



# ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

8948 N 1900<sup>TH</sup> AVE, GENESEO IL

815-989-2025

[www.stjohnsgeneseo.org](http://www.stjohnsgeneseo.org)

March, 2026

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From the Pastor:

## **“March Commemorations for Our Lenten Reflection”**

Lent is a time of both self-reflection according the holy Law of God<sup>1</sup> and a time of reflecting upon Christ's Passion. In order to assist us in our self-reflection, I thought we could utilize two commemorations on the liturgical calendar that come up in the month of March. The first is Perpetua and Felicitas, the second is Patrick.

### **March 7<sup>th</sup>, *Perpetua and Felicitas, Martyrs***

In the beginning of the third century AD the Roman emperor Septimus Severus (reigned 193 to 211) forbade conversions to Christianity.<sup>2</sup> However, Perpetua, a young noblewoman, and her maidservant Felicitas, recognized that they must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:26). They did become Christians *and because of that* were jailed at Carthage in North Africa along with three other believers. On March 7, 203 they were then executed for their faith in Christ.

Three things stand out in their martyrdom. First and foremost, is their willingness to die for the Lord who died for them, trusting that just as He is risen so He shall raise them. Second, during their imprisonment they witnessed to their faith with such conviction that the officer in charge of the prison converted to Christianity as well. Third, they both made arrangements for the well-being of their children after they were gone.

Let us consider a few points for self-reflection. Theirs is an example of faithfulness unto death that all of us know we should be willing to follow as well. And we especially note that, while they did not choose to be martyred (that is suicide!), far from constant complaining, they bravely faced it to the point that their witness brought another to faith. So, do we face the crosses that Christ calls us to bear in that way, or do we instead moan over much less? Are we attracting people to Christ by how we face challenges, or do we sound more like unbelievers? Now be clear, this is not calling for stoicism; we can and do mourn (cf. Romans 12:15). But is our confidence in Christ and His salvation still present, is our treasure truly heavenly things? Or not?

Finally, the last point, dealing with their children, really needs to be considered. We see how they saw that their children would be cared for after they died. In this way they followed the example of their Lord who, while on the cross, saw to it that His mother would be cared for. However, and here is an important point for self-reflection, they did not let even their children come in the way of being faithful to Christ unto death. Would we do such, or would we rationalize, “God would want me to stay alive in order to care for the kids”? Would we realize that we would hurt their souls all the more *by failing* to be faithful unto death? Do we truly believe what we sing, “When God takes me home to heaven, should this be the day I die, God will keep my spouse and children as the apple of His eye”?<sup>3</sup> Or are they nothing more than pious sounding, but empty words when coming out of our mouth?

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<sup>1</sup> This is what we commonly refer to as the *Second Use of the Law*, that is, the Mirror. For when we gaze into the mirror of the holy Law our sins are reflected back to us.

<sup>2</sup> This seems likely. However, some scholars believe that Severus was not personally against Christianity, which would then mean that the persecution spoken of here was a local one. That is possible, as even when there weren't empire-wide persecutions, local persecutions in various places within the empire were still fairly common.

<sup>3</sup> “All for Christ I Have Forsaken,” *Lutheran Service Book* (LSB) 753:4.

### March 17<sup>th</sup>, *Patrick, Missionary to Ireland*

Born to a Christian family in Britain around AD 389, he was captured as a teenager by raiders, taken to Ireland, and forced to serve as a herdsman. After six years as a slave, he managed to escape to a monastery in France. He eventually was ordained as a bishop and around the summer of 433 *returned to Ireland as a missionary*. He was a strong defender of the doctrine of the Trinity and spent the rest of his life spreading the Gospel and organizing congregations.

Let us consider a few points for self-reflection. Similar to the Biblical patriarch Joseph, Patrick remained faithful to Christ during horrible years when it seemed that God was anything but faithful to him. Instead of giving up on God and losing his faith, he recognized his escape was God's blessing of deliverance, *even though it took six long years of slavery before it happened*. Are we patient like that, or do we expect God to "be quick about it"? Do we give God the glory after the cross is removed, or do we take at least partial credit for it, especially if God took "a long time"? Do we see His loving hand disciplining us to teach us faithfulness and patience, or do we just assume He isn't doing His job if we're not happy?

Far from being weakened in his faith due to his suffering, Patrick grew stronger, so much so that he became a pastor who fought for the truth of God's Word. Even more amazing, he became a missionary *to the very people who had enslaved him!* He had true love for his enemies, wanting them to be saved eternally. How about us? Are we drawn closer to God through our suffering, or does the devil gain ground, leading us further away? Do we pray for our enemies, that is, those who have hurt us in some way (physically, emotionally, or however), is our first concern their eternal salvation, or is a grudge, hatred, and retribution where our heart and mind go?

Yes, Lent is a time for self-reflection in view of the holy Law of God and a time of reflecting upon Christ's Passion. And how true it is that such proper self-reflection leads us to ever increasing thankfulness *for Christ's Passion!* For He suffered and died for us in order to pay for our idolatry, our selfishness, our unloving heart. But not only has He paid for our sins, He has also given us the Holy Spirit that we can fight against sin and grow in holiness. We too have received the same Holy Spirit whom Perpetua, Felicitas, and Patrick received; the same Holy Spirit who empowered them to be such faithful Christians and examples to us.

Christ our Lord may not call us to be martyrs (at least in the strict sense), and He may not call us to be missionaries to those whom have hurt us (again, at least in the strict sense), but He does call us to be faithful to Him, which includes suffering for Him as well as witnessing to others of Him (and remember that *how* we suffer *will* be a witness, either a good or poor one!). So forgiven our sins, failures, and short-fallings, and filled with the Holy Spirit who makes us holy, let us look to these examples of faith and imitate them in our callings. And the whole time, let us be confident that we shall join with them in glory, not because of our holy works or patient suffering, which will always fall short, but because of Christ's work and suffering, which is holy and perfect and is *for us!*

God bless you this Lententide, granting you His Holy Spirit to strengthen your faith and new life in Christ your Savior.

Sincerely in our crucified and risen Lord,

*Pastor Nerud*

#### **Apologetics: Blue Jay × Green Jay hybrid<sup>4</sup>**

Blue-Green Jay shows that biblical kind is broader than species and even genus, and the ability to interbreed shows that they didn't diverge millions of years ago.

Scientists were surprised when a homeowner reported an unusual type of jaybird. The bird was found to be a hybrid. *Hybridization* occurs when two separate species interbreed. In this case, the hybrid was a cross between a female Green

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<sup>4</sup>By [Dr Jonathan Sarfati](https://creation.com/en/articles/blue-green-jay-hybrid); <https://creation.com/en/articles/blue-green-jay-hybrid>

Jay (*Cyanocorax yncas*, aka Inca jay) and a male Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*).<sup>1</sup> These two jays are not just separate ‘species’, but different *genera* (singular: *genus*).

The mating had clearly occurred in the wild; the territories of both species were known to have been expanding for some time, eventually overlapping. Previously, they rarely if ever came into contact.

### **Kind > ‘species’**

The Genesis kind comprises all those descended from a single species God created during Creation Week. Biblical creationists, both before and after Darwin, have pointed out that the Genesis ‘kind’ is usually represented today by a bigger grouping than a ‘species’. One key piece of evidence is *hybridization*. If two creatures *can* hybridize, or *can* both hybridize with the same third creature, then they are all the same kind ([creation.com/cats](http://creation.com/cats)). But when two creatures *can't* hybridize, they *may* nevertheless be in the same kind, and their inability to hybridize is for other reasons.

This Blue-Green Jay is hardly the first example of hybrids between genera. Indeed, the wholphin is a *fertile* hybrid between the false killer whale (*Pseudorca crassidens*) and a female bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*)—see [creation.com/liger](http://creation.com/liger). A fertile hybrid *by definition* indicates its parents were of the same ‘biological species’.

Both of these examples show that the kind in many cases is at least as high as the next higher grouping (classification level), the *family*. Both jays are part of the Corvidae bird family, which includes crows, ravens, and magpies. There are other cross-genus hybrids within Corvidae, so it could be called the crow kind.<sup>2</sup> Occasionally, hybrids can occur between species that are not even the same ‘family’, showing that the kind may be even higher in such cases ([creation.com/sturddlefish](http://creation.com/sturddlefish)). This inconsistency is not the fault of the ‘kind’ definition, but of the man-made classification system.

### **Refuting Ark critics**

Ark critics often disingenuously overload the Ark with millions of ‘species’. However, there are far fewer *kinds*. Also, most of those millions are insects or marine creatures, while the only *obligate* Ark passengers were land vertebrates. If kind = species, there were probably only about 60,000 animal passengers. The Ark could hold over 100,000 sheep-sized animals, and most animals are much smaller. But if kind = genus, then there would only be ~16,000 animals. As explained above, in most cases, kind = family, meaning only ~2,000 animals would have been on board ([creation.com/ortlund](http://creation.com/ortlund)).

### **Young-age evidence**

The researchers were also surprised because the two jays supposedly came from their last common ancestor (LCA) over 7 Ma (million years) ago. Jays have very short generation times; they lay eggs when they are about a year old. In 7 Ma, there would have been several million generations. (For comparison, the alleged LCA of chimps and humans was supposedly 6 Ma ago, and primates have much longer generation times.) Thus, there should have been many changes that would have prevented such interfertility.

For example, there are several common processes by which genes re-order on chromosomes, such as inversions and translocations. This means they won't line up with the corresponding genes from the other parent as they are supposed to during the process leading up to fertilization. So, no embryo will form.

Also, mutations, which are common, often result in genes from different parents not working together (*Dobzhansky–Muller incompatibilities* or DMIs). Finally, *gene regulation* would be highly likely to diverge in all that time. This means that some of the master ‘on/off’ switches for genes have changed in either or both parents. Any hybrid embryo that formed despite all the other obstacles would fail to develop because the genes from each parent are now being activated at the wrong times.

The hybrid is thus good evidence that Blue and Green Jays diverged much more recently. Say, after God flooded the globe about 4,500 years ago.

### **References and Notes**

1. Stokes, B.R. and Keitt, T.H., An intergeneric hybrid between historically isolated temperate and tropical jays following recent range expansion, *Ecology and Evolution* **15**(9):e72148, 10 Sep 2025.
2. Lightner, J., An initial estimate of avian ark kinds, *ARJ* **6**:409–466, 2013.

## Why we do what we do in worship<sup>5</sup>

### *Notes on the Liturgy #11 — The Hymn of the Day & Hymns*

The Hymn of the Day is a tradition that began with the Reformation when congregational singing, after a long absence due to priestly and chorale dominance, was reintroduced into the Divine Service. The idea is that the hymn is chosen to reflect the theme of the Sunday, often the Gospel Reading. However, if the sermon is based upon another text, a hymn more reflective of that text is often chosen. But let's zoom out and look at a big picture issue — the use of hymns in general.

This is an important subject because in many churches classic hymns are being ousted for a diet of “praise” music. To give an analogy, this would be like a parent taking away a child's bread, fruit, vegetables, meat and feeding him cake, ice cream, soda, and chips. Would any child complain? There is a place for cake and ice cream, but such should not be the “steady diet” from week to week, nor should such be the main meal in any particular service. Truly, the health of our member's faith is at stake!

With this shift in what is sung in the church, there easily follows a shift in the focus of the worshipers. A steady diet of praise music, even assuming solid texts (an assumption that honestly *cannot* be made), sets itself against the idea of “Divine Service.” In the Divine Service, the focus is first and foremost on our *receiving* God's service as He speaks to us with His Word, feeds us with the Lord's Supper, and washes us in Baptism. A church that extensively uses praise music shifts the focus to our praising God, thus *our serving Him*, “Man Service.” Because of this, such churches also easily become emotion centered. I know God was working because I “felt” Him. But the opposite must then true be as well, that if I “didn't feel” Him (i.e. no emotional response) then it wasn't a “spiritual experience” so I got nothing out of it. Thus the worshiper's attention is shifted away from the service of God in Word and Sacraments (where He actually promises to us!) and is driven inward to subjective emotions, which come and go (unlike God who remains the same yesterday, today and forever). Such means my faith loses the rock of God's unchanging promises delivered in Word and Sacrament, and is instead being built on the shifting sand of my emotions! Truly, this is not just a matter of “taste”!

Of importance to note, Lutherans are *not* the only ones who are concerned about this. A well known evangelical pastor, John MacArthur, has written about the loss of classic hymns. He bemoans the fact that doctrinal content and the teaching function of hymns have been lost with the overuse of simple praise songs. Of classic hymns MacArthur writes, “They were written to teach and reinforce Biblical and doctrinal concepts... Those hymns aimed to praise God by proclaiming His truth in a way that enhanced the worshiper's comprehension of the truth. They set a standard for worship that was cerebral as it was emotional. After all, the first and great commandment teaches us to love God with all our hearts, soul, and MIND (Matt 22:37).” Instead of thought, contemporary songs can become “vehicles of passion” with simple repetition designed to elicit an emotional response devoid of thought, intellect, doctrine.<sup>6</sup>

Building upon all this, hopefully we recognize that Lutheran hymns came out of, and thus uphold Lutheran theology. One of the great dangers of praise music (again assuming no false doctrine right from the start) is that they almost always come from non-Lutheran understanding. They are too often devoid of deep Biblical truths and sacramental theology. For example, how many praise or contemporary Christian songs on the radio speak about baptismal regeneration, confession and absolution, or Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper (i.e. sacramental theology)? As mentioned, most of these songs are candy. They might “taste” good (emotion), but spiritually speaking they are nothing but empty calories.

Certainly praising God *is* good. But let's praise Him by *proclaiming* Biblical truths to one another, building each other up in the faith, as St. Paul admonishes us.<sup>7</sup> After all, if worship is judged by if it makes *me* “feel good,” is it really about praising God, or praising *me*?

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## SEASON OF LENT

Midweek Lenten services continue through this month. Join us as we meditate on the suffering and death of our Lord and Savior, who willingly did everything to pay for all our sins and restore our relationship with God the Father.

Light suppers are served from 5:30 – 6:30 pm each Wednesday before the worship service.

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<sup>5</sup> These notes were originally written in 2001 by Pastor David Oberdieck and have been edited both on the site listed and furthermore by Pastor Nerud. The entire original series of articles may be found at <http://steadfastlutherans.org/liturgy>.

<sup>6</sup> MacArthur in Christian Research Journal vol 23 no 2.

<sup>7</sup> Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16.

## OFFICE INFORMATIONS



Please call the office or Pastor when someone is ill, hospitalized, or homebound or you desire private communion.

- Please use this email to contact the office: [churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org](mailto:churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org)
- Website address – [www.stjohnsgeneseo.org](http://www.stjohnsgeneseo.org)
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo/>
- All Sunday services are 'Live' streamed at 10am and posted to our website

## A DOLLAR FOR MISSIONS



Support travel costs for Rev. Pablo Dominguez – Hispanic Ministry in Beardstown, IL  
Our first project for 2026 is support for Hispanic Ministry in Beardstown, IL. \$1,800 will be collected to support travel costs for Rev. Pablo Dominguez. **Amount to be funded: \$1,800**  
New! Online Giving

Online one-time and recurring donations can now be made

at <https://www.aplos.com/aws/give/LCMSCentralIllinoisDistrict/D4M>

## MITE BITES

**LWML CID Mission Grant #6** –Our Savior Lutheran School in Uganda – \$3,956

The Lutheran Church of Uganda is building Our Savior Lutheran School next to the Lutheran seminary in Magamaga so local children can attend a school not operated by Muslims. Three classrooms have been built so far. These funds would give support for student tuition, room, board, and building costs.

How can I help? Pray that God provides the opportunity for these children to learn about God and His love for them. Support this grant by donating to your church's LWML group mite fund.



## PRAYER GROUP (CHAIN)



All are invited to participate by either requesting prayers or praying for others. Prayer requests are sent to Pastor who then sends them out by email to those praying members. This is a blessing for everyone.

*Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16*

## PRAYER REQUESTS

**Our Infrequent Attendees** –pray the Holy Spirit bring them to understand their need to be in regular worship in church and we as brothers and sisters in Christ would reach out to them.

**Our LWML Chapter**– that God would continue to bless their work.

**Sunday school** – pray the Holy Spirit direct and guide all students in understanding God's love and mercy in Jesus Christ. Lead parents to diligently teach their children of Jesus.

**Youth** – pray the Holy Spirit provide means to work with our youth to encouraging their faithful walk with Jesus. Bless and increase their numbers.

**Elderly/Homebound** - pray that this congregation would continually remember our Elderly and Shut-ins and minister to their special needs.

**Confirmation Students** – pray that they will be eager to study, learn and grow in the teachings of the Lutheran church and their faith. May they see this is the beginning of a life lived for Jesus.



## REMEMBERING THOSE IN NEED!

**ST. JOHN'S FAMILY**—O Lord, You are the great Physician of soul and body. We pray that You would show mercy these members of St. John's:

Linda Aper  
Paula Chapa  
Joyce DeFauw  
John Erdman  
Betty Firch  
Marcia Helke

Jessica Johnson  
Rosalie Jorgensen  
Linda Lundquist  
Mary Jayne Nash  
Aaron Raschke  
Drew Schillinger

Dave Schmidt  
Carolyn Werner  
Carolyn Wildermuth  
Denise Winchell  
Marilyn Woods

Jon/Anita Clausing (missionaries in Kenya)  
Paul Werner (brother of Dan Werner)  
Loyall Talarico (niece of Mary Jo Gehn)  
Ellen Bauer (grandmother of Joel Werling)  
Ann Behrendt (daughter of Carolyn Wildermuth)  
Chad Gehn (nephew of Brad Gehn)

Marty Cavato (cousin of Mary Jo Gehn)  
Jodi Martins (daughter of Gary/Darla Johns)  
Justin Rittenhouse (grandson of John/Nancy Wickwire)  
Joline Parrish (sister of Gayla Kroll)  
Cindy Davenport (cousin of Terri Hock)

*Please remember to call the church office if you are needing prayer. Also let us know when we can remove your name because your health has improved and you are living a regular life. We love to give thanks to God for His healing just as we send Him our requests.)*

**MILITARY** – We pray for those serving in our military and their families:

Luke Thompson (son of John/Kindra Thompson)  
Karl Flynn (son of Mr/Mrs Paul Flynn)  
Casey Powers Jr. (step son of Lisa Powers)  
Brittany Lenni (daughter of Gabe Loenser)  
Rylie Hallendorff (grand-daughter of Carolyn & Dan Werner)  
Chase Werling (nephew of Joel Werling)

2 Robert Erdman  
7 Janet Bertso  
8 Makeena Wickwire  
15 Sean Helke

#### MARCH BAPTISMS

23 Aaron Raschke  
24 Adam Hock  
24 Joel Jorgensen  
29 Carmen Sette



5 Beverly Peterson  
8 Jaimie Jorgensen  
10 Dan Maeltzer  
13 Adam Hock

#### MARCH BIRTHDAYS

14 Coy McKibbon  
17 Francie Kolb  
20 Roselyn Maeltzer  
23 Kenneth Allison

23 Gayla Kroll  
24 Derek Helke  
25 Kevin Rahn  
29 Martin Himmelman

#### MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

5 Joel/Jaime Werling (2005) - 21 yrs  
31 Mike/Jan Dahl (1979) - 47 yrs



*I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.  
Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!  
Psalms 34:1 & 8*

## EVANGELISM/STEWARDSHIP

### Lenten Dinners



February 25<sup>th</sup> – Spaghetti Pie (Kindra Dahl, Jan Dahl & Paula Chapa)

March 4<sup>th</sup> – Chicken Broccoli Casserole (Barb Rassmussen & Sheila Magerkurth)

March 11<sup>th</sup> – It's A Surprise! (LWML)

March 18<sup>th</sup> – Pulled Meat Sandwiches (Sheila Magerkurth, Linda Aper & Bob Erdman)

March 25<sup>th</sup> – Beef Noodle Casserole (Thad & Cathy Curry)

EASTER – APRIL 5<sup>TH</sup>  
BREAKFAST SERVED  
AFTER SERVICE

(Easter Breakfast Donations are for Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Cristo Rey)

### **Kingswood Church in Geneseo**

**South Campus**

**Back Pack Blessings**

[www.kingswoodgeneseo.org](http://www.kingswoodgeneseo.org)

302 N State St, Geneseo, IL 61254 (309) 944-2793



Volunteer to pack backpacks for the children in the Geneseo School District that go home to sometimes no food at all. These backpacks are filled with kid friendly, nutritious food items to get them through the weekend. Come join others and pack backpacks on the last Saturday of the month.



### **NEWS YOU CAN USE!**

I do not do the good which I want; however, the evil which I do not want, this I practice” (Rom. 7:19). Our sinful nature, “dead in trespasses” (Eph. 2:5), was “buried with [Christ] through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). The death of Jesus took away the sin of the world, and for His sake God “forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.” But, like the ground squirrels in my church’s cemetery, our sinful nature keeps trying to dig itself out of the grave. As a result, “I am a miserable human being. Who will rescue me from this body of death?” The entire New Testament answers, “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Rom. 7:24-25) God’s Son came in human flesh, and “Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3). So, “if we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and righteous, that He would forgive us these sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). All of us need to recognize our wretchedness, confess our sins, hear what God’s Son did “for us and for our salvation,” and by the power of the Holy Spirit receive God’s gracious pardon. Lent leads us to all that, and leads us to why we know it is all true: “Just as He is risen from the dead, lives, and reigns to all eternity, this is most certainly true.”

*CID President Mark Eddy*

**Pray For Our Central Illinois District Missions, supported by your church’s Mission Dollars to the District.** Please remember in your prayers Pastor Pablo Dominguez and Cristo Rey (Christ the King) Lutheran Church in East Moline, where the ministry is conducted almost entirely in Spanish, as well as St. John’s Lutheran Church in Beardstown, where Pastor Dominguez travels twice a month to preach and teach in Spanish.

### **Notice and Explanation of District Leadership Changes**

#### **Elected at Convention**

District President: Rev. Michael Mohr

1st Vice-President: Rev. Michael Burdick

2nd Vice-President: Rev. Mark Eddy

### **As of February 17, 2026**

District President: Rev. Mark Eddy

1st Vice-President: Rev. Jason Braaten

2nd Vice-President: Rev. Karl Eckhoff

At the 61st Regular Convention of the Central Illinois District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod held July 13–15, 2025, the above were elected to serve three-year terms in their respective offices by the district voting delegates. Seven months later, the leadership of the district has changed significantly, and this change requires an explanation to our pastors, church workers, and congregations.

On Wednesday, January 28, 2026, District President Mohr was arrested on criminal charges by federal law enforcement. Prior to being held in custody, Mohr was given the opportunity to speak with First Vice-President Burdick and in keeping with district governance temporarily transferred the duties of district president. On Monday morning when the first special session of the Board of Directors met, Rev. Burdick notified the Board that in light of the anticipated duration and demands of the office, he asked to resign from the position of First Vice-President. This resignation removed him from the Board of Directors and elevated Second Vice-President Eddy to First Vice-President and in turn, Acting District President.

With Rev. Burdick vacating his position, the Central IL District Bylaws (2.15(b)) state, “A vacancy in the First Vice-Presidency shall be filled by advancing the Second Vice-President. A vacancy in the Second Vice-Presidency shall then be filled by the President from the reserve list of nominations, that is from the nominees left after the previous election, according to the number of votes received...” Rev. Burdick represented the Eastern Region, so the second-place nominee at the convention for the Eastern Region was Rev. Jason Braaten of Immanuel – Tuscola. He was then appointed as Vice-President for that region by the Acting District President.

When Mohr resigned from his position and as a member of the LCMS roster, Acting District President Eddy succeeded Mohr as District President and vacated the office of First Vice-President. This resulted in Rev. Braaten serving as First Vice-President and a second appointment according to Bylaw 2.15(b) (cited above) of the third-place nominee for the Western Region, Rev. Karl Eckhoff of Christ - Peoria. This final succession and appointment were ratified by the Board of Directors on February 17, 2026, at a second special session of the Board.

While this situation required careful interpretation of our governing documents, the Board acted in accordance with district bylaws, in consultation with Synod and legal counsel. We thank all who have reached out to offer support and wisdom as well as to all who have granted patience as the Board worked through these processes. We remain committed to serving Christ and His Church faithfully in this district, and it is by grace alone that we serve our people and the congregations of the Central Illinois District.

### **2026 Youth Bible Bowl**

**Date:** Sunday, March 22, 2026

**Location:** Camp CILCA

**Topic:** "The Gospel According to St. Matthew"

Those holding either a circuit Bible bowl, or with team(s) planning for the District Bible Bowl, please contact Trip Rodgers ([trodgers@cidlcms.org](mailto:trodgers@cidlcms.org)) a.s.a.p. so we know how many to plan for. Thanks.

### **Dollars for Mission Online**

Our first project for 2026 is support for *Hispanic Ministry in Beardstown, IL*. \$1800 will be collected to support travel costs for Rev. Pablo Dominguez. Reminder that online one-time and recurring donations can now be made at - <https://www.aplos.com/aws/give/LCMSCentralIllinoisDistrict/D4M> or by using the QR code.





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  - Your User ID and password
  - Your estimated project date (Allow 14 days for your Thrivent Action Kit to arrive)
  - A short description of your project and how you and your volunteer team will be involved
  - The church or other nonprofit organization that will benefit from the project, if applicable
  - How you'll use the Community Impact Card
  - Number of volunteers on your team and T-shirt sizes
3. Now that you have everything you need, visit [thrivent.com/actionteam](https://thrivent.com/actionteam) and click **Apply now** to begin the application process. Applying for a Thrivent Action Team takes less than 15 minutes.
4. If it is your first time logging in, you will need your Thrivent ID. If you don't know your Thrivent ID, please contact your Thrivent financial advisor or call 800-847-4836 for assistance.

After you've completed the application, watch your email inbox to see if your project was approved. You should receive an email within three business days of submitting your application.

## After your project

Go to [thrivent.com/actionteam](https://thrivent.com/actionteam) and share your story. Reporting on your project takes less than 10 minutes. Make sure you have the following handy:

- Your User ID and password
- What your team accomplished
- Number of:
  - Hours to plan the event and length of event
  - Hours (on average) each person volunteered
  - Total participants
- The amount raised if you hosted a food drive or fundraiser
- **Optional:** Add your volunteer names, email and state

## Questions?

**We're here for you.**

Call 800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Action Teams."

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# Directing Choice Dollars® and personal giving: A how-to guide

## Direct Choice Dollars online

1. Visit [thrivent.com](https://thrivent.com).
2. Click **Log in**. Enter your Thrivent ID and password.  
(If you haven't yet registered, click **Register now**.)
3. Click **Direct Choice Dollars**.
4. Choose the organization to which you want to direct Choice Dollars:
  - a. To direct a previous organization:
    - In the Browse our curated lists section, select **Your history**
    - Scroll down to view the previous organizations you've supported. Locate the organization, click **Direct** and **enter the number of Choice Dollars** you would like to direct
  - b. To direct to a new organization:
    - In the search box, **enter keyword(s)** like organization name, ZIP code, cause, etc. Or, browse our curated lists to view top organizations by category, e.g., Nearby, Popular, Disaster relief, etc
    - Scroll down to view the organizations. From the results, locate the organization, click **Direct** and **enter the number of Choice Dollars** you would like to direct
5. Validate the information and click **Confirm**.

## Direct Choice Dollars by phone

1. Call 800-847-4836 and when prompted, say **"Thrivent Choice."**
2. **Press 1** to direct Choice Dollars or **2** to hear Thrivent Choice Dollars program Terms and Conditions.  
(If prompted, say or enter your phone number and date of birth.)
3. A client service professional will work with you to direct Choice Dollars.

## Want to make an even bigger difference?

Make a personal donation at [thrivent.com/thriventchoice](https://thrivent.com/thriventchoice). Thrivent pays the processing fees so 100% of your donation goes to help.\* Scroll down to the **Make a personal donation** section, click **Donate** and search the Thrivent Choice Catalog. Once you locate the organization to which you wish to donate, click **Make a personal donation**. You'll then be sent to a Personal Donation page. Follow the prompts to make the donation.

\*Thrivent will pay up to \$300,000 in online processing fees per calendar year for personal donations made through Thrivent's online giving platform.

The Thrivent Choice® charitable grant program engages Thrivent clients with membership and Thrivent Member Networks in providing grants that support charitable activities, furthering Thrivent's mission and its purpose under state law. All grant decisions, including grant recipients and amounts, are made at the sole discretion of Thrivent. Directing Choice Dollars® is subject to the program's terms and conditions available at [Thrivent.com/thriventchoice](https://thrivent.com/thriventchoice).



ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
 GENESEO IL  
 815-989-2025

# March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am	2 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	3	4 Confirmation 5pm Lenten Supper 5:30-6:30pm Worship 7pm	5 Elders 6 pm	6	7
8 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship 10 am	9 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	10	11 Confirmation 5pm Lenten Supper 5:30-6:30pm Worship 7pm	12 Council 6:30 pm	13	14
15 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am Youth 11:30 am	16 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	17 LWML 1:30 pm SS Teachers 6:30 pm	18 Confirmation 5pm Lenten Supper 5:30-6:30pm Worship 7pm	19 Men's Bible Study 6:30 pm	20	21
22 SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship 10 am	23 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	24	25 Confirmation 5pm Lenten Supper 5:30-6:30pm Worship 7pm	26	27	28
29 <b><u>PALM SUNDAY</u></b> SS/Adult/Youth Bible Study 8:45am Worship/Comm 10 am	30 <i>Pastor's Day Off</i>	31				



