

Spirited News

April 2026

The newsletter of Spirit of Truth Lutheran Church

He is Risen!

This month, on April 3rd, we remember the very lowest of low moments in all of history: the crucifixion of the Lord of all. Maybe someone would argue that there were lower moments in history than the death of just one man. Countless people have experienced gruesome deaths, and many of those individuals who have died torturous, horrific deaths were also innocent of any crime, as Jesus was (though there were **none** who were sinless, as our Lord was.) Maybe some would say that when the planes flew into the Twin Towers on 9-11, that that moment in history was the lowest. Or maybe some would say the killing of thousands of Jews and others in Germany during WWII was the lowest moment in humanity's history. Or maybe some would say the senseless killing of large groups of people in a mass shooting at a mall or at a school or even in a church building (which is an all-too-common occurrence) is a "low" moment in our history. Those who are killed in terrible circumstances, such as any of these, do not deserve being robbed of their life. There certainly have been many moments in history that could be described as bleak, or horrific. But, there is only one moment in history when the very presence of God, the Holy and Almighty King of kings and Lord of lords, was the object of such injustice. As we remember that travesty of justice, where the Almighty, Holy One was executed, we are brought to the painful reality that it happened because you and I made it necessary. That lowest of all moments in history needed to happen because we had chosen to sin against God and to alienate ourselves from the One who created us. Oh, the agony that our sin has created. Not only did the Son of God give his life on the cross for you and me, but he did so bearing the full weight of our guilt, our sin, upon him. Jesus died experiencing the alienation from God, being forsaken by God, which is the penalty that we all deserve to suffer because of our sin.



And yet, this month on April 5th, we also celebrate the greatest, most awesome victory of all times: the resurrection of that same Lord and Savior of us all. It is a victory that is more awesome than anything any human being has ever, or could ever, accomplish. It is a victory for which we may never take any credit. **It is totally God's victory.**

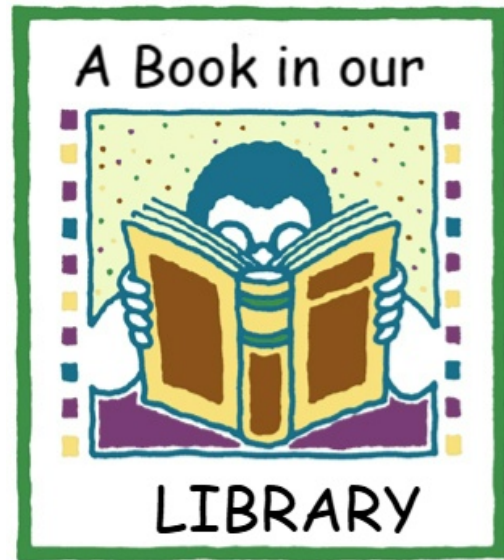
However, it is a victory accomplished **for you and for me.** It is a victory that spells HOPE and LIFE for us. It is the greatest victory in the history of all time, because it is the victory that turns the tables for all of creation, from a situation of despair and hopeless poverty of our souls into a situation of meaning, richness, and vitality, restoring us to a relationship with the Almighty Lord and King of all.

This celebration of the most awesome victory immediately followed the most terrible event ever. On Friday, all that the world could see was a horrific death of a righteous, holy man. And many lived with the heaviness, grief, and despair of that event for many days or weeks, or even their whole life. For many, all they could see was the injustice of it all, and most did not / could not comprehend how terribly unjust that event really was. It is so often not in the realm of possibility for us to fathom what God is accomplishing, even through the most desperate moments that we might find ourselves in. Some days, some moments, or some years in our life, we might be experiencing "Good Friday," and not be able to fathom what God has in store. Sometimes the heaviness of the immediate situation appears so dark, and it seems that hope is impossible to comprehend; we cannot fathom the awesome victory that God is planning. At times in our lives it is "Good Friday," but my prayer for us is that we would cling to God by faith, knowing that God is, and always will be, the One with the final word; a word of victory and hope. Jesus is risen, and that makes all the difference in the world for you and me!

In God's Peace,
Pastor Jim

National Volunteer Week is
April 19-26, 2026





The passion Rich has for Christ is genuine, inspiring and contagious. His teachings will challenge you to be more intentional as you strive to live out God's word at home and at work.

Rich is the Senior Pastor at King of Glory Church in Sioux Falls. He is a City Council member and the son of Pastor Jerry and Paula Merkouris.

Spirit of Truth quilters will meet on Wednesday, April 8th at 9:30 am. They will have morning coffee and a potluck lunch at noon. All quilters are welcome.



JOLLY WIDOWS



The Jolly Widows will meet on April 22nd at the Overtime in Sioux Falls at 11:30 am.

Birthdays in April

William Hofer	3	Cody Flier	17
Deanna Larson	4	Ashlie Hofer	17
Lisa Malone-Swenson	5	Patrick Sprecher	17
Paula Merkouris	5	Christina Jellis	18
Lincoln Reed	7	Dan Buirkmsn	19
Twyla Trumble	7	Marcus Krumvieda	20
David Hanson	8	George Petersen	21
Marilyn Close	10	Brady Bjorum	23
Lucas Mutschelknaus	10	Emily Dagel	23
Jacob Clow	11	Phil Leidholt	24
Jim Lere	12	Erik Burkman	27
Ardell Bonde	14	Roberta Bruget	28
Millie DeBoer	14	Erin Castle	29
Caden Sprecher	15	Jennifer Klein	30
Kenneth Satter	16		

Anniversaries in April

Ron and Pam Meland	10
Jesse and Heather Postma	19
Jason and Sasha Krumvieda	28

MISSIONS

Offerings

For the April tithe we will sponsor two different organizations as usual. The first tithe will go to two NALC missionaries who work together in Tanzania Africa. Here is a little bit of information about each of them:

Noumieshi Nkya leads Evangelism efforts in the villages of Sakwe, Mbiti and Ibulya which are communities deeply impacted by poverty, harmful cultural practices and spiritual darkness.

Tunsubilege Philemoni Mwasongwe is a social worker for the local Lutheran parish in Bariadi Tanzania. She works together with Ndumieshi Nkya in the same villages around Bariadi Tanzania. She visits families in their homes with economic, social and spiritual needs. She provides guidance and counseling services while providing social support for those with life challenges.

We will have the opportunity as a congregation to learn more about these ladies and the challenges they face the last weekend of May when we will have 2 guests from One Plus God the organization from the United States that supports them.

The second tithe will be Go Serve Global. A nondenominational faith based nonprofit organization. It is Christ centered and is committed to serving others. The donors and volunteers help to deliver hope through orphan sponsorships, assisting local leadership and establishing sustainable communities. They serve through mission trips both in the mid-west and internationally. <https://goservglobal.org>

There will be four of us from the mission committee going to Jamaica on a mission trip from April 11-18. Those going will be Jami Andersen, Lynne Erickson, Linda Granberg and Paula Merkouris.

We will be celebrating High School and College graduations on Sunday April 26.

The mission team will be sponsoring a rummage sale again this year. It will be held May 7 and 8 during the Brandon spring rummage sales. Mike and Ardell Bonde have graciously offered to have the rummage sale at their home. This is a big project and we would appreciate help from the congregation.

THANK YOU FROM BONNIE AND ERIK LIEN

Pastor Jim and My Church Family:

Update on my health condition. I have no pain, just a lot of anxiety attacks. New MRI showed 2 new spots! I work on breathing treatments and keeping my oxygen level up.

Hospice at home has now taken over, so I can get all the help I need at home. They have all been wonderful. With God's help, I can still improve.

I thank all of you for the beautiful cards, well wishes, prayers, and support.

As God is my Savior, He is in control now.

Pastor Jim and my church family: You truly are a gift. I love you all.

Bonnie and Erik

Blessing Box donations needed in April 2026

Last names A—D
Last names E - I
Last names J - P
Last names R - Z

Breakfast bars
Mac and cheese
Fruit cups
Evaporated milk

Please keep your dollar amount as close to \$2.00 or under per item as possible!

If you would prefer to donate funds instead of buying groceries, there are brown envelopes on the entrance table for that purpose.

There will always be a box in the Welcome Desk area for these donations.

Blessings, Your Evangelism Team



Blessing Box

Youth Group News

April 12th 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm at Spirit of Truth Lutheran Church - 5th to
12th grades

The Chosen Series Bible Study Episode 4/Light snack

April 26th 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm at Spirit of Truth Lutheran Church - 5th to
12th grades

The Chosen Series Bible Study Episode 5/Light snack

Continental Youth Gathering 2026

From July 7–10, 2026, youth 12-18 and leaders from across the NALC will gather at St. John Lutheran Church in Roanoke, Virginia for four unforgettable days of worship, service, learning, and joy in Christ. This gathering is the heartbeat of our shared youth ministry.

·July 7, 2026 (8:00 a.m.)–July 10, 2026 (11:00 p.m.)

·Roanoke, Virginia, United States

·Registration Deadline: April 15, 2026

·Cost: \$275.00 per person, which includes the program costs, background check for everyone 18+, supplies, t-shirts, drawstring bags, excursions, missions, and most food (lunches, dinners and evening snacks.)

·Transportation and lodging on own.

·Need 1 adult chaperone for 1-7 kids.

More information is on the NALC website. Spirit of Truth youth that would like to attend should talk to Pastor Jim as the Church will help cover a portion of the cost.



Spirit of Truth
Lutheran Church

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Brandon, SD 57005
605-582-5030

www.spiritoftruthsd.org

The entire worship service can be viewed each week through Alliance Communications Cable: Channel 18, Digital Channel 21 on Fridays @ 6:30 pm.

They are also live-streamed on our [YouTube](#) page every Sunday.

If you would like to receive the link, please let the office know. It is sent out via email on Friday mornings.

Spirit of Truth Board of Deacons Meeting –
approved minutes February 10, 2026

Present: Tana Clark, Lynne Erickson, Linda Granberg, Linda Hoeck, Rick Larsen, Dan Larson, Phil Leidholt, Lisa Swenson, Mike Top, and Pastor Jim Steen. Absent: Doug Clark.

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 pm by President Leidholt. Pastor Steen gave devotions and prayer.

Secretary’s Minutes: A motion was made by Lynne Erickson, seconded by Rick Larsen to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2026, meeting as presented. Motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report: Treasurer Larsen reported the audit is moving along. We have several new lines in the balance sheet – to account for checks that were written before the month’s end but did not clear the bank. Our checking account balance is \$105,729.13 There is also a line for the CD that was purchased (\$75,000) but that expense has not been added to the software program. We have \$73,530 to pay our bills. Our net income for the year to date is \$5,178 but the CD expense is not included yet.

Balance 1/31/2026

General Fund Nondedicated money (Subaccount)	\$ 73,530.85
Money given to Building Funds (Subaccount)	(1,772.60)
Money dedicated to Jamaica Team (Subaccount)	5,919.81
Money dedicated to Women’s Team (Subaccount)	2,768.10
Money given to Memorials (Subaccount)	8,927.20
Money dedicated to Quilting Team (Subaccount)	379.13
Money Collected by Sunday School (Subaccount)	688.61
Money received from Thrivent (Subaccount)	10,709.89
Money dedicated to Youth (Subaccount)	294.29
Money dedicated to Blessing Box (Subaccount)	4,283.85
Balance Sheet	\$105,550.65
Checking Account Total	
Checks not posted	
Balance Sheet total	
CD 6547	
January 2026 Tithes	\$1,279.60
Green Heights Church Jamaica	1,279.60
Jamaica School for the Deaf	899.87
NALC	

A motion to approve the report as presented was made by Mike Top, seconded by Lisa Swenson. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Steen stated the Minkota & eastern SD Mission Districts Joint Convocation will be on April 17th and 18th in Fargo, ND. First Communion class will be held beginning on March 1st during the Sunday school hour. There will be five or six youth attending along with their parents.

Old Business: Annual meeting recap – President Leidholt reviewed his comments about the use of video songs during worship. The Nominating Committee (Ron Abraham, Kay Burkhart, Army Erickson, and Krista Leidholt met briefly after the meeting and will meet again on February 19th.

Dishwasher – Mike Top received a quote from Institutional Services for \$7,397.35 plus tax for the dishwasher. This includes the installation charge. A motion was made by Rick Larsen, seconded by Lisa Swenson to use \$2,000 from the Women's fund and the remaining balance from the Memorial account. Motion carried.

New Business: Money market for Building Fund – At the annual meeting, the question was raised about putting future building fund money in a money market account instead of a CD. First Interstate Bank (our current financial institution) pays more for a CD than a money market account. It was noted that most money market accounts are through an online institution and may be susceptible to scamming. There may also be a minimum amount to open the account. We will receive about \$1,300 for our current CD when it matures at 7 months. Rick Larsen will get rates for the money market account and any minimum amount needed.

Evangelism Duties – Lynne Erickson is willing to stay on for another year but is looking for some help. The team has several new responsibilities: Blessing Box, website, and Facebook. Each Deacon is to review their duties as stated in the Bylaws on pages 8-10 prior to the next meeting.

Mission District Convocation Delegates – A motion was made by Linda Granberg, seconded by Dan Larson to pay hotel and registration fees for Pastor Steen and any delegates wishing to attend. Motion carried.

Team Reports: Property – Mike Top reported the procurement committee has met and there is nothing new to report. The parking lot will be re-stripped this summer. Concern was raised about the cleaning of the building and Mike will check the contract.

Stewardship – In the absence of Doug Clark, Tana Clark stated Doug cannot be at all the monthly meetings due to his job travel requirements. We will try doing the meetings via Zoom to help with this.

Mission – Linda Granberg stated a mission meeting was held on January 27th and have selected two female missionaries from Tanzania Africa. They will be designated as one of the two April tithes.

The next meeting will be on March 17, 2026, at 7:00 pm with Phil Leidholt providing devotions. The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda J. Hoeck, Secretary