



HOLY TRINITY

LUTHERAN CHURCH

650 240th St. North Liberty, IA 52317

Vol. 18, No. 1

January 2026

EPIPHANY THEME: “THIS IS THE GOD WE LOVE”

1700 years ago, in 325, the first ecumenical council was convened in Nicaea to discern matters central to the Christian faith, namely: How do we understand Jesus Christ? The council sought to end disputes about the divine nature of Jesus and his relationship to God in an attempt to unify all of Christendom. However, a later expansion was made by the Latin church in an attempt to resolve yet another dispute, which contributed to division between the Eastern and Western church for almost a millennium.

Last year, on the 1700th anniversary of the Creed, this division was meaningfully addressed in “The Common Statement on the Filioque,” issued by both Lutheran and Orthodox church bodies as the fruit of a 40+ year international dialog. So, while we are admittedly late to the party, we’d like to begin this new year in the Epiphany season by celebrating that anniversary, and revisiting the Creed in worship. We’ll do so by utilizing a fresh interpretation of the creed created last year by the Australian church band “CityALight,” who have managed to do the seemingly impossible – set the Creed to music! If it all sounds a bit mysterious, come join us starting Jan. 11th to learn and sing “The God We Love!”

NEW MEMBER FAMILIES WELCOMED ON DECEMBER 21ST

We officially welcomed a number of new families into membership on 12/21, including:

Pastor Sarah and Doug Goettsch,
Christian, Jacob, and Phillip Montover
Taylor and Gabi Ingles
Madeline Strange, Blakely and Emersyn Ingles
Steve and Sue Jensen
Derek and Terra Koenig
Brynlee and Landon
Becky Ledger
Christine Tochihara
Keira

FALL STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN YIELDS A TRULY HUMBLING RESPONSE!



Our Stewardship Team offers a huge thank you to all households who have submitted a Faith Promise for 2026 to date! Collectively, 75 families have now already committed \$286,640 in intentions for the coming year,

including twelve families new to the pledging process, and 58% of past pledging households increasing their commitment from last year. That's a lot to celebrate and represents 83% of our projected need for next year, given what we know at present.!

Have you done your part? If not, help us plan for the best ministry we can in the new year by sharing yours prior to Jan. 13th, when our Visioning Council will finalize a new budget proposal.

Forms are available for on-line submission through our website and hard copies are available in the Fellowship area. It's going to be a challenging year for many! Still let's all do our part and put our "best feet forward" so that God can work through us to the best of our ability!

PASTOR TIM ANNOUNCES PLANNED FALL RETIREMENT

After what will soon be 18+ years of serving as both Holy Trinity's original Mission Developer and eventual Lead Pastor, Pastor Tim recently shared that he is planning to step aside next fall to make way for new leadership and fresh expressions of ministry. The Visioning Council will be visiting with synod staff on Jan. 13th to review the process of calling a new pastor, and will look forward to sharing more at the Annual Congregational Meeting on Feb. 1, and perhaps in an Adult Forum beforehand. Stay tuned for future developments, and please keep both the Council and Pastor Tim in prayer during this upcoming time of transition and discernment.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SET FOR FEB. 1ST

Mark your calendar and make plans to come participate in sharing, conversations, voting, and elections at this year's Annual Congregational Meeting! It takes place after worship on Sunday Feb. 1st and will include a number of key issues, especially approving the proposed ministry budget for 2026, and information about establishing a call committee. Children are welcome – so make a point to be present!

Nominees for leadership positions this year include Lori Donahoe and Cindy Vander Linden for the Audit Committee, Steve Roe for the Endowment Committee, and Lori Jantzen and Ann Roller for the Nominating Committee. Emily Lenhart is nominated for re-election as Visioning Council president, Lea Peters as Council secretary, Jack Fratzke as treasurer, and Ken Morse to Council. The search continues for a youth rep.



CONGRATULATIONS!

...to our collaborative accompanist, Wonkyung Kim, who received her doctorate last month! Way to go, Dr. Kim!

COME HELP DE-DECORATE!

On Wednesday, January 7th, we invite all able-bodied WYN parents and others to come help with putting away the trees and decorations from Christmas!

We plan and hope to pitch together during the hour-long breakout time of WYN, from 6:50-7:50pm. Bring your smiles, your patience, and your willing spirits to help serve alongside others, share a cup of hot chocolate, and give thanks for the season past!

JOIN US FOR A FRESH SERIES OF ADULT FORUMS THIS MONTH!

Rich conversations and insights abound each Sunday at 10:15 in Room 4! We begin the month on Jan. 4th with a session on understanding microaggressions, continuing with sessions on better understanding Scripture passages on issues of sexuality, and Visioning Council on Jan. 24th! Whether you come for one, or come for all, grab a coffee and join in! (see more detail in other articles in this issue)

MANY THANKS!

...To the committed crew from ForeverGreen Nursery who have kept our lot faithfully plowed during all of this winter's plentiful snow!

IN THE SPIRIT OF SHARING, we shared the entirety of this year's Christmas Eve offering (\$2359) with the North Liberty Community Pantry! Rising food and utility prices and widespread vulnerability to hunger have resulted in more people struggling to make ends meet. We recently repackaged over 200 rolls of Toilet Paper and blessed yet another shopping cart full for the local food pantry Let's see what ELSE we can do to extend the "Christmas Spirit" even further!

2025 OFFERING ENVELOPE BOOKLETS are now available for pick-up in the Fellowship area.

PRAYER PAGES UPDATES

- Pray for the family Laurel Hibbard, who passed away in December after a brief stay in Hospice Care and a multi-year fight against metastatic breast cancer that had spread to her bones.
- Pray for the people of Ukraine, Gaza, Yemen, South Sudan, Thailand, Cambodia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo as they struggle to live amid ongoing conflicts.
- Pray for a timely end to tensions between the U.S. and Venezuela, that international law would be honored.
- Pray our Nominating Committee as they pray over new leadership for the coming year.
- Pray for Callahan Pelzer, newborn son of Matt and Kelsi, who arrived on Nov. 13th !
- Pray for Joyce Gruhn, sister of Larry Kudej, facing a host of health challenges at present.
- Pray for William Eddy, recovering from a recent fall and several broken ribs.
- Pray for Kent Madison, for health concerns.
- Pray for Rodney Patterson, husband of Carol Severino, who is facing several health challenges after a recent hospitalization.
- Pray for Greg Carolan, recovering from recent cancer surgery.
- Pray for Evelyn Bollinger, recovering at home from a recent mini-stroke.
- Pray for Jon Brandt ,and Julie Ostrander, (Pastor Tim's sister), each recovering from recent cardiac procedures.
- Pray for Pr. Mike Herschberger,(father of Chris Herschberger), recovering from a recent heart attack.
- Pray for Matt Baumann (son of Sue Baumann), recovering from recent chemotherapy.
- Pray for Elym Choun, being treated for severe aplastic anemia.
- Pray for Susan Palmer, friend of Nancy Grove, being treated for cancer.
- Pray for Emy Charlebois, sister of Clay Peterson, living with metastatic breast cancer.

- Pray for Don Hellem, father of Dan Hellem, homebound at present.
- Pray for Harold Meyer (husband of Twilla Meyer), in care at Crestview in West Branch.
- Pray for Jerry Klingbeil, father of Julie Miller, recovering from recent surgeries
- Pray for Pastor Kathryn Franzenburg, grieving the recent loss of both her sister and her husband, Dr. Bill Davis.
- Pray for Marilyn Hartig, Lisa Smith's mother, who entered hospice on New Year's Eve.

DID YOU KNOW THAT ...

...18% of Americans are 65 or older, up from 12.4% in 2004. 70% of them report that they have people they can turn to for support all or most of the time.

...America's Roman Catholic bishops rebuked the aggressive deportation of immigrants in a rare and near unanimous statement called a "special message." The last time they issued one was in 2013, in opposition to the contraceptive coverage mandate of the Affordable Care Act. The bishops said they "oppose the indiscriminate mass deportation of people" and "pray for an end to dehumanizing rhetoric and violence, whether directed at immigrants or at law enforcement." On the same day, the bishops formalized a separate guidance document for Catholic hospitals, which says that they must not provide "interventions that aim to transform sexual characteristics of a human body into those of the opposite sex" (The New York Times, November 12).

...The sisters of Holy Wisdom Monastery outside Madison, Wisconsin, have spent decades restoring the 170 acres of lawn and farm fields surrounding their home to ecological health. Darcy Kind, a conservation biologist, called the restored oak savanna and native prairie "incredible." In 2024, 132 species of birds were sighted there, including threatened and endangered species. The sisters say these actions fulfill their highest calling: to welcome all people and care for the earth as a sacred place (The New York Times, September 22)