



### Gethsemane Lutheran Church

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Pastor  
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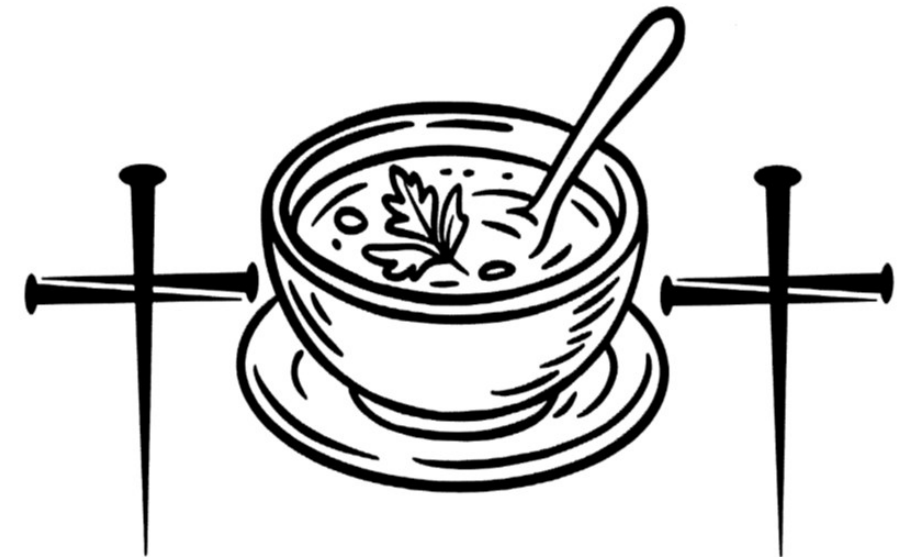
Come and see us on the web!  
[www.gelc.info](http://www.gelc.info)

# Gethsemane Gazette

March, 2026 Volume 48, Issue 3

Join us for March Worship and Events!

## Lenten Soup Suppers & Worship at Gethsemane Lutheran Church



**Lenten Soup Suppers and Table Worship Services with Faith Talks**  
**Wednesdays March 4, 11, 18 & 25**  
**Soup Dinner at 6:00pm,**  
**Worship at 6:30pm.**

Join us for a simple meal of soup and bread and a short, informal worship service around tables in the Fellowship Hall.

Back by popular demand, we will eat together and then in our short worship service, lay members of the church will share a "Faith Talk" in lieu of a sermon. Join us for just one or all of them, both for dinner and the service or just one or the other as your schedule allows. No need to RSVP, just come!

Gethsemane Lutheran Church  
Virginia, Minnesota  
[www.gelc.info](http://www.gelc.info)

**Mission Statement**  
To draw all people to Christ, nurture faith, and fulfill our calling to serve

**Vision for Gethsemane**  
A vibrant place of worship, learning and service, where every person is passionate about their belonging and their ministry

**Marks of Discipleship**  
Pray daily  
Study Scriptures diligently  
Worship weekly  
Encourage Faith in Others  
Serve for the sake of others  
Give freely

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## 3rd Annual CEREAL DOMINOES!



Help us make a difference and have fun too!  
Let's collect boxes of cereal in March!

We would love all sizes of dry cereal to help replenish our food pantry – sorry no individual boxes!  
On **Sunday, March 29th**, we will be creating an EPIC cereal domino train!



### February Angels

Many thanks for our February Angels. It's a blessing to show God's love. Thank you Tony Mazzeo, Dan Gallagher, Barb & Ken Alaspa, Darcy Norha, Debbie Poderzay, Sheila Davidson, Donna Flannigan, Lance Ness, Joyce Bloomquist, Dana Waldon, Fellowship and Generosity Teams, and the Youth. We appreciate everyone who helped.

Laurie Harvey  
February Angel Coordinator

### All Women of Gethsemane

**Thursday, March 26th, at 5:30 pm** in the Youth Room. We are having a casual get together just to "hang out" with other gals and enjoy visiting, relaxing, and having some laughs.

We meet on the 4th Thursday of each month. No commitments, just bring yourself and your own beverage. Please come. - we'll have a fun time! Hope to see you there!

### THIS MONTH'S STAR WORD QUESTION:

(Please discuss this question with someone and/or journal and reflect on it)

How does your star word fit within this season of Lent?

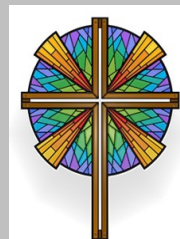
What might God be asking you to think about or do in light of this word?



### Welcoming New Members

Please join us on Sunday, March 29th during worship as we welcome our new members! All new members that are joining, please contact Pastor Rebecca for your one-on-one meeting.

If you are interested in joining the church or just getting more information about church membership, please reach out to Pastor Rebecca or contact the church office.



### From the Pastor

*"For dust you are and to dust you will return." ~Genesis 3:19*

It was the Ash Wednesday after my father died. I was a teenager and never very fond of Lent to begin with. And that year, something about the darkness and death of the season was like a bruise pushing hard upon my already tender heart.

As I stood there in line to receive that ashy cross upon my brow, all I could think about was standing knee deep in the waters of my father's favorite lake with his ashes. I remember how the wind seemed to snatch their gritty form from my hand and fling them from me. Blinking furiously, I wasn't sure I would be able to hold back the sob when our pastor would look me in the eye and say those familiar words, "For you are dust and to dust you shall return."

And when it was my turn, he dipped a finger in that black soot and said, "Rebecca, you have come from God and to God you shall return." And something in me both broke and also healed. A tear in my soul somehow knit itself back together. For I was reminded that this season isn't only about death but also about life after death.

For that is what Lent is ultimately about. Not this idea that our sinfulness is so horrible that we must crawl on our bellies in repentance, but that we came from God and we will return to God. God's goodness along with sin is within us. But somehow, in this journey of life, we have lost our way, gotten turned around. We have forgotten that. We lose sight of the fact that nothing is more important than our identity as created by, in the image of, and for the service to, God.

And so, if for some reason, this Lenten season, with its emphasis on dying is hard for you, I hope you will remember that resurrection in all its forms only comes after death. May we take this time to turn back to the one from whom we come and to whom we shall return. Together may we journey to the cross and once again see Christ, not just crucified but also risen. For yes, we are just dust but God, can do mighty things with simple dust. Amen.

Pastor Rebecca

### Prayer Wall

**In your daily prayers, pray God's blessings for:**

- ◆ The innocents suffering in the war in Israel/Palestine; those displaced from their homes in Gaza; those suffering in Ukraine, Lebanon, and Sudan. We pray for those in need of strength and healing: Madison Grace Brockberg, Pastor Ellen Taube, Jane Erickson Jennifer Anshus, and Lillian Ferkins.

**We continue to pray for;**

- ◆ Judy Bennick.
- ◆ All members who are homebound, in nursing homes, or assisted living.

### Reminder! Daylight Saving Time is Sunday, March 8, 2026

Don't forget to turn your clocks **Ahead one hour** on Saturday evening as we "Spring Forward."

It is also a good time to change the batteries in your smoke detectors too.



### Council Highlights

Greetings All! At February's council meeting we welcomed 5 new members to the council, Ken Alaspa, Mayme Barber, Matt Bothwell, Aubrey Schiller, and Julie Spiering. We are blessed by their willingness to step forward to serve and for the insight they will bring.

Updates were provided on various things going on at Gethsemane, financial reports were reviewed, and an update on the new front doors was heard. The doors have been ordered, when they arrive and the weather permits they will be installed.

There is an excitement in the air at Gethsemane and challenges for us to meet. I believe in this congregation and our leadership. I know that if we all pull together we can meet these challenges and continue God's work as a community.

Peace  
Bennet,  
President



### Giving through the Vanco App

Gethsemane offers several ways to contribute to spreading God's Word. One of them is through the Vanco app called "Vanco Mobile." Download the Vanco app from your App Store on your mobile device. If you're new to Vanco, you'll need to create a free account. Once set up, logging in and making electronic donations will take only a few minutes.

For more information, please contact Vanco at 800-675-7430 or visit their website at [www.vanco.com/vm](http://www.vanco.com/vm).

Thank you for using Vanco. We hope this simplifies your giving. If you encounter any difficulties, please reach out to Vanco or the church office.

### QR Code for Giving at Gethsemane:

When you are reading our monthly newsletter or the Sunday morning bulletin, you will see our QR giving code.

Simply take out your phone, scan the code, put in your password, select how much you want to give for the month, and press done. It's as easy as that and takes less than a minute!



### Weekly Giving

A brief review of Year 2025 financial results shows total year income (\$216,312) fell short of total year actual expenses (\$234,139) by \$17,767.

And an updated look at January results shows that **January actual income (\$16,627) fell short of budgeted expenses (\$21,082) by \$4,455.**

And forecasted **February income (\$16,000) will be short of monthly budgeted expenses by \$5,082.**

We have budgeted expenses each month of \$21,082. And, at 2 months into the year, our total actual income is at \$32,627. **We are \$9,537 behind already so far for the year!!**

Please review this information, and understand our situation. Thank you. Stay warm - spring is coming.

Bruce Kniivila,  
Treasurer





**Blessings to all who have a Birthday this Month:**

- 1: Sandi Shoden
- 2: Hannah Davidson-Teff
- 3: Ian Ramfjord
- 5: Zachary Schiller
- 6: Gladys Boril, Jace Fridelieb, Helen Niemi, Julie Spiering
- 7: Keith Nelson, Henri Fyre
- 10: Laurie Laakso
- 11: William McCormick, John Meinzer
- 12: Charles Eichholz, Laurie Harvey
- 13: Mike Hauber, Amber Rosewall
- 14: Kayla Cochems, Evan Friedlieb, Livia Jorgenson
- 15: Edward Zeidler
- 16: Beckett Cochems, Rees Harvey
- 17: Debra Carpenter
- 19: Dana Waldron, Sherry Wiitala, Shelly Zeidler
- 21: Rebekah Davidson, Tyler Norha
- 22: Michaela Le Doux, Jaynee Peterson, Mary Jo Ralston
- 23: Sheila Davidson
- 24: Eric Krause
- 25: Cindy Bird, Don Sipola, Elijah Wedge
- 26: Sara Weddel
- 28: Barry Collins, Abigal Olson, Nancy Richter
- 29: Tony Mazzeo, Kinsley Suihkonen, Braden Tiedeman

**Memorial Gifts received during the month of February**

<b>In Memory of:</b>	<b>From:</b>
Fran Shimmin	William & Bailey Jane Conger, Pat Sleeman, Barbara Baldriga, Sue Swanson, Jonelle Glumack, Mayme Barber, Mark & Darcy Norha, Margaret Picek, Sue Dorton Cole



**Look who's celebrating their Anniversary for March, enjoy your Special Day!**

- 3/12 Dana and Gail Waldron
- 3/26 Naomi and Paul Ranisate
- 3/31 Charles and Nancy Eichholz
- 3/31 David and Renee' Pollock



**Celebrating the Anniversary of your Baptism**

- 3/1: Mandy Brunfelt
- 3/2: Mary Horan
- 3/4: Makayla Waldron
- 3/7: Matti Koski
- 3/8: Hannah Anderson
- 3/9: Richard Vandervort
- 3/12: Kinsley Suihkonen
- 3/13: Tye Hiltunen, Amber Rosewall
- 3/15: Chrystal Olson, Emma Rosewall
- 3/18: Jim Pauling
- 3/19: David Lind
- 3/22: Austin Kalisch
- 3/25: Aiden Marchetti
- 3/27: Kade Baty-Denzel
- 3/28: Rollie Seppala
- 3/29: Laurie Laakso
- 3/30: Helen Niemi
- 3/??: Jesse Bennet, Sophia Lamppa

**\*\*If we have left you out, we need your help to know! Call the office to update your information\*\***

**Faith Builders (Preschool - grade 6)**

The Sunday School children will now be learning about the crucifixion. Palm Sunday Service will be on **March 29th**. They are so excited and can't wait to be singing and waving Palms on this special day!  
Gods Peace,  
Pam and Donna



**First Communion Class**

Gethsemane will be holding a first communion class **March 15th at 10:30 in the Library**. The class is for first grade and up.

The first communion will occur on Maundy Thursday during the service. If you or your child are interested please contact the church office by March 8.



**Easter Morning Breakfast Sunday, April 5th**

Please join us for Breakfast on Easter morning from 8:00 –10:30 am in the fellowship hall. Breakfast will be served by our Youth Group and all proceeds will go to the Gethsemane youth programs.

The suggested donation is \$10.00. We look forward to seeing you all there!!



**L.I.F.T. Program**

The Winter Unit of LIFT has ended and we are taking a break during our Lenten season. We will resume our Spring session starting Wednesday April 8th at Our Savior's Lutheran Church.

Please keep the following dates in mind and join us:

**Lenten Soup Supper & Worship Services:** Wednesdays, March 4th - 25th. Soup dinner at 6, Worship at 6:30 pm.

**Palm Sunday Service:** Sunday, March 29th at 9am. The Sunday School will sing and our youth will lead worship.

**Maundy Thursday Service with First Communion:** Thursday, April 2 at 6:30pm.

**Good Friday service:** Friday, April 2nd at 12noon & 6:30pm (both services are the same). This is an ecumenical service with 7 of the protestant churches in town. Noon at Hope Presbyterian Church in Virginia, 6:30pm at Messiah Lutheran Church in Mt. Iron.

**Easter Worship:** Sunday. April 5 at 9am and 11 am. Youth Pancake breakfast: 8:00-10:30am. Suggested donation of \$10/person.

**Youth Mission/Service Trip 2026!**

LIFT is headed to The Dwelling in Winston-Salem North Carolina in July of 2026! We have met our fundraising goals for the trip. We would like to say Thank you to everyone for their generosity and for your love and support of our youth. Please see the bulletin board out in the Narthex for our thank you cards...

**Yappy Bracelets and Keychains**

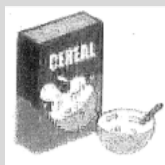
We still have a few Yappy Bracelets and Keychains available. They are \$15.00 each and available in the church office. Please talk with Pastor Rebecca.

**Look for the poster introducing all the LIFT youth going on the Mission Trip**

We will soon have a poster up with pictures, names and a short blurb of each person going on the mission trip. We will let you know once it is up and where to find it!

## Fellowship Team

Fellowship will be supporting the generosity team for March. We will be doing coffee an on March 1st. Our theme is focusing on cereal!! You must join us for fun conversation and possibly a game or two!!! See you there.



## Gethsemane Men's Group

The 1st men's group meeting was held on Feb. 4th. We decided to call the group what it is and keep it simple- **Gethsemane Men's Group**. At the meeting we got to know each other better. We shared how long we have been members of Gethsemane, where we lived in the past, educational and work experiences and family backgrounds.

We each shared what we expected with the meetings. We want a blend of discussing topics of interest, bible study and sharing our experience and views. Some of the additional expectations included: fellowship, learning from each other, growing the church, streaming service metrics - determine what is driving viewership and keep the meetings free flowing. We want to establish intergenerational participation by including men of all ages with those that are in school, currenting working and those retired. **Next Mtg: Tuesday, March 3rd @ 6:30 PM Gethsemane Library**. Any questions, reach out to Dan Alto.

## Synod Assembly and Bishop Elections

The Northeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly is coming up soon on April 24-26. This will be an important year as we will be electing a new Bishop for the Northeastern Minnesota Synod. The field of prospective candidates has been narrowed to four nominees. They are: Rev Andrew (Andy) Berry, pastor of Littlefork Lutheran in Littlefork and Bethany Lutheran in Loman, Rev David Carlson, pastor of Gloria Dei in Duluth, Rev Taryn Montgomery, Synod Minister for Discipleship and Christian Community for the Northeastern Minnesota Synod, and Rev Kathryn Tiede, currently serving as Associate Vice President of Philanthropy for Lutheran Social Services of MN. Biographical information and a two-minute video for each candidate can be found on the Northeastern Minnesota Synod website at <https://nemnsynod.org>. As your Gethsemane delegates to synod assembly, we encourage you to take some time to review this information and provide any feedback you have on these candidates. We welcome your input!

Gail Wieman and Dawn Matschiner  
2026 Synod Assembly Delegates

## Generosity Team

Welcome to our edition of "Gethsemane Gifts!" Each month we will recognize the gifts of generosity that we have experienced from our very own Gethsemane Family. We will focus on one member of our church who has experienced a time of support, love, and/or generosity from other members of our church.

**This month please welcome – Mayme Barber**

Hello Gethsemane! I think of all of you, as my BIG family of brothers and sisters in Christ! Together, WE are the church! I believe every one of us matters, and every one of us is called to serve in our own way.

God has worked through so many of you to show His love and support in the lives of myself and my family – through our celebrations and the sorrows during more than 3 decades of attending Gethsemane. My kids grew up running the halls during Wednesday night choir practice, and squirming in the pews on Sundays. Tom and I were always most interested and involved in the music of worship. With both of us having grown up surrounded by music, we have always believed that music provides a unique form of spiritual worship. Tom left a musical legacy here that lives on through the Joyful Noise choir.

I am so grateful for the fabulous friendships that I have shared with my Gethsemane family. These bonds have been the backbone of my faith journey, that is ever-evolving, and a huge source of wonderful friends to enjoy life with. I believe that God places us where He wants us to be, to do His work, in the lives of others. Thank you for letting God work through you!



## Snow Shoveling

We are looking for volunteers to help shovel snow away from the entrances of the building & the food pantry. Snow shovels & a snow blower are available or you can bring your own. Sign up for a week, maybe two, or possibly an entire month. There will be a sign-up sheet (monthly calendar) on the bulletin board, or call the church office and we can get you signed up.

Your help is greatly appreciated. Any questions, please call Bennet Bloomquist at 218-780-8357

## Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry

### Summer 2026 Registration Is Now Open

Ready for the best week of summer? Registration for Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry (VLM) Summer 2026 programs at Camp Hiawatha and Camp Vermilion is officially open!

We offer amazing Christ centered experiences for all ages: **Traditional Week-Long Programs; Specialty Camps (Canoe Country, Hockey Camp, etc.); Shorter options for young campers; Family Camps**. It's great to be alive in God's great Northwoods! To register and for more information, visit [www.vlmcamps.org](http://www.vlmcamps.org).

### Now Hiring Summer Staff!

Whether you're looking for a summer of adventure or know someone who is, Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry is now hiring for the 2026 season! Join our team for an unforgettable experience building community, leading youth, and enjoying the great outdoors. For more information, visit [www.vlmcamps.org/employment](http://www.vlmcamps.org/employment).

### Now Hiring!

Do you or anyone you know have a passion for cooking, maintenance, or like to work in an office setting. We have part time positions open at Camp Vermilion Cook, MN and at our main office location in Duluth, MN. Join a mission-driven team that values community, faith, and a spirit of service - all in a Beautiful Northwoods setting: Leak Cook Camp Vermilion; Camp Vermilion Maintenance Assistant; Office Assistant - Duluth. For more information, visit [www.vlmcamps.org/year-round positions](http://www.vlmcamps.org/year-round positions).

### Camp Vermilion Spring Quilting Retreat!

Whether you're a dedicated quilter or a hobbyist in knitting, scrapbooking, or needlepoint, the Spring Quilting Retreat at Camp Vermilion offers the perfect Northwoods escape to focus on your projects. From March 11-15, 2026, you can join a community of fellow makers for the full weekend or just drop in for a day of crafting and shared meals. For more information, visit [www.vlmcamps.org/-events](http://www.vlmcamps.org/-events).

### VLM Work Days:

Spring is just around the corner! Join us at Camp Hiawatha and Camp Vermilion as we work on prepping our sites for an amazing summer. Rally your congregation or come individually. We have plenty of projects for all ages.

**Camp Hiawatha Work Day: May 2**  
**Camp Vermilion Work Day: May 16**

## AARP Smart Driving Class

This class is for drivers 55 years old and older. After completing this course, you can receive a 10% discount on your auto insurance. The cost of attending this course is \$20.00 for AARP members and \$25.00 for non-members. The class will be held on **Friday, March 27th, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm at Gethsemane Lutheran Church, 901 4th St South in Virginia**. The instructor for this course is retired Chief of Police Dana Waldron.

There are several ways that you can register: going on-line to [aarp.org/findacourse](http://aarp.org/findacourse); call 218-780-7446; or email [dana.w319@gmail.com](mailto:dana.w319@gmail.com).

## Things Happening at Our Savior's Lutheran Church



**Community Closet:** Come through the doors located at the end of flat-roofed portion of the church closest to the nursing home across the street on 12th. This Community Closet is stocked with gently used clothing and household items, and a food pantry. We do not charge anything for items you need, and we do not do an interview or have a sign-up. No questions asked, just come in if you have a current need. We are open **every Wednesday, 12 pm - 3 pm**, and during every Community Breakfast held the **second Saturday of each month, 9 am - 11:30 am**.

**Free Community Breakfast:** Start a new tradition and stop at Our Savior's Lutheran on 8th Street **every 2nd Saturday of the month** for a free, hot meal 9 – 11:30 am. We have great cooks and you're bound to meet a friend. Your family and neighbors are invited!

### WELCA Clothing and Used-A-Bit Sale

Will be held Friday, April 17th (8:30 am – 2 pm) and Saturday, April 18th (8:30 am - 12 pm). Please bring donations to the Fellowship Hall on the back table on the left. DO NOT leave items for the sale on the pews in the hall going to the office this is where donations for the Community Closet go.