

The Prairie Willow

A joint newsletter for Shepherd of the Hills and West Zion Lutheran Churches

SOTH April 2026

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church (SOTH)

201 Falcon Avenue
Benson, MN 56215
320-843-3408

soth2008@live.com

www.shepherdofthehillslc.com

Facebook: 

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church ELCA



West Zion Lutheran Church (WZ)

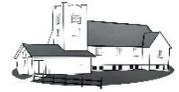
29190 357th Avenue
Hancock, MN 56244
320-239-4195

wzlutheranchurch@gmail.com

www.westzionlutheranchurch.com

Facebook: 

West Zion Lutheran Church



Information & Contacts

Pastor Steve Carmany

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Office Secretaries

Betsy Anderson

320-444-2425

betsyanderson3@hotmail.com

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320-444-1113

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Custodians

Stephanie Smith – SOTH

320-766-3945

Gary & Connie Williams – WZ

320-843-4417



Pastor's Message



By Pastor Steve Carmany

Greetings from Pastor Steve - "For Such a Time as This"

"God so loved the world, that he..." John 3:16

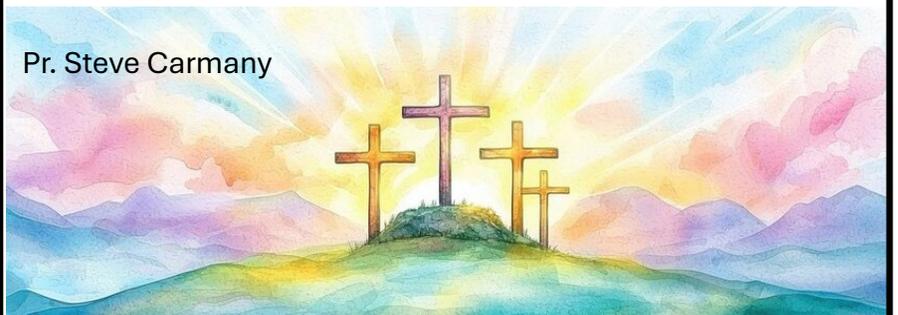
Easter is right around the corner! Love is in the air! God is good, all the time! However, Easter doesn't happen without a death. Resurrection doesn't come without a cross.

And our hearts don't crack open, again and again, to God's Grace & Forgiveness & Joy, without Jesus standing among us declaring "Peace be with you..."

We are Easter People, and we are filled each day with the Holy Spirit, to be God's grace for the world around us.

We too were born, "For Such a Time as This!"

Pr. Steve Carmany



Pastor's Message Continued...

A Great Time to Take Part in One Another's Ministries!

Looking through this month's newsletter and calendar, there are many opportunities for everyone from our 3 congregations to worship at each other's churches and take part in one another's events:

*Lenten & Holy Week Services....

*Holy Week Meals

*Parish Get-Togethers

*Klub / Bible Studies / Daily Prayer Time

*Sunday School & Saturday Kids Club

*Confirmation Sunday

*In-Person Worship Every Sunday at our sanctuaries

Come, let us fill one another's churches each week as **One Body In Christ!**



Maundy Thursday



Maundy Thursday Meal

April 2, 2026

5:30-6:30PM

Free Will Offering

*Hosted by the
Shepherd of the Hills
Luther League*

Worship follows at 6:30PM

*Shepherd of the Hills
Lutheran Church*



SONRISE EASTER BREAKFAST

**FOLLOWING THE 7:30AM
WORSHIP SERVICE**

FUNDRAISER BY THE LUTHER LEAGUE

FREE WILL DONATION

201 FALCON AVENUE, SWIFT FALLS, MN



Parish Calendar

SOTH

Thursday, April 2	Maundy Thursday – Meal at 5:30 pm, Service at 6:30 pm.
Sunday, April 5	EASTER – 7:30 am Worship followed by Easter Breakfast No Sunday School
Wednesday, April 8	Confirmation at 6:15PM Church Council at 7PM
Sunday, April 12	9 am - Worship, fellowship to follow 10 am - Sunday School
Wednesday, April 15	Confirmation at 6:15PM
Wednesday, April 22	Confirmation at 6:15PM
Sunday, April 26	9 am - Worship, fellowship to follow 10 am – Last Day of Sunday School
Wednesday, April 29	Confirmation at 6:15PM
Sunday, May 10	11 am - Worship, fellowship to follow Confirmation Senior Recognition Day

WEST ZION

Friday, April 3	Good Friday – 6:30 pm Service
Sunday, April 5	EASTER – 9:15 am Worship
Thursday, April 9	WZ Zoom Church Council Meeting at 7:15PM
Sunday, April 12	11 am -WZ Worship Noon Parish Get Together Meal @ Hancock Firehall
Sunday, April 26	11 am - Worship
Sunday, May 10	9 am - Worship

EAST ZION

Thursday, April 2	Maundy Thursday – 4:30 pm Service
Sunday, April 5	EASTER – 11 am Worship
Sunday, April 19	11AM -EZ Worship
Sunday, May 3	11AM -EZ Worship

SCANDI HAVEN

Wednesday, April 1	Lenten Bible Study at 12:45PM
Wednesday, April 8	Lenten Bible Study at 12:45PM

**Worship services are live streamed on the Facebook page of each specific church.
Search and follow East Zion Lutheran, West Zion Lutheran or Shepherd of the Hills ELCA.**

Schedule Assignments

SOTH Computer Operators & Acolyte Schedule

	<u>Computer</u>	<u>Acolyte</u>
April 5	Lily Wrobleski & Kinsley Trump	Jacey Reich
April 12	Coy Kobbermann & Logan Hight	Aletta Larson
April 26	Blake Larson & Jacey Reich	Coy Kobbermann
May 10	Shelbie Anderson & Logan Hight	NA
May 24	Memorial Weekend (Outdoor Service)	NA
June 7	Aletta Larson & Adult (TBD)	
June 21	Lily Wrobleski & Adult (TBD)	
July 5	Adult (TBD)	
July 19	Logan Hight & Adult (TBD)	
August 2	Coy Kobbermann & Adult (TBD)	
August 16	Jacey Reich & Adult (TBD)	
August 30	Blake Larson & Adult (TBD)	



SOTH Fellowship Schedule

April 5	Luther League Easter Breakfast
April 12	Lynn & Shellie Larson/Chris & Laura Larson
April 26	Troy & Michelle Nelson/Jason & Betsy Anderson
May 10	Confirmation Sunday/Senior Recognition

SOTH Altar Guild

April	Betsy Anderson/Michelle Nelson
May	Gail Svor/Janet Mitteness
June	Marge Anderson/Roxanne Nelson
July	Linda Amlie/Jane Petrak
August	Tammy Thompson/Doreen Thompson
September	Sheri Fahl/Brenda Nelson
October	Janine Ellingson/Laura Ostlie
November	Joyce Lagred/Tammy Thompson
December	Dee Baird/WELCA Officers



Prayer Requests



STEVE NELSON, MARGE ANDERSON, SARA & JON REICH, SUE CARSON, DICK SEIBERT

Announcements

FREE PIANO AT WEST ZION

If interested, contact a council member!



EAST ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH INFORMATION

28745 County Road 10

Starbuck, MN 56381

Phone: 320-239-4195

Email: office@eastzionlutheranchurch.org

Interim Administrative Assistant: Mary Jo Forbord

Custodian: Sandy Knutson, 320-843-4342

Website: eastzionlutheranchurch.org

Facebook: East Zion Lutheran Church

SOTH CHURCH RENTAL

Make sure to visit the website, speak with a church secretary or grab a facility use policy contract from the church office door to reserve the church, its tables and or chairs for your special events!

ON-LINE GIVING OPTIONS

To make it easier to give, SOTH and West Zion have partnered with Tith.le. Tith.le offers automatic withdrawals from an account of your choice or from a credit card. Visit the Shepherd of the Hills website under giving or the West Zion website under give to learn more and sign up! Tith.le is recommended by the Southwest Synod of the ELCA and is notably safe!

BULLETIN DEADLINE

Announcements for bulletins must be emailed to soth2008@live.com or call/text 320-444-1113 by noon Tuesday prior to church service.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

All items for the Prairie Willow newsletter need to be emailed to soth2008@live.com by noon on the 20th of each month. You can also text or call 320-444-1113.

CONFIRMATION & SENIOR RECOGNITION

Sunday, May 10. 2026-Confirmands are Blake Larson, Aletta Larson, Lily Wrobleski, Coy Kobbermann and Jacey Reich.

2026 graduates are Shelbie Anderson of KMS and Riley Ostlie, Tanner Nelson, Landon Skarsten, Tate Kobbermann and Emily Reich all of Benson.

GRC WELCA SPRING GATHERING

Please see poster included in the April newsletter. 9AM registration on Saturday, April 18 at First Lutheran Church in Morris. 10AM start, free program open to public. This years theme is "This is My Father's World." Engage in various fun and meaningful activities that contribute to our cause. Event offering will go to Synodical Women's Organization, If Wishes Were Horses and Stevens County Food Shelf.

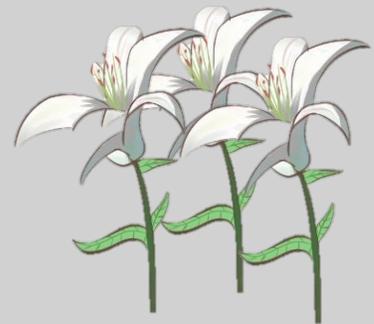
2026 SWMN SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Begins at 1130AM, Friday, June 5 and ends at 5PM, Saturday June 6 at Gustavus Adolphus College and online via Zoom. This year's theme is Grounded in Hope. The synod asks that we have one or two voting members in attendance based on our congregations size, plus one youth voting member (under 18) and one voting young adult (ages 18-30). Early rate registration by April 10 is \$175 per person. Price increases to \$225 on April 11. There are options to stay on the Gustavus campus for \$60 (single room) or \$45 (double twin bedroom) or there are motel (Americinn, Best Western Plus, Konsbruk Hotel) options in St. Peter. On campus housing does include bedding or private bathrooms.



EASTER GARDEN

If you are interested in providing an flower to be placed in front of the church for our Easter Service, please bring to church by Noon on the Saturday, April 4. Flowers can be donated to the church or can be picked up after Easter service and taken back home to enjoy. Thank you in advance!



LUTHER CREST BIBLE CAMPS

Do you have youth interested in attending summer camp? Luther Crest in Alexandria has camps for all ages and can be for a single day, a week or anywhere in between! Visit www.luthercrest.org for details and registration. Information is also available on the Narthex table. Scholarships are also available for those who qualify and can be found on the Luther Crest website. Swimming, campfires, games, crafts, bible study, great food and great friends! With that said, bring a friend! Happy camping!



QUARTERLY MEAL AT THE HANCOCK COMMUNITY CENTER

West Zion will be hosting their quarterly meal at the Hancock Community Center on April 12 at Noon. Come enjoy some food and socialization! East Zion and Shepherd of the Hills are encouraged to participate. Free will offering will be taken.

POSTPONED

The Glacial Ridge Conference Annual meeting at Kongsvinger Church in Donnelly has been postponed until April 12 at 3PM.



Saturday Kids Club

Saturday, April 18 from 10AM-Noon at East Zion!
Give yourselves a break! Drop of the kids for some fun activities supervised by church volunteers.



East Zion Klub Schedule

- Mar. 27, Friday: 9am, Friday Klub Prep – Potato peeling at EZ
- Mar. 28, Saturday: 9am, Saturday Klub Cooking at EZ
3pm-5pm, Hot Klub pickup at EZ
- Mar. 29, Sunday: 9am-11am, Chilled Klub pickup at EZ

Church Council Reports

From the Secretary...

March council meeting was cancelled due to snowstorm. Next Council meeting is Wednesday, April 8 at 7PM.

Birthday Party

90th Birthday celebration for Leona Blowers on May 2 from 2-4PM at the Benson Community Center.
Happy Birthday Leona!



Church Council Reports

From the Treasurer...

Please see the last few pages of the newsletter for account balances. Please note: to take advantage of a bit more interest, we are also utilizing a money market account through BMO where we can easily transfer funds as needed.

Sincerely,

Jim Ostlie, Treasurer

Glacial Ridge Conference
Women of ELCA, 2026

SPRING GATHERING

We are excited to invite you to our upcoming Saturday morning event, where we aim to make a significant difference in the lives of those who need it the most.

THEME AND THEME VERSE This Is My Father's World

Psalms 104:24 How many are your works, LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

Fundraising Activities

Engage in various fun and meaningful activities that contribute to our cause. Event offering will go ½ to Synodical Women's Organization; ½ to If Wishes Were Horses, Morris, MN IN-KIND items/cash will go to Stevens County Food Shelf.

Live Entertainment

Experience captivating performance
by local talents.

Musicians Ken & Linda Hodgson with Lisa Winter.

Education from If Wishes Were Horses, Morris, MN,
'Empowering Dreams, One Hoof Beat at a Time.'

Delicious Food

Enjoy a delectable spread of
food and refreshments at
9:30 a.m.



**9:00 AM REGISTRATION \$15 9:30 AM BRUNCH
10:00 AM FREE PROGRAM OPEN TO PUBLIC**

**FIRST
LUTHERAN
CHURCH**

200 EAST 5TH STREET
MORRIS, MN 56267

SATURDAY APRIL 18, 2026

March 2026 Financial Report

Checking Account

Line Item	Date	Check #	Description	Payment	Deposit	Balance
1305	3/2/2026	Auto	Amazon (kitchen supplies)	\$187.85		\$2,301.27
	3/2/2026	Auto	From Savings		\$5,000.00	\$7,301.27
	3/2/2026	Debit	Amazon (White Paper)	58.19		\$7,243.08
1407.2	3/4/2026	14887	GPC Dyed Fuel	\$464.88		\$6,778.20
1407.3	3/5/2026	Auto	Federated Telephone	\$90.18		\$6,688.02
1402	3/5/2026	Auto	North Star Mutual Insurance	\$378.04		\$6,309.98
	3/9/2026	Debit	County Line Liquor (Communion Wine)	\$39.53		\$6,270.45
	3/9/2026	Auto	Tithely-offering-regular		\$965.34	\$7,235.79
1401	3/12/2026	14888	MN Dept of Labor & Industry (Elevator)	\$145.00		\$7,090.79
	3/12/2026		SOTH Cemetary Fund	\$900.00		\$6,190.79
1407.2	3/12/2026	14890	GPC (dyed fuel)	\$464.88		\$5,725.91
1407.4	3/12/2026	14891	GPC (propane budget plan)	\$448.50		\$5,277.41
1309.2	3/12/2026	Debit	Autom (Confirmation stoles)	\$81.26		\$5,196.15
1309.2	3/12/2026	Debit	Autom (Confirmation stoles)	\$3.84		\$5,192.31
1608	3/16/2026	Auto	Tithely-offering-regular		\$89.84	\$5,282.15
1407.1	3/20/2026	Auto	Agralite	\$250.00		\$5,032.15
1204.4	3/23/2026	14892	East West Zion Parish (February pastoral)	\$2,489.45		\$2,542.70
1204.1	3/23/2026	14892	East West Zion Parish (pastoral benefits)	\$796.65		\$1,746.05
1304.3	3/23/2026	14892	East West Zion Parish (Zoom)	\$6.90		\$1,739.15
1608	3/23/2026	Auto	Tithely-offering-regular		\$765.34	\$2,504.49
1201	3/23/2026	14894	Stephanie Smith (April custodial)	\$505.50		\$1,998.99
1202	3/23/2026	14895	Betsy Anderson (April Secretarial)	\$379.13		\$1,619.86
1202	3/23/2026	14896	Jim Ostlie (April Secretarial)	\$379.13		\$1,240.73
1205	3/23/2026	14897	Melissa Wroblecki (April Powerpoint creator)	\$92.35		\$1,148.38
1203	3/23/2026	14894	Stephanie Smith (April Organist 2X)	\$101.59		\$1,046.79
1304.3	3/23/2026	14893	Jim Ostlie (safety deposit box replacement key)	\$25.00		\$1,021.79
1207	3/23/2026	14898	United States Treasury (Q1 payroll taxes)	\$786.42		\$235.37
	3/23/2026	Auto	From Savings		\$4,000.00	\$4,235.37
1304.1	3/26/2026	Auto	Great America Financial Services	\$211.89		\$4,023.48

Total Income to date 2026:

Total Income to date 2025:

\$9,422.82
\$7,469.98
\$1,952.84

March Financial Report

Savings Account

Line Item	Date	Description	Withdrawal	Deposit	Balance
	3/2/2026	To Checking	\$5,000.00		\$1,952.18
1608	3/4/2026	Offering-Regular (2/25/26)		\$100.00	\$2,052.18
1608	3/4/2026	Offering-Loose (2/25/26)		\$30.00	\$2,082.18
1608	3/4/2026	Offering-Regular (3/1/26)		\$1,080.00	\$3,162.18
1608	3/4/2026	Offering-Loose (3/1/26)		\$30.00	\$3,192.18
1609	3/4/2026	Offering-Lunch (3/1/26)		\$28.00	\$3,220.18
	3/4/2026	Cemetery Fund Deposit		\$900.00	\$4,120.18
1608	3/19/2026	Offering-Regular (3/4/26)		\$60.00	\$4,180.18
1608	3/19/2026	Offering-Loose (3/4/26)		\$10.00	\$4,190.18
1608	3/19/2026	Offering-Regular (3/10/26)		\$160.00	\$4,350.18
1608	3/19/2026	Offering-Loose (3/10/26)		\$5.00	\$4,355.18
1608	3/19/2026	Offering-Regular (3/18/26)		\$280.00	\$4,635.18
1608	3/19/2026	Offering-Loose (3/18/26)		\$5.00	\$4,640.18
	3/23/2026	To Checking	\$4,000.00		\$640.18

Money Market Account

Budget	Date	Description	Withdrawal	Deposit	Balance
	2/19/2026	Beginning Balance			\$25,000.00
	2/27/2026	Interest		\$2.29	\$25,002.29

Mission Investment Funds

6 Year Term Building Fund	\$78,206.45
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Demand Checking Building Fund

Demand Checking Building Fund	\$9,819.29
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Demand Checking Memorial Fund

Demand Checking Memorial Fund	\$128.22
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BMO Money Market Account

BMO Money Market Account	\$25,000.00
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