



ALC Mission Statement: The Gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to be a welcoming community for all people growing in faith, love, and service.

For the 2023-24 Program Year at American Lutheran Church, I chose to dig into our congregation’s Mission Statement. I was especially drawn to the end of the Mission Statement where it challenges us, as a community of believers, to grow in three areas – faith, love, and service.

Throughout the Fall months, we reflected on how we grow in faith. Faith is the foundation of our Christian lives. It is that belief in a God that pours out upon us the blessings of grace, forgiveness, and salvation. Faith is what gives us the ability to hold onto that belief with a God who we cannot see. We focused on four things that strengthen us and help us grow in faith.

- Community – surrounding ourselves with other people of faith who lift us up when we are struggling, who encourage us, who challenge us, and who lead us by their example.
- Scripture – God’s living word that reveals who God is and what God has done for us again and again whenever we read and study it.
- Worship – coming together as that community to be fed by God’s Word and by the gifts of Holy Communion.
- Prayer – this gift God gives us that invites us to be in communication with God at all times of our life keeping us connected to our Creator and Savior.

Visually, we used the image of a tree to help reinforce this idea. With “FAITH” being the trunk of the tree, as it serves as the foundation of all that we do as God’s people. The four practices that help us grow in faith became the branches growing out of the tree.

Now it is time to add the leaves to our tree as we shift our focus from faith to love. To be a community growing in love, we need to first learn what love is. As we just witnessed at Christmas, love comes from God. Love came down to us and all the world through the newborn baby in the manger, Jesus Christ.



Throughout January, I am inviting everyone to answer the question – “Where do you see God’s love in your life?” As you witness God’s love in the world, then come and write what you saw on a leaf by our tree display. The leaves of God’s love will then be added to our tree as we grow in faith and in love!

May we all be filled with the love of God in 2024 and continue to be the welcoming community Jesus Christ calls us to be!

- Pastor Justin



CHURCH COUNCIL

Pres: Ryan Gruba
V. Pres: Sara VanMeter
Secretary: Heather Zinter
Treasurer: Emily Mueller

PROPERTY/ MANAGEMENT

Ryan Gruba
Dan Bohn
Brett Storm

YOUTH/EDUCATION

Jessica Schuchard
Heather Zinter
Holly Hilbrands

FINANCE/STEWARDSHIP

David Bergan
Sara Anderson
Jacob Knoll

WORSHIP/EVANGELISM

Laurie Strege
Sara VanMeter
Amanda Grabow

LISTEN TO THE SERVICE:

On the RADIO

LIVE at 9 am on KMSD
(1510 AM / 95.1 FM)

FACEBOOK Live

“LIVE at 9 am on Facebook”

ALC APP

Worship Service Videos,
Bulletins, Newsletter

www.americanlutheran.com

Worship Service Videos
Bulletins, Newsletter

AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS AND UPDATES

Highlights from the December 13 Council Meeting

Property & Management Committee

- The two furnaces in the fellowship hall area need to be replaced. There are a total of 17 furnaces in the church building. We will set up a maintenance schedule to cover all of the furnaces.
- The steeple light was replaced.

Worship & Evangelism Committee

- Engagement postcards were mailed the first week of December.
- New church directory photos will be taken April 3– 6.
- Game night participation was low. We will look at different dates and time options.

Finance & Stewardship

- Reviewed the new gift acceptance policy and designated gift program checklist.
- Looking into a potential endowment fund.

Youth and Education

- The preschool fundraiser Sunday, Nov. 12. raised approximately \$3,000.
- The Sunday School Christmas program will be on Sunday, December 17.
- Pastor Justin and Rachel did a great job with the community youth lock-in November 17. Overall, it went well and we received good feedback on how to improve it next year.
- The Annual Camp Sunday and Pancake Breakfast will be held January 21.

Other Business (including new & old)

- Discussion regarding confirmation classes and sports schedules.
- Reviewed 2023 Council goals. All goals have been met.
- The nominating committee is in the process of finding 3 new council members. So far, at least 3 have committed.

- Annual reports need to be completed by each committee. We are working to reduce redundancy. It should be a summary about what we worked on for goals. A typed copy should be emailed to the church office before the next council meeting.
- The Annual Meeting date and time was set as Sunday, January 28, following the worship service in the sanctuary.
- Council members should begin thinking of goals for next year. We will set them at the January council meeting.
- Heather will take the lead on Christmas gifts for the staff.
- A quick discussion on Lenten supper plans was held. We will continue with how we handled them in 2023.
- Reviewed employee benefit options and costs. Approved the addition of a Simple IRA option for all staff. The church will match up to 2% of their salary. This will be listed under the Admin budget line and likely be covered by our investment income each year. The investment committee will review the plan.
- 2024 budget discussion. We approved the proposed budget set at \$353,000 for 2024.

The next American Lutheran Church Council meeting is January 10 at 6:30.

Thank You!

THANK YOU to the Council members whose terms expire at the Annual Meeting on January 28:

**Dave Bergan Amanda Grabow
Ryan Gruba Heather Zinter**

Your service to American Lutheran Church is greatly appreciated!

American Lutheran Church Staff Contact Information

PASTOR

Justin Neugebauer
alcpastor@itcmilbank.com
Office 605-432-5566
Cell 605-228-8073

PARISH ASSISTANT

Carol Kirchberg
Carol.Kirchberg@americanlutheran.com
Office 605-432-5566
Cell 605-949-2942

ALC PRESCHOOL

Sierra Daugaard—Teacher
alcps@itcmilbank.com
Assistant: Mya Johanson

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Gail Selgeby
alcoffice@itcmilbank.com
Office 605-432-5566
Cell 605-467-3831

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Rachel Kiley
Milbank.alc.youth@gmail.com
605-210-0753

CUSTODIAN

Peggy Mueller

PARISH NURSE

Diana Dirksen
dirksen@tnics.com
605-949-1403 (leave message)



Pastoral Acts



Eunice Seffrood

Funeral: November 20, 2023
March 21, 1931 — November 11, 2023



Matthew Paul Kohn

Baptized on December 3, 2023
Parents: Justin & Malinda Kohl
Sponsors:
Nathan & Jasmine Schlueter,
Tanner & Ashley Kohn



Given to the Glory of God

Thank you to all of the musicians:
adults, youth & children,
organ, piano, bells, instruments,
guitars, drums, keyboard, and
voices, for providing the many
beautiful pieces of music
throughout the
Advent & Christmas Season.

THANK YOU!



Bible Study, Service, & Mission Opportunities

Contact the Church Office
for additional information.

Wednesday Morning Women's Bible Study

Wednesdays at 10 am.

Thursday Morning Men's Breakfast Group

Thursdays at 8 am in the library. Great conversation plus they look at the upcoming Sunday's gospel lesson.

Piece Corps Quilters

The quilters meet the 2nd and 4th Tuesday each month at 9.

Peace Circle (WELCA)

Bible Study, Fellowship, and Community Service. Meets first Tuesday of each month at 11 am in the Library.

Page Turners Book Clubs

There are two book clubs that meet once a month on the 4th Monday. (2 pm or 5 pm) Books are provided for you.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

This group crochets or knits prayer shawls (on their own time) to give to members in need of a special touch of love. Yarn is provided.

ALC High School Youth Group

Usually meets the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month

ALC 7-8th Grade Group

This group meets occasionally for events.

ALC Library

It's easy to check out books. No time limit. Two locations: A Book Cart in the entry area and the Church Library room.

Manna Praise Band

Usually practices one evening a week.

Note-A-Bells

A bell choir that practices most Wednesdays at 5:15.

Choir

No set schedule. They send out emails/texts when meeting.

Decorating Committee

This group changes the décor in the church to match the seasons and celebrations.

Event Committee

Plan and help with events throughout the year.

Altar Guild

This group takes care of the altar. They set up the altar for communion each week for worship. Teams sign up for one month each year.

Plant Care

Water and care for indoor plants on a weekly basis.

Boy Scouts

Meet on Monday Evenings

Baking Angels Baking Group

This group meets once or twice a month to bake the treats for the Sunday Coffee Fellowship hours.



ANNUAL MEETING

Annual Meeting Announcement

This year's Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 28 immediately following Worship.

ALL MEMBERS are invited to stay for the meeting as we look toward the future of American Lutheran Church.

Annual Reports with the 2024 Proposed Budget will be ready by Sunday, January 21.

Some highlights and topics to be discussed at the 2024 Annual Meeting:

Election of New Council Members

- Review Proposal to transition from 12 Council Members to 10 Council Members over the next 3 years
- Reducing Adult Council Members to 9 and adding 1 Youth Council Member
- We will be electing 3 Adult Members this year (instead of 4) and 1 Youth Member
- We continue to develop our Committee Structure – empowering Committees to do the work needed in their area of ministry, adding sub-committee members to assist when needed (Preschool Board is a great example of this).
- Council then will re-focus on the big picture and visioning for the congregation, which can be done more efficiently with a smaller number.
- Nominating Committee has also struggled in past years to find 4 candidates willing to make the 3 year Church Council commitment

2024 Budget

The 2024 Budget will include a jump in the Proposed Offerings needed.

A few reasonings for this proposal:

Increase in Staff/Wages –

- The Education Coordinator position went from a 15-20 hours per week position (focusing mostly on Sunday School) to a 30-35 hours per week position (coordinating all the Youth Programming of the church).
- Following Amy Bass's resignation, Council and Mutual Ministry reviewed the needs of this position for our congregation and made the decision to increase this Staff Position. There was room in the 2023 Budget to cover the last few months of the new position, but there is an increase for 2024.
- The Budget also includes a wage increase for Staff as it does every year

Increase in costs

- As everyone is seeing in their own households, everything seems to cost more these days. All these little increases for things like Communion supplies, kitchen supplies, cleaning supplies, etc add up.

Correction from 2023 Budget

- To make the 2023 Budget balance, we included a large sum in the "Other Income" line of the Budget. In hindsight, this was not a clear representation and the bulk of that amount should have been included in the "Proposed Offerings" line of the 2023 Budget.
- We are correcting that and moving that to the correct line in 2024, which adds to the significant jump in that line for this year's Budget.

New Gifting Policy

The Finance Committee has developed a new Gifting Policy for Memorials and Dedicated Gifts. This policy will provide clarity for these gifts for both the givers and the church.

Men's Coffee Group

Thursdays at 8 am in the library.

Great conversation plus they look at the upcoming Sunday's gospel lesson.

Stop by and join in on any Thursday!



ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS



The Annual Giving Statements

will be mailed out late-January. Do you need new offering envelopes? Let the office know, or pick one up at the Welcome Center on Sundays.

Time, Talent, Treasure

Date	Attendance	Offering
12/03/23	256	\$ 2,632
12/10/23	256	\$ 3,834
12/17/23	418	\$ 4,567
12/24/23	274/220	\$ 7,781
12/31/23	80	\$ 10,926

Online giving: \$ 5,589

Wednesday Mornings

Where Bible Study & Fellowship Meet

You are invited!

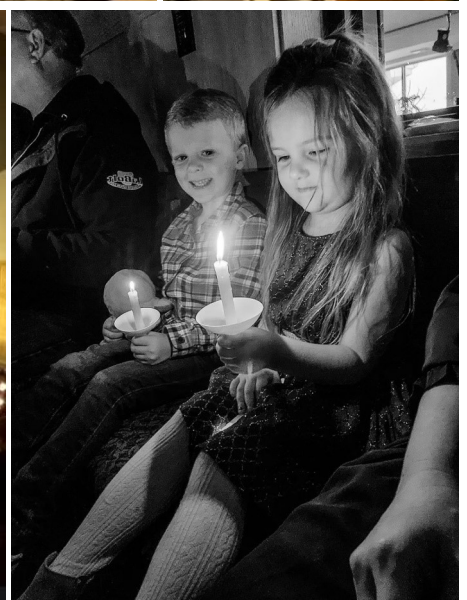
Just stop in on Wednesdays at 10:00



THE PEOPLE WERE AMAZED AT HIS TEACHING, BECAUSE HE TAUGHT THEM AS ONE WHO HAD AUTHORITY. MARK 1:22, NIV

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

1/2	Greg Grimm	1/12	Leland Weappa	1/18	Maddox Sackreiter	1/24	Jessy Johnson
1/2	Jayce Johnson	1/13	Stacy Anderson	1/19	Paisley Ericsson	1/24	Karen Smith
1/2	Janelle Kelly	1/13	Annabeth Kohn	1/19	Pam Gomer	1/24	Millicent VanMeter
1/3	Kathy Sussex	1/13	Dick Schmeichel	1/20	Brittany Bray	1/25	Jason Sackreiter
1/6	Lynden Harms	1/14	Marilyn Hodenfield	1/20	Robin Cook	1/26	Peg Dohrer
1/8	Rosemary Goetschius	1/14	Rebecca Welberg	1/21	Susan Leddy	1/26	Ken Johnson
1/8	Mark Granquist	1/15	Theresa Granquist	1/22	Jaxon Bear	1/26	Cooper Sackreiter
1/8	Jason Stinson	1/15	Mervyn Larson	1/22	David Gulck	1/27	Cade Grabow
1/8	Matthew Unzen	1/15	Peyton Snell	1/23	Spencer Boerger	1/27	Samantha Madsen
1/9	Aaron Anderson	1/15	Brett Storm	1/23	Brady Gomer	1/27	Olivia Mears
1/9	Bob Biersbach	1/15	Dereck Trapp	1/23	Sandy Kathman	1/28	Jonathan Ash
1/10	Jennifer Brus	1/16	Mary Bray	1/23	Karmen LaRoche	1/28	Bill Wietman
1/10	Kristian Winston	1/16	Witten Thompson	1/23	Lauren Lester	1/29	Gail Selgeby
1/12	Bridget Anderson	1/16	Emmitt Welberg	1/23	McKenzie Severson	1/30	Madison Tesch
1/12	Jason Bear	1/16	Owen Welberg	1/24	Jarret Bear	1/31	David Dorneman
1/12	Madisen Sipe	1/17	Patty Hamman	1/24	Brander Hicks		



Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men.

Luke 2:14

Camp Sunday-Pancake Sunday-January 21



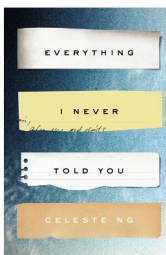
Sunday, January 21
Starting at 10 pm
 Enjoy a delicious pancake breakfast with sides. Prepared and served by the men of American Lutheran Church. All proceeds from the free-will offering go directly to support ALC children attending Lutheran Camps.

There is additional information, along with camp brochures, on-line at www.losd.org. Camp can be expensive. But, ALC provides up to \$300 per ALC Camper to help with the costs. Check with Pastor Justin, Rachel, or the Church Office for more information on how to be re-imbursed.

"I PRAISE YOU, FOR I AM FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE. WONDERFUL ARE YOUR WORKS; THAT I KNOW VERY WELL."
PSALM 139:14



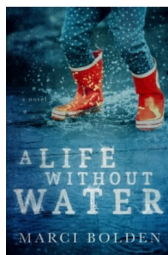
Book Clubs on Monday January 22



Everything I Never Told You
 by Celeste NG (at 2 pm)

A Life Without Water
 by Marci Bolden (at 5 pm)

Books are provided. Contact Janelle Kelly or Church Office.



Diana Dirksen, Parish Nurse



Blood Pressures will be taken Sunday, 01/14/24



The annual walking program starts on January 15.

This year, we will be walking through some of the National Parks on the western side of the US.

If you are interested, or want additional information, sign up at the church Welcome Center counter, call the church office, or contact Diana directly by phone or email.

(All contact information is on page 2 of this newsletter.)

"....think of the walking program as a mission-practicing good stewardship of our health and body."



Grown-ups
Movie Night

January 14 @ 5:00
ALC Holy Word Theatre

Pizza, Popcorn,
 Soda, Candy
 Free Will Offering

Sign up at Welcome Center to help plan for numbers.

PICTORIAL *Directory*

It's time for our
NEW Church
Directory! Every
family receives a
FREE 8x10 family
portrait and a
printed directory!

*It won't be
OUR
directory without
YOU!*



Save the Date!

Wednesday, April 3rd 2:00 – 8:30

Thursday, April 4th 2:00 – 8:30

Friday, April 5th 2:00 – 8:30

Saturday, April 6th 10:00 – 4:00

Sign-up will begin soon.

Watch the
newsletter and bulletins
for more updates.

Toddler Time with Caretakers *Starting*

January 26

at 9:00 am at

American Lutheran

Church. You do not have to
be a member.

Sign up by ALC website



Rachel received the **Sprinkle of Grace Grant** from the SD Synod, ELCA. This grant is to help start a program for children younger than preschool age.

This will be a time for caretakers to play with and learn along with their children in a safe environment.

Toddler Time with Caretakers is a program offered to children 18 months to 3 years old.

First, toddlers will enjoy time singing and reading. Then they will move on to sensory and imagination play and crafting, all with their caretaker.

This is also a great opportunity to meet other parents and grandparents.

Toddler Time will start on January 26, with one Friday morning a month. It is not limited to our church community, please tell your friends. To sign up, go to the American Lutheran Website, APP, or use the code.



Enrolling Soon for 2024-2025 School Year!

Beginning January 8th, 2024

* Current Students and Families

Beginning January 15th, 2024

* ALC Church Members

Beginning, January 22nd, 2024

* Open Enrollment for all until Classes are filled

*Registration Forms available by the Preschool
Classroom door and on the ALC Website!*



The voice
of the LORD
is powerful;
the voice
of the LORD
is full of majesty.

Psalm 29:4

ALC HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH MINISTRY

Youth group spent the month celebrating. They had a fun Christmas party the first Wednesday with games and challenges. The girls won the competition. The last Wednesday, youth group joined other area churches and went caroling at Park Place Assisted Living. Then enjoyed a fun, but competitive, round of Christmas Jeopardy.



CONFIRMATION CLASS

There are 18 Confirmation Students in 7/8th Grade this year. 2023-24 is our Catechism Year, so we have spent the Fall Semester studying the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Together our prayer is stronger. They also discussed the Church year and common worship practices in our Sunday Services. We will tackle the Ten Commandments, Baptism, and Holy Communion in the Spring.

Each Wednesday includes time for snacks and then a variety of activities and projects to help teach them the lesson for the day.

We had 2 Service Project days. On the first one, we helped the Peace Circle WELCA group assemble the School Kits and Personal Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief. We also spent time that day bringing out the 105 quilts made by the Piece Corps Quilters for display across the pews for Quilt Sunday. The second Service Project Day was spent assisting the Grant County Christian Service Council with the October Food Give Away. The students worked really hard at both projects!

They are also working on their Sermon/Worship Note requirement and serve as Acolytes at each Worship Service.

They were able to celebrate with a fun day on their last day before Christmas Break. We hope they come back rested and ready to learn. We are looking forward to the next semester and continuing to watch them explore and grow in their faith.



The Christmas program went very well and I was so proud of all the kids. Pam, Anna & Pastor did an amazing job preparing the kids to sing. Thinking about the program, I wanted to share a little thought.

This year's program reminded me of the broken world we live in today and how we chase the perfect Christmas, but it never quite feels perfect. Yet, every year we see many perfect Nativity scenes.

A post has been going around on social media, reminding us Jesus' birth probably did not feel perfect to Mary. Traveling a long distance while due and giving birth in a place with animals? I've delivered many babies, and I don't think a single mom would choose that for their child. Yet God did!

He picked the most imperfect place to give a perfect gift. He sent us Jesus and had a plan for us to reach that grace through Jesus' sacrifice.

As we will learn in the coming months, Jesus' life would not be easy but he continued to teach us and make the ultimate sacrifice so we can leave this broken world and join Him.

So are you still searching for the perfect Christmas? I think the only way to find that true meaning and warm feeling of Christmas is reaching for your relationship with The Trinity.

This next year witness the miracles God does in your life, follow the teachings of Jesus, open your heart to listen to the Holy Spirit and find the perfect imperfect Christmas next year.

Hope to see your kiddos back on January 7th.

Rachel Kiley





ALC Preschool



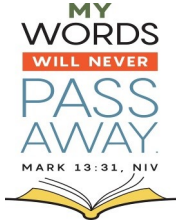
Morning Class: 8:00-11:00
Afternoon Class: 12:15-3:15
Email: alcps@itcmilbank.com



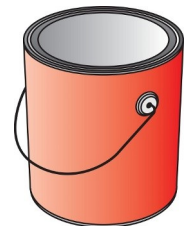


JANUARY



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 11 Peace Circle	3 10 Bible Class 5:15 Bell Practice 6 Manna Praise Band 6 HS Youth Group	4 8 am Men's Group	5	6 1 Baking Angels
7 9 Worship 10 Sunday School 10 Coffee Fellowship	8 7 Scouts	9 9 Quilting Milbank Ministerial	10 10 Bible Class 3:30 Confirmation 5:15 Bell Practice 6 Manna Praise Band 6:30 Church Council	11 8am Men's Group 2 Vespers at St. Williams	12	13
14 9 Worship 10 Sunday School 10 Coffee Fellowship 5 Grown-up's Movie Night	15	16	17 10 Bible Class 3:30 Confirmation 5:15 Bell Practice 6 Manna Praise Band 6 HS Youth Group	18 8am Men's Group	19	20
21 CAMP SUNDAY 9 Worship 10 Sunday School 10 Pancake Breakfast	22 7 Scouts 2 Book Club 5 Book Club	23 9 Quilting	24 10 Bible Class 3:30 Confirmation 5:15 Bell Practice 6 Manna Praise Band	25 8am Men's Group	26 9 Toddler Time	27
28 ANNUAL MTG 9 Worship 10 Annual Meeting 10 Sunday School Coffee Fellowship	29 7 Scouts	30	31 10 Bible Class 3:30 Confirmation 5:15 Bell Practice 6 Manna Praise Band	←-----Painting the Fellowship Hall & Kitchen-----→		
←-----Painting the Fellowship Hall & Kitchen-----→						

PAINTING OF THE FELLOWSHIP HALL AND KITCHEN



The Fellowship Hall and Kitchen will be painted, by volunteers, starting on Monday, January 22. This project might take up to two weeks. **MANY VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED.**

If you are interested in helping, or even just want to stay in the loop on progress, sign up at the Church Welcome Center Counter. We will send schedules, updates, and additional information to everyone who signs up.

Once painting starts, all paint and supplies will be provided. However, if you have a favorite brush or roller, bring it along. As we move items in and out to paint walls—things will also need to be cleaned and organized.

You can work by yourself, in a small group, with a large group, during the day, in the evenings, on the weekend—whatever works best for you. Everyone's help will be greatly appreciated.

Talk to Pastor Justin or Mark Granquist (605-467-9469) if you have any questions.