



United in Christ Lutheran Church

Sharing the Hope of Jesus in a Troubled World

February 2025

President's Message

*Information from the
Church Council*
Page 3

**Volunteers for the
month**

*Ushers, Readers,
Communion Helpers,
and Cleaners*
Page 2

Lent 2025

*Information about the
Lenten season*
Page 2

Prayer Requests

*Offering Prayers for
our brothers and sisters
in Christ who are in
need*
Page 3

**Monthly Calendar of
Congregation Events**

*A snapshot of the
month ahead*
Page 4

**minutes of the Church
Council**

*Approved minutes of
the Church Council*
Page 5

Pastor's Letter

Winter Darkness

February often finds us in the heart of winter, when the nights still stretch long and the days, though growing ever so slightly longer, are often cloaked in clouds and cold. It can feel like the season itself mirrors some of the darker moments we experience in our personal lives or the world around us. For many, the lingering shadows of winter nights can echo a sense of longing, loneliness, or even weariness.

Yet, in this season, we are reminded of the promise that shines brighter than any darkness we face: Jesus is the light of the world. In John 8:12, Jesus declares, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." This promise is not seasonal. It isn't diminished by the winter nights or by the challenges we face in our lives. It is a constant truth that shines steadily, inviting us to draw near to its warmth and hope.

The light of Jesus not only dispels the darkness around us but also the darkness within us. When the weight of the world—with its pain, injustice, or uncertainty—feels overwhelming, we can take heart in knowing that Jesus' light cannot be overcome. His light leads us, comforts us, and empowers us to reflect His love in a world in need.

This February, as we move closer to Lent, let us pause to consider the power of light in the midst of darkness. Think of a single candle flickering in a dark room. Though small, its glow changes the space, giving vision and direction. In the same way, we are called to carry the light of Christ into the world. It may feel like a small flame, but its power to transform is immense.

+Pastor Jason

Lent 2025

(Ash Wednesday, March 5 through
Good Friday, April 18)



What do you need?

What do you need to survive and thrive? We all know that we need oxygen to breathe, food to eat, water, and shelter.

If you go deeper, what else do you need? Sleep, perhaps? Human contact? An abiding sense of purpose? Prayer? Maybe you don't think you need those things at all! How many of your needs are subjective?

What do the people in our congregation need? What are they missing and what do they long for? What about our congregation as a whole? What does it need to survive? How are these needs different from what it needs to thrive?

How about our neighbors, the people beyond our church doors? What do the people in our community need? Would the people in Morrisonville describe different needs than the people who worship here? How do our needs as the people of God differ from the needs of people more broadly? For instance, does everyone need to pray?

We need a multitude of different things. This Lenten season, we're going to talk about it in this worship series, *All We Need*.

Each service, we'll explore what the scripture for the season reveals about our needs, personally and communally. Not every weekly need will be obvious. Many go beyond Abraham Maslow's famous hierarchy. Instead, we will explore topics like the need for sleep, change, and beauty. Each week's scripture will redefine and expand what we think of as needs. Some may be difficult to notice before the Spirit nudges us to consider them. Even basic needs are cast in a new light when we consider them from the perspective of our lives as God's people.

REMINDERS for February...

02/02/25

Ushers: Norm Harris and Mark Harris
Reader: Thomas Smith
Communion Assistant: Paul Anderson

02/09/25

Ushers: Henry Lipke and Marie Rasmussen-Hall
Reader: Rona Anderson
Communion Assistant: Chet Gabris

02/16/25

Ushers: Chet Gabris and Darryl Horton
Reader: Chandra Diring
Communion Assistant: Bob Harm

02/23/25

Ushers: Dennis Stephenson and Bob Harm
Reader: Dennis Stephenson
Communion Assistant: Marie Rasmussen-Hall

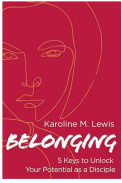
Altar Guild for February -

Marie Rasmussen-Hall

Feb. Head Usher of the Month - Norm Harris

Cleaning: **Note** - a group including the Stephensons, Marie, Cindy, and Bob are going to do the church cleaning this year and will plan a schedule for this. The details are pending at this time.

Winter Book Study



Our Winter Book Study continues as we are inviting the congregation to read together *Belonging* by The Rev. Dr. Karoline Lewis. What does it look like for you to belong to Jesus Christ? Not your colleague, or your professor, or your neighbor, or the leaders of your denomination, but you? How might your one-and-only life be patterned differently, to more truly align you with Christ? What pretense might you give up? What potential might open up for you as a leader and disciple?

The answers to these questions (and maybe more) are what we will discover together. You will read the book at your own pace with a goal of finishing the book this month. For those who wish to, we will meet as a group for open discussion at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, February 25.



From the Congregation President...

At the brief meeting of the Church Council that immediately followed the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, I was elected by the Council to serve as the president of the congregation for the next year. Dennis Stephenson agreed to continue to serve as the vice-president and Marie Rasmussen-Hall will continue to serve as the secretary of the Council (last year, Marie and Karen Millard shared the duties of secretary). Organization of the Council continues at our meeting in February when duties related to various committees will be reviewed. Chet Gabris joins the Council as a new member this year and Mark Quam will continue as a member of the Council, now in his second term. The Council will continue to meet on Tuesday evenings (generally the third Tuesday of the month).

- Bob Harm, President

Prayer Requests...

(we invite your prayers for the following):

Joanne Quam - continued recovery at home, **Dorothy Hasey** - at Columbus Heath and Rehab, **John Kincaid** (Chet's brother-in-law) — at St. Mary's Care Center, **Betty Bader** - at Legacy in DeForest, **Bill Mitchell** (friend of the Andersons) - liver cancer, **Clifford Netzer** (friend of the Sullivans) - stem cell procedure, **Glenn & Sue Vasberg** - multiple health concerns (friend of Mark and Deb Sullivan), **Heather Fjelstad-Bunce** - (niece of Dennis Stephenson) has leukemia, **Alice Hansen** - recovering from eye infection and other health issues, **Geno Lainberger** - now recovering at Madison Health & Rehab Center, **Wyatt McLaughlin** (Ivy's brother) - recovering at home from burn injury, **Kathy Olsen** (Dick & Ann's sister-in-law) - lung cancer

Lenten Daily Devotional

As part of our Lenten theme, All We Need, we are offering a daily devotional booklet along with daily prompts on our Facebook page (@UnitedInChristMorrisonville) for those who would like to engage deeper in our theme.

In order to be good stewards of our resources and God's creation, if you would like a printed daily devotional guide please sign-up via the clipboard on the table in the Fellowship Hall by Sunday, February 23. We are planning to print only what we need. Please see Pastor Jason with any questions.

Notable Events in February

Birthdays –

02/06 > Alice Hansen
02/11 > Glen Smith
02/18 > Donna Colby
02/21 > Mara Millard

Other Items...

Please Note >>> Letters from the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA and the Bishops for Wisconsin and Upper Michigan regarding concerns about the treatment of migrants under recent government policies have been included with the newsletter for your information and consideration.

Church Council meeting - Tuesday, February 18th.

The Lunch Bunch group decided to gather at BB Jack's in DeForest again in February (Wednesday the 19th). Join us if you can for good food and conversation.

February 2025 - Calendar of Events for the Congregation

Sunday, Feb. 2	8:30 Worship (4th Sunday after Epiphany) - fellowship following
Sunday, Feb. 9	8:30 Worship (5th Sunday after Epiphany) - fellowship following
Wednesday, Feb. 12	6:00 Open Table Dinner Church
Sunday, Feb. 16	8:30 Worship (6th Sunday after Epiphany) - fellowship following
Tuesday, Feb. 18	6:00 Church Council meeting
Wednesday, Feb. 19	11:30 LUNCH BUNCH at BB Jack's
Sunday, Feb. 23	8:30 Worship (7th Sunday after Epiphany) - fellowship following
Tuesday, Feb. 25	10:00 Winter Book Study Discussion

Pastor Jason is normally in the church office on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays (and occasionally on Friday), but at times, he may be out doing visits, pastoral care, etc. A monthly calendar is posted in the Fellowship Hall to provide more information on when he would most likely be available. His sabbath days will be Mondays and Saturdays.

Altar Flowers

For 2025 we will continue offering the opportunity for sponsorship of the altar flowers each Sunday. A new sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. Sponsorship is for 2 weeks and can be made in honor of someone, commemorating an event, in memory of someone, or to the glory of God. The cost is \$25.00 bi-weekly. Once you sign-up please complete the information on the provided envelopes along with your payment and place it in the offering plate at least two weeks prior to your selected date(s).



January 24, 2025

Dear church,

On Monday [January 20, 2025], our nation witnessed the peaceful transfer of power central to our democracy, followed by sweeping actions by the incoming Trump administration. Facing such changes, we receive guidance through Martin Luther's words in the Large Catechism.

In the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer, where we pray "Give us this day our daily bread," Luther writes about the importance of praying for our leaders, asking God to grant them wisdom and strength. He also speaks to the responsibility of leaders to provide stability, sufficiency and equity, saying, "[I]t would be very proper to place in the coat-of-arms of every pious prince a loaf of bread instead of a lion, or a wreath of rue, or to stamp it upon the coin, to remind both them and their subjects that by their office we have protection and peace, and that without them we could not eat and retain our daily bread."¹¹

This past week has been one of rapid and cascading change, from the inauguration of a new president and vice president to the flurry of activity in government orders and regulations. The policies and decisions reflected in this week's executive orders and regulatory changes have the potential to profoundly impact our lives, the well-being of our neighbors and the future of the planet. Therefore, I am concerned about the ways that many of the executive actions have created uncertainty and fear in our communities among neighbors struggling to survive, neighbors struggling to provide for their children, and neighbors struggling to be seen.

As a church, we are called to speak up when the government distorts or denies the image of God in each person by endangering access to protection, peace and daily bread. Where harm or inequity occur, we are called by God to respond with love and advocacy.

Luther also writes that in asking for daily bread, we are to pray for our leaders. We should pray that they act wisely and justly, protect all people and not cause harm.

Prayer is not passive; it's an act of hope. Prayer reminds us to ground ourselves in God's promise. We pray for strength, to love unconditionally and to serve one another. As we lift up our petitions, we must also act—advocating for policies that affirm the dignity of every person and standing against actions that demean or exclude.

This church is committed to upholding the humanity of everyone, regardless of who we are or where we come from. We are a church called to love our neighbors and accompany all people in their joys and struggles. We must remain steadfast in this calling. As the ELCA, we will continue to proclaim the radical inclusivity of Christ's love. And we will deepen our local and global partnerships with those working to build a just and compassionate society, especially through our ecumenical and interreligious networks.

I commend to you the social message "[Government and Civic Engagement in the United States: Discipleship in a Democracy](#)," which states on page 7: "To evaluate how well agencies of government are doing their proper work of providing for the safety and well-being of those within their borders and/or jurisdiction, Lutherans ask one simple but all-encompassing question: Is the neighbor being served?"

I encourage our congregations to use the resources of the [ELCA Witness in Society Team](#) with advocacy networks on the state and federal level. And get involved with [AMMPARO](#), the ELCA's strategy toward just and humane policies affecting migrants.

As we move forward, let us hold fast to our faith and to one another. Let us be bold in our witness to the gospel, steadfast in our prayers for those in authority and tireless in our efforts to seek justice for all.

May God grant us courage, wisdom and peace in these days.

In Christ,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

¹¹The Book of Concord, Kold and Wengert, eds., page 450.



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

Greater Milwaukee Synod
East Central Synod of Wisconsin
La Crosse Area Synod
Northern Great Lakes Synod
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin

Joint Statement on Immigration from ELCA Bishops in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

–Ephesians 4:15-16

Friends in Christ:

We, the six bishops who oversee the work of congregations in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, have come together to speak with one voice in this extraordinary time. With the words from Paul's letter to the Ephesians in mind, calling us to speak the truth in love and work together to build up the body in love, we are particularly concerned with recent actions by the president's administration in Washington regarding immigration and the suspension of the policy that previously restricted actions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in "sensitive locations," including schools, hospitals, and houses of worship.

We reject the lies that these policy changes are based on: lies that seek to demonize all immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers as dangerous criminals who need to be removed from the country; and we call upon our elected leaders to base their policy decisions on the facts and on truth.

We reject the fear that these lies create, and we recognize that, while fear may be an effective organizing strategy in the short term, it is morally bankrupt and will lead to continued division and conflict; we call upon our elected leaders to find ways to work together to create an immigration system that builds people up and welcomes the contributions of those who seek to live here. Specifically, we call for the immediate restoration of the sensitive locations policy, allowing children and families the ability to engage in the basic functions of civic life.

We also reject the recent action that put an immediate end to all work related to refugee resettlement, recognizing that this action causes direct harm to countless families, many of whom are already living

and working in this country; and we call for the immediate restoration of funding for refugee resettlement.

Finally, we reject the notion that our nation is so divided that we will never be able to find common ground, and we call upon all our leaders, all those who work in the public and the private sector, all our congregations, pastors, deacons and leaders, to learn how to become effective allies for our immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking neighbors¹ so that we can live in a world that respects the human dignity of all and builds one another up in love.

In Christ,

Bishop Paul Erickson
Greater Milwaukee Synod

Bishop Martin Halom
Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

Bishop Anne Edison-Albright
East Central Synod of Wisconsin

Bishop Katherine Finegan
Northern Great Lakes Synod

Bishop Felix Malpica
La Crosse Area Synod

Bishop Joy Mortensen-Wiebe
South-Central Synod of Wisconsin

¹ For more information and resources, see <https://www.elca.org/our-work/publicly-engaged-church/ammparo>

UNITED IN CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Morrisonville, WI 53571

Minutes of the Church Council Meeting

December 17, 2024 at 6:00 P.M.

A quorum of four is needed. Seven members were present.

Council Members Present: Darryl Horton, Dennis Stephenson, Karen Millard, Mark Quam,
Marie Rasmussen-Hall, Bob Harm and Pastor Jason Poole-Xiong

Members Absent: none

Others Present: Paul Anderson

Call to Order: President called the meeting to order, Pastor opened with a prayer.

Financial Report: Dennis made a motion to switch insurance carrier to Brotherhood Lightwell Insurance from Church Mutual (our current carrier), seconded by Pastor, approved. Motion to approve report by Dennis, Seconded by Bob to approve report. (Approved.)

Secretary's Report: Motion to approve by Pastor seconded by Mark (with corrections), approved.

Pastor's Report: Motion by Mark, seconded by Dennis to approve. (Approved.)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Building and Grounds:

Paul will install new lock on north door on east side.

Christian Education & Youth Ministry: none

Stewardship: none

Music and Worship: none

Old Business:

Working for Christ booklets.

New Business:

January 26th is the Annual Meeting.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Dennis, Seconded by Karen, approved. Closed with the Lord's Prayer. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Next meeting - January 7th at 6:00 p.m.

Submitted by: Marie Rasmussen-Hall, Co-Secretary



open table
dinner church

Winter
Evening
Prayer
Dinner Church

For our Open Table Dinner Church in February we will offer an Evening Prayer service as a way to center ourselves during the long winter nights.

Wednesday, February 12 (6:00 p.m.)

Spaghetti w/Meatballs, Garlic Bread & Caesar Salad

**United In Christ Lutheran Church
4650 County Tk. DM
Morrisonville, Wisconsin 53571**