



Gethsemane Lutheran Church

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Virginia, MN 55792
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Email: gelc@gelc.info
Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9 am to 4 pm

Rebecca LeMenager
Pastor
Brenda "Bunny" Varani
Parish Secretary

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
VIRGINIA, MN
55792
PERMIT NO. 57

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Come and see us on the web!
www.gelc.info

EASTER PANCAKE BREAKFAST
SUNDAY, APRIL 5: 8:00 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.
SUGGESTED DONATION: ADULTS - \$10
KIDS UNDER 5 - FREE

THEN JOIN US FOR WORSHIP AT 9 A.M. OR 11 A.M.!

PANCAKE BREAKFAST SUPPORTS YOUTH PROGRAMS

GETHESEMANE LUTHERAN CHURCH VIRGINIA MINNESOTA

Gethsemane Gazette

April, 2026

Volume 48, Issue 4

Join us for April Worship and Events!

HOLY WEEK

GETHESEMANE LUTHERAN CHURCH
VIRGINIA MINNESOTA



MARCH 29 9 A.M.	PALM SUNDAY SUNDAY SCHOOL SINGS YOUTH LED WORSHIP
APRIL 2 6:30 P.M.	MAUNDY THURSDAY WORSHIP WITH COMMUNION
APRIL 3 NOON & 6:30 P.M.	GOOD FRIDAY NOON AT HOPE PREBYTERIAN 6:30 P.M. AT MESSIAH LUTHERAN
APRIL 5 9 A.M. & 11 A.M.	EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP WITH COMMUNION (9&11) PANCAKE BREAKFAST 8-10:30A.M.

For more information, please contact the church
218-741-4961 www.gelc.info

Gethsemane Lutheran Church
Virginia, Minnesota
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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March Angels

Many thanks the March angels who signed up for their month: Mayme Barber, Mike and Diana Hauber, and Julie Spiering. I would also like to thank the members of the congregation who helped out but were not o the March angel list: Bennet Bloomquist, Fellowship Team, Dan Gallagher, Tony Mazzeo, Darcy Norha, Laurie Harvey, Rick and Evie Kinnunen, Sue Swanson, Debbie Poderzay, Tom Lee, Richard Vandervort, Sunday School Kids, Joyce Bloomquist, Dana Waldron, Sam Davidson-Teff, and Molly Pemmaraju. .

Without a coordinator for the month, we still managed to get the ministry work done.. It is so amazing to see what can be accomplished when we all pitch in together!!

Blessings to All of you...

Gethsemane Men's Group

The next men's group will be meeting on **Monday, April 13th, 6:30 pm** in the Library. Any questions, please call Dan Alto at 847-917-3765.

All Women of Gethsemane

Due to the Arrowhead Concert being held on Thursday, April 23rd, we are rescheduling our women's night to **Thursday, April 30, at 5:00 pm** in the Youth Room. Please notice the time change to as it seems like everyone came make it starting at 5:00. We continue having our 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 relate to this season of Easter?



From the Pastor

"Praise the Lord, my soul. The birds of the sky nest by the waters; they sing among the branches." ~Psalm 104: 1, 11

"Look for your first robin!"

Every spring, this is something my mother tells me. It is something she did with her mother and has been passed down. My mother has a knack of always picking the right day to ask the question. It is usually that day or within a day or two that I see my first robin. Perhaps there have been robins before but I needed my mom's reminder to help me see what is right in front of me.

Over the years, once I no longer lived at home, it became a ritual for us to always call each other the first day we see a robin each spring. With climate change sometimes we will call each other when that first confused robin is spotted way too early. And for me, seeing my first robin is always a sign of spring. One more precious to me than any other.

I've been thinking a lot about the things we pass down. Perhaps it's been the faith talks during lent. I've been thinking about how we too have touchstones of faith, signs of Christ and people that have given those to us. Perhaps for you it is the smell of Easter lilies on Easter morning, the glow of candlelight on Christmas Eve. Do you have a hymn that reminds you of someone special? Maybe deviled eggs or jello salad bring you back to church potlucks in the fellowship hall. Perhaps you have a beloved pastor or Sunday school teacher whose love is tied firmly to your faith.

And us... how are we doing passing on the faith? What signs of God's love and care are we passing on, to help people through the tough winters of their lives... to help them remember that spring and new life are here? In 10, 20, 30 years from now, will someone be thinking of this church when they stand to give a faith talk?

My mother and I are both growing older. I know and I dread that there will come a day when I will no longer have someone with whom to call with the news of seeing my first robin. And I also know that I will always have my mother with me. And that my friends is the good news of Easter. We do not need to fear the day when death comes for us or the ones we love. For through Christ our Lord and through his resurrection we are promised that nothing can separate us from God. Love wins. Love always remains. Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

~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;

- ♦ All members who are homebound, in nursing homes, or assisted living.

Prayers of peace and comfort for:

- ♦ Family and friends on the death of Ruth Kokko.

Congratulations to Gethsemane from Thrivent!

In 2025, Gethsemane received \$1,002 through the Thrivent Choice Program. Your work strengthens communities, and we're grateful for the impact you make every day. **Good news ahead:** We're excited to share that enhancements to the Thrivent Choice program are coming soon— including broader member eligibility, full-year flexibility, and a new year-end expiration date. Stay tuned— more details will be shared in the months ahead.

Council Highlights

Hello Gethsemane! Happy Spring? (We hope) The March council meeting heard reports of the going ons at Gethsemane. The organ has been repaired, Sue tested it out and it's good to go!

Bruce went through the finance reports and, as you may or not know, giving is behind. When the budget was approved for 2026, it was stated that our giving needed to increase. So far that has not happened. I ask ALL members of Gethsemane to consider their giving and how you can help us to meet our expenses and to continue the work of our church.

Many exciting things are happening—our outreach continues to grow, we have an incredible group of young people in LIFT, our Sunday school enrollment is increasing. New members are joining. With the hard work of our members and the continued leadership of Pastor Rebecca, I see a bright future ahead. Let's each do whatever we can to make it happen. As you consider what you can do remember the words of Martin Luther, "How soon 'not now' becomes 'never'."

Grace, Bennet

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.

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

Giving update: 2026

Actual plus estimated thru March

	Actual Income	Budgeted Expenses	Shortfall or Surplus
JAN	16,267	21,085	-4,818
FEB	15,906	21,085	-5,179
MAR	23,195	21,085	+2,110
	(estimate)		
YTD	55,368	63,255	-7,887

Bruce Kniivila, Treasurer



Blessings to all who have a Birthday this Month:

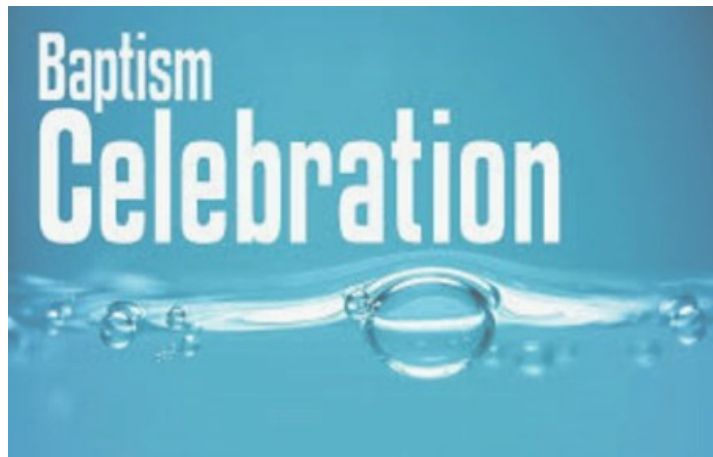
- 2: Eleanor Anshus
3: Halee Zorman
4: Dominic Pauling
5: Mikaela Christenson, Tomina Koop, Mark Olson
6: Matthew Koski
7: Kirsti Axelson, Martin Hudson, Matthew Reid
9: Ronald Lackner
10: Nicki Johnson
11: Paula Elg
13: Chad Seppala
14: Miia Johnson, Madison Waldron
15: Ken Alaspa
17: Jack Florey, Kristy Suihkonen
19: Abigale Schiller
20: Brent Marchetti, Stephen Dahl
21: Penny Stecker
22: Paula Hanson, Kyle Toivari
24: John Anderson, Barbara Johnson
25: Susan Kamnikar, Aaron Spiering
27: Landen Krause, Winnie Lackner
28: Donna Flannigan
30: Kirby Fyre, Lisa Harvey

Fellowship

Ladies and Gentlemen, get you hats ready for May!! Fellowship will be hosted a Kentucky Derby party May 3 after church! That means big and decorative hats, fancy dresses and typical men's outfits too!

We are giving you plenty of notice to get those hats ready! We will have special treats and drinks for your pleasure! Mark Your Calendars and join us May 3, 2026!

Fellowship committee



Celebrating the Anniversary of your Baptism

- 4/4: Evie Kinnunen, Jillian Zeidler
4/6: Jaleen O'Connor
4/7: Barry Collins
4/9: Ben Brunfelt
4/10: Matt Seppi, Sheila Vandervort
4/13: Dale Erickson, Carolyn Lustig
4/15: Cindy Lustig, Lillian Rosandich, Sydney Spelts
4/16: Hannah Davidson-Teff, Jayne Scott
4/17: Debra Dall
4/18: Valerie Florey, Abby Toivari
4/19: Gladys Boril, Tyler Norha
4/22: Jennifer Hanson
4/26: Sheila Davidson
4/27: Aiden Krause, Juliana Pauling, Elijah Wedge
4/29: Myla Meinzer
4/?: Lance Lamppa, Max Lamppa

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

Easter Flowers

Please help us build a Gethsemane Garden for our altar on Easter morning!

If you would like to donate a plant to help decorate the altar for Easter morning; please drop off your plant (with your name on the bottom) to the church office by noon on Good Friday, (April 3rd).

You can pick up your plant following the 11:00 Easter morning service.

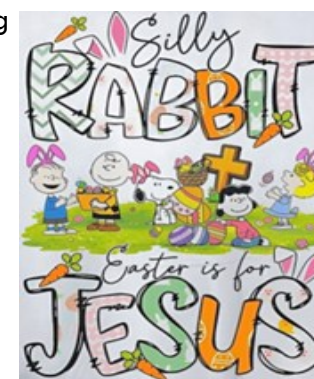


Faith Builders

We have been busy learning about the Easter season. We always look forward to singing on Palm Sunday waving our palms! We still have plenty of Sundays before we are finished for summer. Spreading Gods good news will be our focus for April and May. Happy Easter!

Gods Peace, Pam and Donna

(Preschool - grade 6)



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.

Summer Event!!



Sunday, July 26th - Wednesday, July 29th
5pm - 8pm

Gethsemane Lutheran Church

This summer, we will welcome staff from Camp Onomia to lead Vacation Bible School!

The theme verse is "Wear Love" (based on Colossians 3:12-14) and during VBS, youth will explore what it means to "put on" love as part of their identity as God's beloved children. Through Bible stories, worship, and activities they'll practice Christlike virtues - Kindness, Humbleness, Calmness, Steadfastness, and Forgiveness -discovering how love sustains us, weaves us together, and shapes our witness in the world.



L.I.F.T. Program

Please Note!! Due to a conflict at Our Saviors on Wednesday, April 15th, the LIFT session will be held at Gethsemane instead of Our Savior's.



Spring Unit Begins April 15th at Our Savior's Lutheran Church!

April 15th, 22nd, 29th
May 6th, 13th

Join us for the Spring Session of LIFT!

3-6th Grade Youth Group
Confirmation

Sr. High Youth Group

NEW! Adult Bible Study!!

All adults are invited to this 5-Week, letionary based Bible Study. No preparation or homework required! Bring your questions & curiosity!

Schedule

- 6:00pm - 6:30pm: Dinner
6:30pm: Worship with Communion
6:50pm - 8:00pm: Groups

Thank you, Trevor Ranisate, for your fantastic job filling in for Pastor Rebecca!

Gethsemane is incredibly proud of you as we witness your faith journey.

Your parting words "Trust in yourself, trust in the Lord, and everything will turn out alright" was perfect!



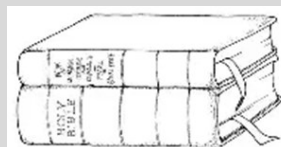
College Scholarships

Once again scholarships will be offered through the Mission Endowment Fund to all GELC members who are high school seniors and those who will be post-secondary students in the 2026-2027 school year. The amount will be determined at a later date.

The deadline for returning the scholarship form to the church office will be **on Friday, May 1st, with No Exceptions.** You may stop by or call the church office to get the form. We will also have the forms available on the Youth Bulletin Board, next to the Youth Room. Scholarships will be presented on Sunday, May 17th.

Generosity Team Favor of the Month

We all have our favorite Bible or two or three! During April, the Generosity Team will be collecting all of those extra Bibles you might have in your closets and book shelves! Our church has been asked to collect spare Bibles to further the mission of Missioncry.com - a ministry that has been spreading God's word since 1956!



Please bring all Bibles to the church before **April 30th** and know that your donation will be shared with so many less fortunate than ourselves! Thank you!

NEMN Synod Assembly: April 24-26

As you may know, this year's synod assembly includes electing a new bishop. Gethsemane's reps (Pastor Rebecca, Gail Wieman and Dawn Matschiner) would love to hear your thoughts about the bishop candidates. You can read bios, watch the recordings of the forums and read about the duties of the Bishop on the Synod website (nemnsynod.org).

Camp Sunday: April 19

We will be celebrating all things camp on Sunday April 19. During worship we will have some members talk about their VLM camp experiences. We will sing some camp songs and even coffee time will have a camp theme!

Please feel free to wear your camp swag, bring pictures of you at camp (any camp) as we reminisce, vision and dream about the past, present and future of camp!



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 – Julie Spiering

Hi there! I'm Julie Spiering. My husband, Mark, and I were married at Gethsemane in 1999. (Sheesh that makes me feel old.) We were not members prior to our marriage. We picked Gethsemane as our church home because we felt very welcomed by Pastor Nathan and others at the time, and Gethsemane immediately felt like "home." I joined the Joyful Noise choir, helped with Sunday School music and Confirmation, and have served on the church council. Mark and I have two sons – Nathan (21) and Aaron (15). Gethsemane is a source of peace, strength, and fellowship for me. I particularly cherish my Joyful Noise family. I have a hard time articulating my faith, but music and fun make it easy! Every week, I look forward to our Wednesday evening practice. Sometimes we goof around and laugh more than we work on our music, but that's what makes it so special. It's clear to me that our entire group loves to share the music we prepare with the rest of the congregation on Sundays. It is such a blessing to be part of a group that cares for and supports one another, not only through music, but also through faith and fellowship. My favorite part of worship at Gethsemane has always been Children's Time. Faith to me is simple, uncomplicated, and I love seeing that seed planted in our little ones during that time. Come say "hi" if you have a chance! I can usually be found on the east side of the sanctuary, third pew from the front, on the far right end.



Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry

VLM Camp Employment Opportunities

VLM is in need of a year round Food Service Director, Summer Kitchen Help, Maintenance Assistant, and Summer Counselors (+18YO).

For more information, visit www.vlmcamps.org/year-round-positions.

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

Eveleth-Fayal Garden Club Daffodil Sale, Benefitting Care Partners

Friday, April 3rd; 10 am - 6 pm. \$10 per bunch

Available at BOTH Super One Virginia Locations

Super One North: 601 145th St N
Super One South: 1111 17th St S

Each \$10 bunch of fresh daffodils support Care Partners' mission of providing financial help to Iron Rangers facing cancer.

Range of Voices Concert

Good News! A Concert of Spirituals.

Friday, April 10th

7:00 pm. Chisholm Baptist Church, Chisholm MN

Sunday, April 12th

2:00 pm, Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Virginia MN

Admission: \$10 adult, \$5 youth, under 5 free. \$25 family.

There will be coffee an' after the concert

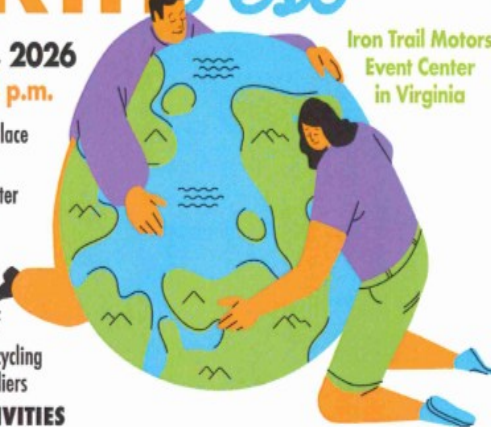


No Place but HOME EARTH Fest

APRIL 18, 2026
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

FREE ADMISSION

- Local Marketplace
- Food by MN Discovery Center
- Exhibitors
- Speakers
- Lead fishing tackle dropoff
- Cell phone recycling to benefit soldiers
- KIDS ACTIVITIES



Iron Trail Motors Event Center in Virginia

Eco Faith Summit of the of the Upper Midwest.

From Fear to Fire: Igniting Community for a Planet in Peril: Saturday, April 18, 9:30am - 5:00pm, First Lutheran Church in Duluth and Zoom Livestream.

The day includes inspiring speakers, spoken word artist, painting artist, action stations, afternoon engagement sessions, children's programming, youth and young adult specific community time, table exhibits, group livestream experience guide, and networking time to equip disciples in congregations, camps, campuses and communities to respond to our planet in peril. To register and for more information including a group discount, free registration under age 30: <https://www.ecofaithnetwork.org/ecofaith-summit-2026>.



Choralaires Spring Concert 2026

Friday, April 24th at 6:00 pm
Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Virginia MN

Sunday, 26th at 2:00 pm
Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Virginia MN

A Free Will Offering will be taken to benefit Local Charities

