

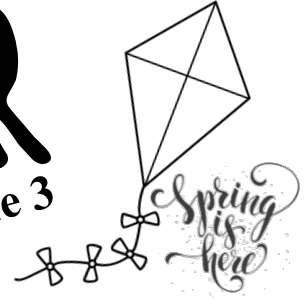


ELCA
God's work. Our hands.

St. John's – Kongsvinger Lutheran Parishes
Glacial Ridge Conference
SW MN Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

PARISH PARTNER

Vol. 31 Issue 3
March 2026



“KEEP IT SIMPLE” WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Worship Services at 9:30 A.M.

****First/third/fifth Sundays at Kongsvinger**

****Second/Fourth Sundays at St. John's**

Holy Communion Services:

****First Sunday of the month at Kongsvinger**

****Fourth Sunday of the month at St. John's**

***JUST A REMINDER: THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS** earned in 2025 expire on March 31, 2026. This program is part of Thrivent Financial's charitable giving program - and Choice Dollars are earned by members owning certain types of Thrivent products. The program is fully funded by Thrivent and DOES NOT affect your investments in any way. You may direct your share of these dollars to any charitable non-profit organization (including your church) you wish to support. Sign in to your Thrivent account at www.thrivent.com; call Thrivent at 1-800-847-4836 and follow the prompts; or contact your Thrivent agent for assistance. We encourage you to put these dollars to good use by supporting a cause important to you.

St. John's
+
Kongsvinger
Lutheran Parish
is a member of the
Glacial Ridge
Conference
of the
Southwestern Minnesota
Synod
of the
Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America

STAFF
Pastor Rochelle Anderson

Parish Secretary
Mary L. Werk

Kongsvinger Organist
Sue Erdahl-Nelson

St. John's Organist
Peggy Wilke

OFFICERS
President
Chad Smith (K)
_____ (SJ)

Secretary
Algene Larson/
Laura Lehman (K)
Joan Kopacek (SJ)

Treasurer
Mary Werk (K)
Jan Greiner (SJ)

Financial Secretary
Nancy Thompson (K)
Judy Burner (SJ)

Women's Group President
KLCW - Co-led by Algene
Larson and Mary Werk
SJ WELCA - Donna Eystad

Women's Group
Council Representative
KLCW - Cork Loge
SJ WELCA - Della Dunn

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Deb Erickson, Chad
Smith, Jody Loher, Pat
Smith, David Larson, and
Blake Flaten (K)

Donna Eystad, Robert
Burner, Greg Greiner, Jack
Kopacek, and John
Kopacek (SJ)

P.O. Box 97
Donnelly, MN, 56235
Phone: 320-246-3211
E-mail: stjkongs@runestone.net

PASTOR'S REFLECTIONS



Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners will return to you.

Lent is a time of preparation. A walk with Christ to the cross. Setting aside time for prayer and meditation. A time to reflect inward - looking our sins square in the face. Seeing where we strayed from God. Changing our minds to turn back to God. We ask for forgiveness and we hear Jesus say, "Your debt is paid, go in peace and love one another as I have loved you."

In the following weeks of Lent, take time with Jesus. Read a portion of scriptures and then reflect on it. What stood out for you? What did it say to you? You can begin with a few verses of Psalm 51. Another source to use for reflection is the Lenten devotional.

Take time to reflect on the cross.

Pastor Rochelle

PARISH POPCORN

LIVE AND ON-DEMAND VIDEO STREAMING

PLEASE NOTE CHANGES!!

Worship services originating from Kongsvinger will now be available to watch live – or watch later at your convenience – on our YouTube channel at:

<https://www.youtube.com/@st.johnskongsvinger>

To watch live, visit the link above and click on the 'LIVE' tab to access the next scheduled service. To watch a past worship service, click the 'HOME' tab and look for the date in the title. All worship services will be archived at this location. Broadcast of Kongsvinger worship services on Morris Access TV will be on first, third, and fifth Wednesdays at 1:30 p.m., AND ADDITIONALLY ON THE FIRST, THIRD, AND FIFTH SUNDAYS at 1:30 p.m. It is on **MediaCom channel 8** (OR on **MediaCom channel 117-2 for users with a digital box**).

LENTEN BIBLE STUDY “*Dying His Death... Living His Life*” meets Sunday mornings following worship (through March 22), at whichever church is hosting worship. You are welcome to join us for any or all sessions.

LENTEN SERVICES continue each Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. at alternating locations (March 18 at St. John’s and March 25 at Kongsvinger). Cash offerings will be given to the Stevens County Food Shelf. Check offerings, as always, will be given as directed.

HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE

- **Palm Sunday, March 29** - Worship at St. John’s at 9:30 a.m. Sunday School kids are singing.
- **Maundy Thursday, April 2** - Holy Communion Worship Service at St. John’s at 7:00 p.m. Provided meal will be served beginning at 6:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome!
- **Good Friday, April 3** - Worship at Kongsvinger at 7:00 p.m.
- **Easter Sunday, April 5** - Holy Communion Worship at Kongsvinger at 9:30 a.m. No Sunday School. First Communion Recognition for Taya Lehman, daughter of Nick and Laura Lehman. No coffee hour.

THANK YOU!!

To all our prayer warriors for your continuing prayers. When we aren’t able to do anything else — we can always pray!

To all those who continue to do quiet (and often unseen) acts—being God’s hands and feet.

To the world you may be just one person, but to one person, you may be the world.

To our congregation members for remembering your church with your financial offerings. Your continued generous support is appreciated!

To ushers, musicians, lectors, altar guilds, deacons, trustees, coffee fellowship servers, and all who work to keep our worship services running smoothly.

“THANK YOU” seems inadequate to express our appreciation to all our members. You ARE God’s church— caring for God’s people!!

THANK YOU!!

JUST A REMINDER: If you or someone you know is hospitalized, in a nursing home, or homebound, and would appreciate a pastoral contact or Holy Communion, please contact the Parish Office at 246-3211. Even though you may be asked your religious affiliation during check-in, the hospital/nursing homes don’t share that information with us - unless you specifically request that they do. Updates to the Parish Office are always appreciated.

WEBSITE DISCLAIMER: With our website active, we would like to know if any of our members prefer to not have pictures of themselves or their children included on the site. They would likely be group photos of activities of the churches without names attached. If you do not want pictures of you or your family included, please let the Parish office know. Thank you!

Baptismal Anniversaries

- 3 - Jacklyn Hawthorne
- 5 - Payton Gessford
- 10 - Kevin Johnson
- 12 - Neil Itzen
- 15 - Chad Smith
- 16 - Andrew Erickson
- 17 - Kalevi Torma, Eddie Ellson
- 18 - Alycia Athey, Deb Erickson
- 23 - June Itzen, Anna Weispfenning
- 24 - Mark Dunn
- 27 - Gerald Loher III
- 30 - Gary Gulbrandson



- Judy Burner
- Robert Burner
- Deb Erickson
- Renee Dahlen
- Cyndi Olson
- Bernice Erdahl
- Gertie Werk
- Governmental leaders around the world
- Conflicts around the globe
- Area military members and their families
- Our homebound members; residents of nursing homes and care centers



- 3 - Gary Gulbrandson
- 4 - Jeremiah Thompson, Harrison Greathouse
- 5 - Kenneth Perkins
- 6 - Daniel Ennen, Mason Torma, Adam Christiansen
- 7 - Randy Erdahl
- 9 - Keith Kaehler, Greg Greiner
- 10 - Quinton Oelke
- 11 - Taya Lehman
- 14 - Nancy Thompson
- 16 - Kylie Mau
- 17 - Danielle Kloos
- 19 - Jill Koch, Carter Torkelson
- 20 - Daniel Bailey-Kloos
- 22 - Stacy Baxter, Patrick Janachovsky
- 24 - Christina Berger
- 26 - Lacey Eystad
- 27 - Jeff Arnold, Brian Ennen
- 31 - Logan Gamradt, Destiny Pollard



PARISH PRAYER CHAIN MINISTRY

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

THE MISSION OF THE PRAYER MINISTRY IS TO PRAY, TEACH OTHERS TO PRAY, PROVIDE PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES, AND PARTICIPATE IN THE FULFILLMENT OF OUR CHURCH'S VISION AND MISSION AS WE ARE INSPIRED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Powerful Prayers for Lent

Lent is a time of reflection and renewed faith as we focus on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We invite you to use these Lenten prayers as you reflect on this season.

PRAYERS OF REPENTANCE FOR FORGIVENESS

Heavenly Father, I come before You with a humble heart, acknowledging my weaknesses and the ways I have fallen short. Lord, I ask for your mercy—wash me clean and renew my spirit. Help me to turn away from sin and walk in the light of Your truth. Teach me to accept Your forgiveness and to forgive others as You have forgiven me. May this Lent be a time of true repentance, where I surrender my burdens and embrace the freedom that comes through Your grace. Thank you for never giving up on me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Father God, I don't want this Lent to pass by as just another season—I want to be changed. Strip away anything in me that keeps me from fully surrendering to You. Fill me with Your Spirit and renew my mind so that I may grow in faith, love, and obedience. Open my heart to your Word, and let my prayer life deepen in intimacy with You. Help me to quiet the noise of the world so I can hear Your voice more clearly. Make me more like Jesus, day by day. Amen.

Lord, my Shepherd, there are so many decisions before me, and I don't always know which path to take. In this season of Lent, I surrender my plans and ask for Your wisdom to guide me. Show me where You are leading and give me the courage to follow, even when the way is uncertain. Help me to trust that Your plans are always for my good and Your glory. Let this time of reflection draw me closer to Your will. Thank you for walking with me every step of the way. Amen.

-Excerpts from Christianity.com



- 7 - Rick and Carrie Waggoner
- 9 - Eric and Melissa Whittemore
- 22 - Mark and Karen Janachovsky
- 23 - Craig and Bonnie Moses
- 31 - Jason and Kelly Kraft

March 2026

Sunday

Monday




Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

<p>1 JOINT Service of Holy Communion 9:30 a.m. (K) Coffee fellowship</p> <p>Bible Study #3 (K) Follows worship</p> <p>Sunday School 10:45 a.m. with Adopted GP Event</p> <p>Rendsville 4-H Mtg. (K)</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3 Do-Days 9:00 a.m. (K)</p> <p>West Central Homes Worship 2:00 p.m.</p>	<p>4 *No Element Confirmation</p> <p>Lenten Worship 7:00 p.m. (SJ) No Coffee fellowship</p>	<p>5 KLCW MEETING 1:30 p.m.</p>	<p>6 Recorded Message - 11 a.m.</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS</p> <p>JOINT Service 9:30 a.m. (SJ) Coffee fellowship</p> <p>Sunday School 10:45 a.m. (K)</p> <p>Bible Study #4 (SJ) follows worship</p>	<p>9 Funeral Service for Andrea Torma 10:30 a.m. (K)</p>	<p>10 Do-Days 9:00 a.m. (K)</p> <p>West Central Homes Worship 2:00 p.m.</p> <p>Church Council Meetings (SJ)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Kongs at 6:15 PM •Joint 7:00 PM •St. John's at 8:00 PM 	<p>11 *No Element Confirmation</p> <p>Recorded Message - 11 a.m.</p> <p>Lenten Worship 7:00 p.m. (K) Coffee fellowship follows</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15 JOINT Service 9:30 a.m. (K) Coffee fellowship</p> <p>Bible Study #5 (K) follows worship</p> <p>Sunday School 10:45 a.m. (K)</p> <p>Glacial Ridge Conf. Assembly 3 p.m. (K)</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 St. Patrick's Day </p> <p>Do-Days 9:00 a.m. (K)</p>	<p>18 *No Element Confirmation</p> <p>Recorded Message - 11 a.m.</p> <p>Lenten Worship 7:00 p.m. (SJ) No Coffee Fellowship</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 APRIL 2026 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</p> <p></p>	<p>21 Open House (Couples) Bridal Shower for Leah Staples and Mason Dunn 10:30 AM-1 PM (K)</p>
<p>22 JOINT Service of Holy Communion 9:30 a.m. (SJ) Coffee fellowship</p> <p>First Communion Class</p> <p>Bible Study #6 (SJ) follows worship</p> <p>NO Sunday School</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 Do-Days 9:00 a.m. (K)</p>	<p>25 *No Element Confirmation</p> <p>Recorded Message - 11 a.m.</p> <p>Lenten Worship 7:00 p.m. (K) No Coffee Fellowship</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29 Palm Sunday *NOTE CHANGE JOINT Service 9:30 a.m. (SJ) SS Kids singing Coffee fellowship Sunday School 10:45 a.m.</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31 Do-Days 9:00 a.m. (K)</p>		<p> Lent</p>		

WORSHIP & PRAYER

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

MARCH 1, 2026

Lessons

Genesis 12:1-4a;
Psalm 121;
Romans 4:1-5, 13-17;
John 3:1-17

Liturgy

JOINT Holy Communion Service at Kongsvinger 9:30 a.m.

Lector Craig Loge (K)

Acolyte Royce Erdahl (K)

Parish Prayers

For our Sunday School students that the "Race Through the Old testament" fundraiser be a blessing.

Church

The ELCA and the ELCA World Hunger Appeal; the Northern and Central Southern Illinois Synod; All ELCA seminaries and those preparing for ministry; and Our Savior's Lutheran Church (Chokio)

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

MARCH 8, 2026

Lessons

Exodus 17:1-7;
Psalm 95;
Romans 5:1-11;
John 4:5-42

Liturgy

JOINT Worship Service at St. John's 9:30 a.m.

Lector Pat Smith (SJ)

Parish Prayers

For God's guidance for the delegates in decisions at the Glacial Ridge Conference Assembly.

Church

The ELCA and the ELCA Region One; the Southeastern Iowa synod; Congregations in the Minnesota Valley Conference; and Trinity and Holden Lutheran Churches (Beardsley and Clinton)

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

MARCH 15, 2026

Lessons

Samuel 16:1-13;
Psalm 23;
Ephesians 5:8-14;
John 9:1-41

Liturgy

JOINT Worship Service at Kongsvinger 9:30 a.m.

Lector Mary Werk (K)

Parish Prayers

Of support for our student (Taya Lehman) in her First Communion experience.

Church

The ELCA and ELCA Region Two; the Western Iowa Synod; Christians in mission in South America; and East Zion and West Zion Lutheran Churches (Hancock)

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

MARCH 15, 2026

Lessons

Ezekiel 37:1-14;
Psalm 130;
Romans 8:6-11;
John 11:1-45

Liturgy

JOINT Holy Communion Service at St. John's 9:30 a.m.

Lector Scarlet Bergstrom-McKee (SJ)

Acolyte Sawyer Torma (SJ)

Parish Prayers

For MN FoodShare Month - that the program continues to be successful in reaching those in need.

Church

The ELCA and ELCA Region Three; the Northeastern Iowa Synod; Children of our church and their teachers; and Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church (Hancock)

SUNDAY OF THE PASSION

MARCH 29, 2026

Lessons

Matthew 21:1-11;
Isaiah 50:4-9a;
Psalm 31:9-16;
Philippians 2:5-11;
Matthew 26:14 - 27:66

Liturgy

JOINT Worship Service at St. John's 9:30 a.m.

Lector Jeanne Ennen (SJ)

Parish Prayers

Of thanksgiving for the coming season of Spring.

Church

The ELCA and ELCA Region Four; the Northern Great Lakes Synod; Congregational programs that serve/ advocate for others; and Faith Lutheran Church (Morris)

WOMEN OF THE ELCA NEWS

St. John's WELCA NO MONTHLY MEETING

WANTED: Sheets or bedding for use as liners in quilts. Flat sheets preferred, but if Queen or King size – fitted is OK. May drop off in box in St. John's entry. Any questions, please call Joan Kopacek. (VFW/Legion sewing group)

ST. JOHN 'S: Easter lilies will be available for \$15 to purchase in honor of or in memory of loved ones. Other plants will be available as well—price to be determined. There is a sign-up sheet in the entryway for you to record your name and memorial information. Deadline to order will be Monday, March 23. Contact person is Donna Eystad.

Kongsvinger Women of the ELCA March 5, 2026 1:30 p.m.

CONTACT PERSON: Mary Werk

BIBLE STUDY THEME: "The Call to Faithfulness"
(Hosea)

BIBLE STUDY LEADER: Algene Larson

ALTAR COMMITTEE/EASTER LILY GARDEN:
Cork Loge and Deb Erickson

BANNER COMMITTEE: Jerry and Mary Werk

COMMUNION BREAD: Meriel Cardwell

SUNSHINE LADY: Elaine Harstad

BULLETIN BOARD: Kayla Erdahl

HOSTESS: Sue Erdahl-Nelson

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP for March will be served by Circle One.

LENTEN SERVICES on Wednesday, March 11, 2026, will be held at Kongsvinger at 7:00 p.m. Coffee fellowship will follow the service (Circle One serves). **LENTEN SERVICES** on Wednesday, March 25, 2026, will be held at Kongsvinger at 7:00 p.m. Coffee fellowship will follow the service (Circle Two serves.)

EASTER LILY GARDEN: Easter lilies will be available for \$15.00 to purchase in honor or in memory of loved ones. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board at Kongsvinger for you to record your name and your memorial information. Deadline to order will be Sunday, March 29. Contact person is Cork Loge.

SAVE THE DATE: 2026 SWMN SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION CONVENTION will be held on Saturday, May 2, 2026, at Calvary Lutheran Church (302 Olena Avenue) in Willmar, MN. Special performance by Sweetwater Revival. Full schedule published next month!

COOKBOOKS: KLCW has received the re-print of our original "Blue" Cookbook - in time for our 150th Anniversary. The cost of the books will be \$12 each. Contact the Parish office if you would like to purchase one.

GLOBAL HEALTH MINISTRIES: We are collecting items for newborn kits and hospice kits for GHM. There is a listing of items needed on the Kongsvinger KLCW bulletin board. We have a box in the Parish Hall for you to drop off donations. Financial donations are also welcome!



PARISH HAPPENINGS

WINTER WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

If you wish to be notified of cancellation of services during the winter months (to be part of a phone tree), please submit your preferred phone number to the Parish Office NOW! The KMRS station does not have personnel present to accept phone calls at this time. We will also use our Facebook and website resources to notify of cancellations.

TAILWIND DIRECTION - FIFTH ANNUAL

FUNDRAISER is scheduled for Sunday, March 8, 2026, at the Herman Community Center in Herman, MN. Social Hour starts at 11 a.m. followed by a meal at 11:30 a.m. Tickets can be purchased from area businesses and board members. Contact Sandra Dunn if you have questions.

GLACIAL RIDGE CONFERENCE ASSEMBLY

will be held on Sunday, March 15, 2026, at the Kongsvinger Parish Hall. Registration and refreshments begin at 2:30 p.m. and meeting begins at 3 p.m. Delegates elected at our Annual Meetings should plan to attend.

OPEN HOUSE (COUPLES) BRIDAL SHOWER FOR LEAH STAPLES AND MASON DUNN

will be held on Saturday, March 21, 2026, from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Kongsvinger Parish Hall. Mason is the son of Lowell and Sandra Dunn. Everyone is welcome! Come and go as you wish. Couple is registered at Target, Amazon, Pampered Chef and Anthropologie.

KONGSVINGER LUTHERAN CHURCH will be celebrating its 150 Anniversary in 2026 (September 20). Your input is needed for this event. Is there something you are interested in helping with? If you are interested in serving on one of the planning committees (Grounds, Correspondence, Program, Meal, and more), please contact a church council member or the Parish Office as soon as possible. You will find an updated list of volunteers included in this newsletter.

\$25 THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS DURING YOUR BIRTHDAY MONTH!

Thrivent is giving members an additional \$25 in their Choice Dollars account during their birthday month. These funds must be designated to an eligible non-profit by the end of your birthday month or they will expire. Log in to your Thrivent account to direct the funds to any non-profit organization of your choice.

KMRS RADIO BROADCASTS IN 2026 - You may sponsor a broadcast in loving memory of or in honor of loved ones or special events. The remaining date is August 9, 2026. The cost to sponsor a broadcast is \$65.00. Please contact the Parish Office to reserve your date.

KONGSVINGER CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING - February 1, 2026

A brief meeting was called to order by Chad Smith at 11:25 A.M. with the following present: Algene Larson, David Larson, Jody Loher, Cork Loge, Chad Smith, Pat Smith, and Mary Werk.

Concern was expressed for two of our congregation families who are dealing with devastating illness. David Larson made a motion to request \$2,000 for each family from the Kongsvinger Endowment Interest Fund and match with \$2,000 for each family from congregation funds. We will gift Mark and Deb Erickson \$4,000, and Joha and Annie Torma \$4,000 to help cover medical expenses. Second by Cork Loge. Motion carried. The gift will be delivered to Erickson's and Torma's early this week.

Meeting adjourned at 11:35 AM

Respectfully submitted,
Algene Larson, Secretary, Kongsvinger Lutheran Church

***APRIL 2026 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE** is Friday, March 20, 2026.

Community News and Events

WEST CENTRAL MINNESOTA COMMUNITIES ACTION: 2025-2026 Energy Assistance Program began on October 1, 2025. Easy application process, open to homeowners and renters, and no asset limits. The program is designed to assist income eligible households with heating and electricity bills during the winter. Application forms are available in the narthex of each church.

If you qualify for the program, you are encouraged apply and take advantage of this support to keep yourself, your loved ones, and other community members warm and comfortable during the coming winter. Call 1-800-4924805—Option One for assistance.

“GATHERINGS” PEDERSEN FUNERAL HOMES - We are encouraging anyone who wants to attend the gatherings - that the meetings will continue but we will not be there to facilitate them. The meetings will continue to be held on the second Tuesday of every month (March 10) at noon at Old #1 in Morris.

OPTIONS FOR WOMEN ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

OUR ANNUAL BABY BOTTLE FUNDRAISER is underway for Options for Women in Morris. The fundraiser will run for the month of March. Simply pick up a baby bottle from the basket in the back of both churches, take it home to fill with your loose change during this month, and return to the basket at either church by March 29. The Options for Women Center in Morris serves Moms, Dads, and young families in the six surrounding counties. They provide “Earn While You Learn” classes which helps clients grow in knowledge from pregnancy all the way through parenting children, life skills classes, healthy relationship classes, Natural Family Planning and Fertility Awareness classes, along with a Dad program and even Bible Study classes. Clients can earn points to be exchanged for baby needs like diapers, clothing, and other baby needs. They work to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of their clients. They offer a car seat program, free pregnancy and STI testing, and free limited ultrasound services. All programs available in both English and Spanish. Through your generosity, we have been able to open a satellite office in Ortonville (March, 2025) to expand our mission and ministry to even more families. THANK YOU for your generous support in the past and we ask you to prayerfully consider donating through this Baby Bottle Campaign. We lost ALL of our state funding from the MN Positive Alternatives Grant in 2023 — so we are making a special plea for donations. The grant covered about 70% of our budget and the legislators removed all funding from pro-life centers for the entire state of Minnesota. Thank you for what you are able to do.

STEVENS COUNTY FOOD SHELF supplies a five-day emergency or supplemental food package to residents of Stevens County. There is no fee for this service. Clients must provide proof of residency. The food shelf welcomes donations of foods or financial contributions to support our community. **PLEASE NOTE HOURS** (to accommodate the increasing after-work traffic) The Stevens County Food Shelf is open: Monday: 2:30-3:30 10:30-11:30 a.m.; p.m.; Tuesday: 5:30-6:30 p.m.; Wednesday: Thursday: 5:30-6:30 p.m.; and Friday: 10:30-11:30 a.m. The food shelf is located on the corner of Seventh Street and Iowa Avenue on the northeast side of Morris.

EDUCATION CORNER

**Sunday School will meet from 10:45 to 11:30 a.m. at the Kongsvinger Parish Hall.

****NO SUNDAY SCHOOL** on Sunday, March 22, or Sunday, April 5.

****SUNDAY, MARCH 29 (PALM SUNDAY)** - Our Sunday School kids will be singing during worship services at St. John's (9:30 a.m.) We encourage you to join us that day and show your support for the kids.

****"RACE THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT"** fundraiser was held during the month of February. The kids had a very successful fundraiser. \$1,570 was raised for the Courage Cottage in Morris. The Sunday School kids will be delivering the check and sharing some music with the residents at the Courage Cottage on March 25. Thank you so much for your support.

ELEMENT CONFIRMATION

Element will not meet during the Lenten season. You are expected to attend worship services in your home congregation.

FUSION YOUTH MINISTRY IS A MULTI-CONGREGATION MINISTRY REACHING OUT TO 9TH-12TH GRADE YOUTH IN THE MORRIS AREA. MARCH EVENTS:

Bible & Breakfast

3/6/2026 - Morris and Hancock

3/13/2026- Morris and Hancock

3/20/2026 - Morris and Hancock

3/27/2026 - Morris and Hancock

Morris at Faith Lutheran and Hancock at Albert's - Time is 7:15-8:00 a.m.

LUTHER CREST BIBLE CAMP

ADULT CREATIVE RETREAT will be held March 26-29, 2026. Come to this Creative Retreat at Luther Crest and breathe life into your creative spirit in community with others. Whether you love art, writing, music, crafting, or simply exploring your imagination, this weekend offers time away to slow down, create, reflect, and connect with God and with others in the peaceful camp setting. Enjoy cozy spaces, inspiring conversations, campfire moments, and creative time that feeds your soul. Everyone is invited to join in the renewal and joy of creating with others in a camp setting.

Register for this event by calling 320-846-2431 or go on-line at www.luthercrest.org.

SCRIPTURE/SERMON SUMMARIES — MARCH 2026

March 1 — Read Genesis 12:1-6

Abram and his wife Sarai are sent on a faith quest. They look rather foolish to the world. They leave the security of a kinship community to go out and trust an unknown God while becoming foreigners in a strange land. The faith of Abram and Sarai in this passage is not defined by doctrines or clear convictions. Faith is a walk of life where people learn who their God is through a trusted relationship. This is true in the Gospel of John as well where faith is never a noun. It is always a verb, an action that trusts in a relationship that recognizes that one's entire existence is dependent upon God. That is what faith looks like. And it has consequences for others because faith is never a private affair: *"in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed"* (Genesis 12:3b). *Discuss:* How would you describe the journey of faith that you have been on?

March 8 - Read John 4:5-42

Jesus meets with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, the same place where Jacob met Rachel more than a thousand years before. It is now the place where Jesus shows what it means that *"God so loved the world"* (John 3:16) by caring for a non-Jewish woman, someone who was alone and likely shunned by her own people. The woman is so impressed by Jesus and their conversation that she goes to her townspeople and says, *"Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?"* (v. 29). The Samaritan woman does three things that are essential traits of evangelism: 1) she invites, *"Come and see"*; 2) she tells her own story of her encounter with Jesus, *"I just met a man who . . ."*; and 3) she wonders if this is the awaited Messiah, *"He cannot be the Messiah, can he?"* Her question in the original Greek suggests she really doesn't think so. Even so, the people come to believe that Jesus is the Savior. It is another biblical example that shows that faith is formed by the power of the Holy Spirit through personal, trusted relationships. *Discuss:* How do you have conversations with others about Jesus.

March 15 - Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13 and John 9:1-41

In John 9, Jesus sees in the blind man a person who needs mercy and sight. This story is built on an important theme that Jesus is the *"true light, which enlightens everyone"* introduced in John 1:9. Just as Jesus gave sight to the blind man, Jesus gives divine light for all the world. Jesus' light challenges the Pharisees who think they see yet do not truly see. In 1 Samuel the prophet is to anoint a new king, but Samuel is not able to perceive or see what God sees. A scrawny, youngest son (David), who is originally not even considered as a candidate, is chosen by God to be king. Thankfully, God sees and decides by a standard far different from our own. In our blindness, Jesus comes to us and shows God's work of healing and new life. The light Jesus brings into the world helps us to see ourselves and others with mercy. *Discuss:* How has Jesus, the *"true light,"* enlightened your life and helped you see others with mercy?

March 22 - Read John 11:1-45

With the story of the raising of Lazarus, Jesus makes it clear that he is not only the source of *"the resurrection on the last day"* (v. 24), but the source of life now. Jesus does not just say he is the resurrection. He says, *"I am the resurrection and the life"* (v. 25). In this story we gain understanding of what it means that Jesus is the *"Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world"* (v. 27). The future hope of the resurrection is so important and so real that it changes our life in the present. Even though Jesus weeps with his friends, grief does not control his—or our—life. Our lives are to be freed from the daily powers of sin, fear, and death. *"Unbind him and let him go"* (v. 44) is the message for us, too. Jesus comes to us when our burdens are many, to unbind us and set us free. Jesus says, *"Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die"* (v. 26). *Discuss:* How does faith in Jesus impact your priorities, your values, your relationships?

March 29 - Read Matthew 26:14–27:66

Many theories have been put forward in the history of the church to state why Jesus had to die to be our Savior. However, one point is clear in the Bible: Jesus' death shows the depth of God's love, a love that is willing to experience a form of slavery, humiliation, and excruciating death, *"even death on a cross"* (Philippians 2:8). Crosses have become forms of jewelry and part of other art forms that point to Jesus' death. However, neither jewelry nor other art forms fully express the pain and humiliation that God in Christ endured to indicate the character of who God is for us. Jesus joins our human existence by making our deepest prayer his prayer: *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* (Matthew 27:46). God in Christ Jesus joins our life experience and from the cross stretches out his arms to say, *"I love you this much."* *Discuss:* When you see someone wearing a cross, what does it mean to you?