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Our next
 Property Council
 meeting is
 TBD. Be watching
 for more info.



What happened to the Palms?

What changed the mood of pilgrims who enter Jerusalem with Jesus – acclaiming “Blessed is the One who comes in the Name of the Lord! Hosana!” Maybe their mood did not change, rather it was local Jerusalemites who were rallied to Jesus’ trial before Pilate? Who cried “Crucify Him,” because they had been made to believe it was in their best interest. And that is the blessed paradoxical mystery of Faith: Jesus died. Jesus was raised from the dead. Jesus will come again. With Love for sinful humanity, undeserved, yet God & Creator’s will, Jesus went to the cross without resistance. “Not My will, but Thine.” That is faith! It was in the condemning crowd’s interest for Jesus to die, just not in the way they and the Temple leaders thought. Comprehensive and inclusive beyond our imaginations Jesus’ death on the Cross was a once-and-for-all act of divine grace for all who will believe. Believe that the Creator, Son, and Holy Spirit together love and value each of us this much, as to suffer death to remove from us the barriers of sin so that we may receive the fullness of grace. And forgiven realize our freedom and the joy of God working divine goodness and mercy in us, as the new and blessed life relating to fellow humanity and creation.

I have had two, and now three years of Palms to burn. The Palms are burned to produce the ash applied on Ash Wednesdays. Ash which reminds us from the dust of the cosmos we have come and to simple dust our bodies will return. This helps me, I pray you also, get in touch with that spirit soul within me that is not dust, rather personal unity with God. That is gift and eternal from they who are the beginning and end of all that is, was, and will be. It is all God’s; each of us are inescapably creations and creature of God’s making. What we do with this life and self-understanding, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, (lest we think it is something to use for our own interest alone). What we do with this life, new life with the trinity, touches all our relationships, is our participation with God’s love.

The love of God powerful enough to be at work in you raised Jesus from death to life. Angels rolled the stone away and folded the grave cloths. Yet as you read this, the church is still remembering Jesus’ passion before his death. His receiving in the disdain and abuse of from the Temple guards, and Roman soldiers in Pilate’s palace. Jesus receive in and upon His body the selfish and fear inspired rebellion of humanity, and the mocking of the leaders and others who said, “if He could open the eyes of the blind man, let Him save Himself.” He received all of this and death by crucifixion so we will know how powerless that all is, as it was absorbed into Jesus. He did die, and was buried, but that was not the end as the fearful hoped, even the devil.

EASTER we celebrate what came next, how powerful God's love is. This is the mystery that assures our hope, strengthens us to face and counter the sin that continues. By confidence of faith, we are not defined by sin or this world, rather in the love of the God who redeemed humanity for our eternal relationship with them.

We enter the darkness preparing our souls to rejoice in the light. Amen.



Choices in Mission- April 2026

This April the Choices in Mission project is the offering taken at the Synod Assembly. This offering will be sent to our companion synods in Tanzania to support the work of the Lutheran Church there. Our companion synods are the Pare and Mwangi Dioceses. Bishop Amy Current has recently had the opportunity to visit these Dioceses and build our relationship with them.

If you would like to read the message regarding this offering from the synod here is a link: <https://www.seiasynod.org/2026-offering>

If you have questions please visit with a council member or Judy Monroe

2026 Joint Service Project between First Lutheran and UCC

The Joint Council has chosen a 2026 service project for the congregations to work on together. We will provide a Thank you to nursing home staff- nurses, care aides, laundry aides, kitchen staff, everyone who works to care for those who live in nursing homes.

Our hope is that members will work together to prepare a snack. Joint Council is working on locating appropriate funding, as the ingredients will be costly for this many persons. All nursing homes have been contacted and we know how about how many staff to prepare for for each of the 5 nursing homes.

We anticipate this project will be completed during the course of 2026, allowing for the many different schedules of our membership. We will be offering recipes as suggestions for you to get ideas, or use.

Early in March we will have financing and recipes finalized and will be ready for members to indicate their interest in participating.

Feel free to talk to members of Joint Council (Judy Monroe, Allison Bartholmey and Jim Lammey) to learn more or indicate your interest.

More information coming very soon!!

Chihoni Calling!

Word is getting around, and more and more patients are getting the care they need at Chihoni Medical Center. Initially, some took one look at the beautiful building and concluded that this must be one expensive place! In fact, at 5000 Tanzanian shillings (\$1.94) per visit, prices are competitive, and as people discover that, they come! They also come to buy medications from the pharmacy.

The clinic is offering free screenings for blood pressure and diabetes on certain days of the week. This service brings people into the building, where prices are posted for everyone to see.

Paula Lofstrom and David West have completed their round of churches and will be arriving at Chihoni on April 15. Traveling with them will be Chihoni's first medical student, Emily from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. Others will be arriving in June.



A young patient with her mother

Meanwhile, construction continues. The next structure will be the Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) building, for which Sele's crew has already completed $\frac{3}{4}$ of the concrete blocks needed. The RCH will be a place for routine pregnancy care and well-baby clinics, protecting mothers and children from exposure to infectious diseases. A separate building is required by law.

Paula's Update is already posted on the IHP website. You can read it here: <https://www.ihptz.org/post/march-2026-update-from-ihp>

We praise God for the progress at Chihoni and pray his blessings on the clinic, those who serve, and those receiving care.

Prayer for April

Loving God, As we remember Christ's humble service and sacrificial love, help our hearts to be open to Your command to love one another and to follow You with gratitude and obedience.

Help us reflect on the depth of Christ's sacrifice; God draw us into quiet reverence, renewed repentance and steadfast hope in Christ redeeming love.

Lord God, we give You our highest accolades for raising Christ from his grave and making Your son our eternal Lord. Help each of us, O Lord, to experience the same joy which the friends of Jesus felt when meeting the risen Christ. And as we approach the throne of grace, O Lord, help us to receive and reflect on all the words you have for us.

Amen.

Spring Bake Sale

Mission Coalition will have their annual spring bake sale on Saturday, April 18 from 9 a.m. to noon at Saint Luke UMC. Donations of baked goods are greatly appreciated and can be dropped off at St. Luke's from 7:30 to 8:30 or Corinne can pick them. Putting prices on baked goods is helpful. See Corinne for details. All proceeds go to Kid Assist.



Celebrate Holy Week with us.

Palm Sunday Worship 3/29 9:30 Am.
Maundy Thursday 4/2 7:00 Pm.
Good Friday Cross Walk 4/3 Noon
Good Friday Services 4/3 7:00 Pm.
Easter Breakfast 4/5 8:00 Am.
Easter Sunday Worship 4/5 9:30 Am.

Bible Quiz

According to Matthew's account, something remarkable happened to the earth on the day Jesus was crucified and again on the morning when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary visited the tomb. What occurred on both days?

- There was a flood on both days.
- There was an earthquake on both days.
- There was a huge fire on each day.
- There was complete darkness on both days.

Answer on pg. 2



A Hymn Mix-Up With a Message

C. Gray Norsworthy, a pastor in Atlanta, once shared a story about the woman who prepared his worship bulletin. She was faithful in her work but didn't have much background in church hymns.

One week, Pastor Norsworthy handed her a draft of the service and hoped she could decipher his handwriting.

When he reviewed the finished bulletin, he noticed the final hymn was titled "Just As I Am, Without a Clue."

Whether it's "without a clue" or "without a plea," the truth remains the same: we all come to Jesus just as we are — and we all need him.



Happy Birthday

Connie Zimmermann 04/08

Stan Kirchhoff 04/09

Judith Monroe 04/09

Leonard Rose 04/11

Carol Ve Verka 04/16

Emily Cantu 04/17

Lynette Birkenholz 04/19

Landon Karsten 04/20

Andrew George 04/27

Janelle Karsten 04/30

Jennifer Sumpter 04/30

Joint service project UCC and First Lutheran

As part of our partnership we work on joint service projects. Last year we hosted a concert. This year we are preparing a thank you for the nursing home staff in town. We will be making snacks, and packaging them individually so that all shifts have an opportunity to have a thank you.

Workers are needed-

- Purchasers
- Cooks
- Taste testers
- Packagers
- Labelers
- Card makers- and ensuring that as many people in your congregation sign them as possible!
- Deliverers
- Fellowship - as in cheering on the cooks in various way- snacks for them maybe?
Or just your encouraging presence

And perhaps even in ways that are not mentioned above! The Joint Council does not pretend to think of everything!

There are 5 nursing homes in town and our only request is that the project be completed before Thanksgiving. We know how many staff to prepare for at each nursing home, and their preferred time of day for delivery. We hope for this to be a surprise delivery, so the timing is up to the team.

Please sign below to indicate you are interested in helping this year, or if you just want more information and we'll reach out to you! If you have a time of the year that is better for you (spring, summer, fall) please indicate that so we can pair folks up!

We have located funding, so purchasing the ingredients is not a barrier. We have suggestions for snacks, but they are not limitations- just ideas to get you going. First Lutheran has 2 ovens, UCC has 4. Both have ample work space.

We hope to have folks from the churches working together to get to know one another better.

If you want to help, but need a ride-that can be arranged too! Or if you see another barrier for yourself, let us know and we'll help you work around it!

You Are Invited...



*Please join in the celebration
of the 50th Anniversary of Ordination
for Rev. Matthew Martens
on Sunday, May 17, 2026,
at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church
209 Colorado Ave., Ames IA, 50014*

Worship: 10:30 AM

Light Luncheon: 11:30 AM

with time to share brief stories.

Matthew + Mary

Please RSVP by May 1st

515-570-9280

matthew.martens@mchsi.com

Then & Now at First Evangelical Lutheran!

Reflections on an old picture, a changing community, and a steady hope

I recently came across an old photograph of our church, like a small time capsule. The moment I seen it, I found myself slowing down—taking in the details, tracing the lines of a familiar building, and imagining the people who once stood in that same place.

In the picture, so much looks the same at first glance—yet the longer you look, the more you notice what has changed. Maybe it's the landscaping, the street out front and to the east, the entrance where there is now a circle driveway and carport, or the small features that were updated over the years. Whatever the differences are, they tell a story: a congregation adapting to needs, making room for ministry, and caring for this place as a home for worship.

It's striking to think about how much the world has shifted since that photo was taken—how our community has grown, how technology has changed the way we connect, and how the pace of life feels faster than ever. And still, week after week, our church has continued to be a steady presence: a place where people gather, pray, serve, and find belonging.

That's why a simple photograph matters. It gives us a visual reminder of the past—of faithful steps taken long before us, of decisions made with prayer, and of ordinary days that became part of a much larger story. It's a gift to remember that we did not start from nothing; we inherited a



legacy built by people who loved God and loved this community.

Looking back also helps us look forward. When I compare “then” and “now,” I see how far we’ve come—and I’m reminded that God is not finished with us yet. My hope is that the years ahead will be marked by the same faithfulness: growing in welcome, deepening in discipleship, and finding new ways to serve our neighbors with compassion and joy.

If you have older photos of the church—or stories you remember about “how things used to be”—I’d love to see them. Feel free to share a copy with the office (or email one in), and tell us what you know about the moment it captured. Together, we can preserve these glimpses of the past and celebrate the ways God has carried us into the present.

Reflection prompts: What’s one change you’re grateful for in our church’s life? What’s one thing you hope never changes? Where do you sense God calling us next?



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Property Meeting 6:30 Pm.	2 Dorcas 9:30 Am. Maundy Thursday 7:00Pm.	3 Crosswalk @ noon Good Friday 7:00Pm.	4
5 Easter Breakfast 8-9:15 am Worship Service 9:30 am	6 Church office will be closed.	7	8	9	10	11
Easter Sunday	13	14	15 Lois Cr. 9:30 Am.	16	17	18
Worship Service 9:30 am						
12 Worship Service 9:30 am						
	20	21	22	23 Council Meeting 6:00 Pm.	24	25
19 Worship Service 9:30 am						
	27	28	29 Earth Day & Administrative Professionals Day	30		
26 Worship Service 9:30 am						
Annual Meeting following Service Council Retreat at Noon						

80205
NEWTON, IOWA
NORTH
309 EAST THIRD STREET

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

**Watch Past and Live
services !**

newtonfirstlutheran.org
&
(on Facebook at)
First Lutheran Church-
Newton

**Online worship
service are
always available!**



Join Us

Sunday Morning Worship 9:30 Am

Coffee Hour 10:30 Am

**Maundy Thursday & Good Friday
Services 7:00 Pm.**