precipitated the disastrous events of the Concordia Seminary Walkout in 1974 brought the LCMS into the Lutheran Council USA, and into various cooperative agencies. Lutheran World Relief likewise became and remains a rebranded independent entity apart from the LCMS. Like LIRS, it does charitable work as a government contractor. There is no specifically Christian content, no sharing of the blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins.

More than a decade ago, I was part of an LCMS delegation that attended what would be our last Committee on Lutheran Cooperation meeting at the ELCA headquarters in Chicago. The ELCA bishop prayed, avoiding "Father" and "Son" in his prayer. I told him that we would no longer meet. Among other things, including the ELCA's teachings and statements on sexuality, I told him, "I'm no longer sure we are praying to the same God." It is difficult enough to carry out what we call "cooperation in externals" (for instance, doing mercy work together without church fellowship for the benefit of people in need) when we no longer agree on what the Gospel is. It is impossible when we can't even agree on what the Law is.

The LCMS grants special status to certain agencies as Recognized Service Organizations (RSOs). Like LIRS, we have no ownership of, governing authority over or hand in the financial management of such agencies. They are independently audited. Some of the organizations on the list circulated by Flynn for public scrutiny are LCMS RSOs and at the same time retain affiliation with the ELCA. Because of the public uproar over Flynn's post, many of our LCMS people are asking for a review of these RSOs. Rightly so. We are following up on these concerns. To maintain RSO status in the LCMS, an agency must agree to "[respect] and ... not act contrary to the doctrine and practice of the Synod." In short, our RSOs are not to give themselves over to ELCA doctrine and practice.

Let me just note (and this is NOT an official position of the LCMS): I'm personally pleased with DOGE. The federal government is bloated beyond all rational limits. It can't fund its activities without accumulating debt. And it's failing in its basic tasks. Christians believe the government should protect its citizens, maintain just laws, prosper marriage and family, and punish criminals. I think the government is failing across the board. The bigger government becomes, the more it meddles in what should not be its business at all, such as promoting faddish, unscientific philosophies of sex and family to the detriment of those who in good conscience cannot agree — and never will agree no matter the coercion.

I'm sure that General Flynn meant well with his muckraking, but he misses the mark in two ways. First, though I do not agree philosophically with every operational aspect of LIRS, if there is something legally amiss, the blame falls squarely upon the federal government. LIRS — and even our own LCMS RSOs — simply does what the government asks and pays for them to do.

During his first term, President Trump and the First Lady visited one of the LCMS RSOs currently under scrutiny. The president wanted to ensure that the institution would be a place to deliver outstanding care to unaccompanied minors. That agency has been quietly doing this work since that visit. They take the work with profound seriousness and love. They did not and do not deserve the broad brush of disdain brought upon them.

Second, our immigration laws are a mess. I can safely say our LCMS people are all for removing criminal bad actors from this country. Caesar “beareth not the sword in vain” says St. Paul (Rom. 13:4). There are indeed millions who have broken federal immigration law. That is wrong. It is also true that millions have been enticed and encouraged to enter illegally into this country by contradictory American voices at all levels: federal, state and local. I cannot but be sympathetic to their plight. At the same time, a well-regulated border, sound immigration policy, and welcoming space for persecuted refugees are all fundamental parts of a God-pleasing answer to the question: Who will contribute to this marvelous and blessed American experiment?

Blessings to you all.

In Christ,

Pastor Matthew C. Harrison
President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
St. Louis

Book of Concord Lenten Reading Plan

A Forty-Day Reading Plan from Concordia Publishing House

Page numbers, given in parentheses, reference *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, second edition (Concordia Publishing House, 2006).



<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DATE	LITURGICAL DATE	READING
	5-Mar	Ash Wednesday	The Three Ecumenical Creeds (16–18); Luther's Small Catechism (313–48)
	6-Mar	Thursday after Ash Wednesday	Luther's Large Catechism: Preface–Part I, para. 77 (351–67)
	7-Mar	Friday after Ash Wednesday	Luther's Large Catechism: Part I, para. 78–178 (367–78)
	8-Mar	Saturday after Ash Wednesday	Luther's Large Catechism: Part I, para. 179–291 (379–92)
	9-Mar	Lent 1	
	10-Mar	Monday, Lent 1	Luther's Large Catechism: Part I, para. 292–Part II, para. 70 (392–408)
	11-Mar	Tuesday, Lent 1	Luther's Large Catechism: Part III, para. 1–84 (408–18)
	12-Mar	Wednesday, Lent 1	Luther's Large Catechism: Part III, para. 85–Part IV, para. 86 (419–31)
	13-Mar	Thursday, Lent 1	Luther's Large Catechism: Part V (431–40); Brief Exhortation to Confession (649–53)
	14-Mar	Friday, Lent 1	Augsburg Confession: Preface–Art. XX (27–44)
	15-Mar	Saturday, Lent 1	Augsburg Confession: Art. XXI–XXVI (44–53)
	16-Mar	Lent 2	
	17-Mar	Monday, Lent 2	Augsburg Confession: Art. XXVII–Conclusion (53–63); Apology: Greeting to Reader (73–74)
	18-Mar	Tuesday, Lent 2	Apology: Art. I–IV (74–102)
	19-Mar	Wednesday, Lent 2	Apology: Art. V, para. 1–122 (102–18)
	20-Mar	Thursday, Lent 2	Apology: Art. V, para. 123–212 (118–33)
	21-Mar	Friday, Lent 2	Apology: Art. V, para. 213–79 (133–43)
	22-Mar	Saturday, Lent 2	Apology: Art. VII–XI (143–57)
	23-Mar	Lent 3	
	24-Mar	Monday, Lent 3	Apology: Art. XIIa (158–71)
	25-Mar	Tuesday, Lent 3	Apology: Art. XIIb (171–84)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DATE	LITURGICAL DATE	READING
	26-Mar	Wednesday, Lent 3	Apology: Art. XIII–XX (184–201)
	27-Mar	Thursday, Lent 3	Apology: Art. XXI–XXII (202–10)
	28-Mar	Friday, Lent 3	Apology: Art. XXIII (210–18)
	29-Mar	Saturday, Lent 3	Apology: Art. XXIV (220–37)
	30-Mar	Lent 4	
	31-Mar	Monday, Lent 4	Apology: Art. XXVII–XXVIII (237–51)
	1-Apr	Tuesday, Lent 4	Smalcald Articles: Preface–Part III, Art. II (259–72)
	2-Apr	Wednesday, Lent 4	Smalcald Articles: Part III, Art. III–XV (272–85)
	3-Apr	Thursday, Lent 4	Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope (294–306)
	4-Apr	Friday, Lent 4	Preface to the Christian Book of Concord (3–12); Formula of Concord: Epitome Summary–Art. I (473–77)
	5-Apr	Saturday, Lent 4	Formula of Concord: Epitome Art. II–VII (477–91)
	6-Apr	Lent 5	
	7-Apr	Monday, Lent 5	Formula of Concord: Epitome Art. VIII–XII (491–502)
	8-Apr	Tuesday, Lent 5	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Introduction–Summary, Rule, and Norm (505–11)
	9-Apr	Wednesday, Lent 5	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. I (511–19)
	10-Apr	Thursday, Lent 5	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. II, para. 1–56 (520–30)
	11-Apr	Friday, Lent 5	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. II, para. 57–Art. III, para. 25 (530–40)
	12-Apr	Saturday, Lent 5	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. III, para. 26–Art. IV, para. 40 (540–52)
	13-Apr	Palm Sunday	
	14-Apr	Monday in Holy Week	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. V–VI (552–61)
	15-Apr	Tuesday in Holy Week	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. VII, para. 1–62 (561–73)
	16-Apr	Wednesday in Holy Week	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. VII, para. 63–128 (573–81)
	17-Apr	Holy (Maundy) Thursday	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. VIII (581–96)
	18-Apr	Good Friday	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. IX–XI, para. 47 (596– 609)
	19-Apr	Holy Saturday	Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration Art. XI, para. 48–Art. XII, Conclusion (609–19)

MARCH



This is a monthly prayer guide for your daily use. Each day as you pray, please feed your Mite Box in support of district and LWML Mission Grants. As you lift up the countries and mission grants listed, pray that the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ would be heard by those who live there or are served by our mite offerings. Each country listed has been a recipient of a mission grant from LWML at some time since 1942. What a joy it is to bring these prayers to our Father's listening ears!

1. For a clean heart (Psalm 51:10).
2. For LWML Mission Grant #6.
3. For China, one of the 83 countries where LWML has supported a grant.
4. For the work you do.
5. For things that make you smile or laugh (Psalm 68:3).
6. For the Lutheran Women in Mission Vice President of Communication.
7. For the country of Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast).
8. For the LWML Mid-South District.
9. For trials that strengthen and refine you (James 1:2-4).
10. For your basic needs.
11. For the country of Cuba.
12. For wisdom (James 1:5).
13. For government and world leaders.
14. For church leaders.
15. For the Czech Republic.
16. For the LWML Gulf States District.
17. For your family.
18. For the city/community where you live.
19. For the Dominican Republic.
20. For friends who are nonbelievers.
21. For LWML Mission Grant #7.
22. For your coworkers.
23. For the country of Ecuador.
24. For the persecuted.
25. For your enemies (Matthew 5:44).
26. For the country of Egypt.
27. For the missions of your church.
28. For those in nursing home facilities.
29. For those who clean and maintain your church.
30. For those facing life changes.
31. For those with serious illness.

- 1 Clinton Zone and their officers
- 2 St. John Lutheran Preschool, Clinton
- 3 Immanuel Lutheran, Charlotte.
Rev. Lloyd Redhage, Ladies Circles
- 4 Orphan Grain Train
- 5 Ash Wednesday
- 6 Grace Lutheran Preschool, DeWitt
- 7 St. John Lutheran, Clinton
Rev. Dr. Daniel Pool, Mary Martha Circle
- 8 IED 2026 Convention Planning Committee
- 9 IED Young Woman Representatives to the
Omaha Convention in Omaha: Anna, Audrey
and Mary
- 10 Jacob Diercks, St. Louis Seminarian in his
first year
- 11 Trinity Lutheran, Clinton
Rev. Nathan Wille
Ladies Aid and Eventide Guild
- 12 Church musicians and choir directors
- 13 Matthew Diercks, pre-seminary student
at Concordia University Wisconsin
- 14 Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca
- 15 Grace Lutheran, DeWitt
Rev. Eric Obermann
LWML Mission Guild
- 16 IED Mission Grant recipient – Mission
Central, Serving the Lord in Latvia,
Rev. Samuel Bobby and family
- 17 Pastors' wives and families
- 18 Iowa East District Board of Directors
- 19 Immanuel Lutheran, Grand Mound
Rev. John Dolde
Mary Martha Circle
- 20 LWML Mission Grant # 27: Siouxland
Lutheran Hispanic Ministry
- 21 Rev. Dr. Arthur Rickman and family,
Missionaries in Panama
- 22 Lutheran Family Services (RSO)
- 23 Trinity Lutheran, Lowden
Rev. Daniel Redhage
Ladies Aid
- 24 LCMS Disaster Response
- 25 Rev. Leif Camp and family
Missionaries in Russia
- 26 Mission Opportunities Short Term (MOST)
Ministries
- 27 St. Paul's Lutheran, Stanwood
Rev. Dr. Andrew Watkins, Home Mission
Circle
- 28 Lutherans for Life (RSO)
- 29 Nathan and Sarah Federwitz, Prefield
Missionaries Lutheran Bible Translators
- 30 Sunday School Teachers
- 31 Higher Things (RSO)

**Siouxland Lutheran Hispanic Ministry, Hope
Lutheran Church Hispanic Ministry for \$50,000.**

In June 2019, Hope Lutheran Church in South Sioux City, Nebraska, called their first full-time missionary pastor for Siouxland Lutheran Hispanic Ministry. The Pastor is a missionary pastor for all the LCMS churches in the Siouxland region of South Dakota, Nebraska, and Iowa. The Pastor collaborates with and trains local congregations to meet the needs of their Hispanic neighbors and share the Good News of Jesus with them.

How do they make connections with their Hispanic neighbors? One of the components for immigrants wishing to assimilate to the United States, is by learning English, the culture, and establishing citizenship in a Christ-centered learning environment. English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) and citizenship classes are offered at Hope Lutheran Church.

The funds for this grant will help purchase curriculum books for the ESL program, Spanish Bibles, catechisms, hymnals, and other resources for the Hispanic people in Siouxland. The funds will also bless the ministry as they share the Good News of Jesus and build relationships at community events and special holiday meals.

Did you know?

A Recognized Service Organization (RSO) of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod is a tax-exempt service organization that is independent of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) but whose operations foster the mission and ministry of the church, whose program activities are in harmony with the programs of the Synod, and who agrees to respect and not act contrary to the doctrine and practice of the Synod.

Why does the LCMS have them? The LCMS seeks relationships with service organizations in order to extend the reach of the Synod. Together, the Synod and the RSO are able to address human, social, economic, educational, and spiritual needs that would otherwise be beyond the resources of one organization alone.