



Dear Lord of Life blessed community,

It is starting to feel like spring. The daffodils outside my house have begun to bloom—those bright, stubborn signs that winter never gets the final word. Earlier this week, I found myself out on the water in a canoe, and the geese were there too, pairing off two by two, settling in, preparing nests. Even the April showers have come early this year, soaking the ground and quietly doing the hidden work of making new life possible. Everywhere you look, creation is waking up.

And we find ourselves, right now, on the cusp of the Great Three Days—moving toward Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the joy of Easter morning. It’s not accidental that these things arrive together. The church calendar and the natural world are telling the same story: something is dying, and something is rising. This season invites us to pause and ask where we are seeing that movement of life already taking shape around us.

So perhaps the question for us this April is this: where is life already beginning to grow—in the world, in our church, in our own lives? Where do we see signs of hope? Where is something small pushing up through the soil, something easy to miss if we are not paying attention? And just as important, how do we notice it—and nurture it? Because new life is often fragile at first. It needs attention, care, and intention. It asks us to lean in.

In our life together as a church, I see those signs of life all over the place. I see it in the laughter during coffee hour, in the ways you show up for one another in times of grief and celebration, and in the partnerships we are building in our community. I see it in the quiet, steady faithfulness of people who keep saying “yes” to love, even when it is

hard. These are shoots of resurrection. Our calling is not to force growth, but to tend it—to water it, to make space for it, to create the kind of community where life can flourish, where people can grow taller, stronger, and bloom in ways that bring color, beauty, and joy into the world.

But spring is not only about what is growing. It is also about what must be released. The trees do not cling to last year’s leaves, and the soil does not hold onto what has already died. So there is another question for us this season: what do we need to let go of? What has been weighing us down? What has not been serving us? What fears, anxieties, or frustrations are we carrying that need to be laid down?

Because resurrection does not come without Good Friday. New life does not come without some kind of death. Not a death of despair, but a death that makes space—a clearing, a surrender. The cross is not the end of the story, but it is part of the story. And so we are invited, gently but honestly, to release what we cannot carry into resurrection with us, trusting that God can take even those things and transform them.

As we walk through Holy Week together, we will tell that story again. We will gather in the shadow of the cross. We will sit in the silence of the tomb. And then we will proclaim what we already know deep in our bones: that life wins, that love wins, that God is always, always bringing something new into being—even now.

So this April, let's pay attention. To the daffodils. To the rain. To the quiet, unseen growth happening all around us. And let's ask, together: where is God bringing new life among us, and how can we be part of it? After all, is that not our namesake?

With gratitude for each of you, and hope for what is still to come,



Pastor Adam

**Happy
Birthday**

April 13 Carolyn K.
April 18 Deborah M.
April 20 Margie S.
April 20 Steven F.

Easter Bonnet

This Easter (April 5) we are going to try something old and new. We are going to wear Easter bonnets at the church service on Easter. A hat something like a Derby hat. You can get one in the stores, online or resale shops. Or if you are creative, make one. So Ladies, we hope to see you in your Easter bonnets this Easter!



Lifting others up and celebrating their success goes to all that stepped in and helped out with the treat table and the voting day treat table. Also to Art for installing the paper towel dispenser in the Woman's bathroom.

Senior Spirits

We will meet on Thursday April 16, 2026 at noon. We will have our usual Potluck lunch and as always everyone is welcome! Any questions please call Marilynn at 630-927-9996

Lunch Bunch

We will meet at Longhorn, 708 Janes Ave. in Bolingbrook on Tuesday, April 14, 2026 at 11:30 AM. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to Debbie McNichols at 630-878-4970. Please plan to pay with cash, as cash is preferred by the restaurant.

Maundy Thursday

(Institution of Eucharist)
Thursday April 2nd @ 7:00pm

Good Friday

(Christ's Seven Last Words)
Friday April 3rd @ 7:00pm

Holy Saturday

(Service of Preparation)
Saturday April 4th @ 3:00pm

Easter

(Christ Has Risen!)
Sunday April 5th @ 10:00am

Gardeners Needed



There will be a meeting on Sunday, April 12 after service for all those who would like to help maintain or water the flower gardens. If you have questions, please call Arlene at 630 918-7890 or Judy Padera.

2026 Council Members

- Marilyn Sells - President, Personnel
- Ron Matta - Vice President, Property, Personnel
- Linda Glover - Secretary, Worship and Music, Christian Education
- Jim Kelly - Treasurer, Finance
- Marlene Carlson - RIC
- Art Kardatzke - Property
- Kellie Kerfin
- Ray Kozak
- Kathy Kratochvil
- Debbie McNichols - Hospitality
- Judy Padera - LCW
- Joy Prueter - Children and Hunger
- Alice Tangorra
- Pastor Adam - Christen Education, Evangelism, Personnel

Committee Report

Finance:

February donations were weak. The \$11,703 total is the fifth highest February in the last ten years, exceeding a weak 2025 (\$11,361) by \$342 while trailing a weak 2024 (\$11,765) by \$62. February expenses (\$20,913) were lower than 2025 (\$23,031) by \$2,118 and higher than 2024 (\$19,875) by \$1,038. February operations generated a \$9,210 deficit. The year-to-date deficit increased to \$19,298, the deficit is the second highest the end of two months in the last ten years.

At the end of two months, 16.67% of the year, 15.8% of the budget was spent. Most categories that exceeded 15.8% were highly seasonal. However, it should be noted that in prior years the percent expended has been several percent lower than the completed portion of the year.

Donations through February recorded in Shepherd's Staff agree in total and by fund with the financial records.

No pass-through funds are overdrawn. Twelve on-line donations totaling \$878.82 were received by the last counters report date (02/23/26). There was one Thrivent donation totaling \$23 (YTD there have been 2 Thrivent donations totaling \$150).

The balance sheet remains strong. There is no long term debt. Total assets have decreased by \$18,552 since 12/31/25. The decrease is due to the operational deficit.

James T. Kelly
Treasurer

Council Highlights

Pastor's Report

Worship & Programming Adjustments

- Midweek daytime Lent service (11 AM) will be discontinued next year due to low attendance
- Continued emphasis on:
 - Evening Bible Study
 - Holden Evening Prayer

Holy Week Planning

- No Bible study during Holy Week
- Maundy Thursday setup at noon (cross-shaped table, ~40 seats planned)
- Good Friday:
 - Stripping of the altar will take place at the beginning of the service
 - Council members encouraged to lead participation

Community Engagement Updates

- Joint service with Loving Word: strong attendance and positive feedback
 - Plan to repeat (likely fall, paired with picnic)
- Election Day hospitality:
 - Strong community goodwill
 - Continued as a core outreach practice
- Sunrise Senior Center service experiment:
 - Very low participation → will likely not continue
- Emphasis: Continue what builds connection; release what does not

Upcoming

- Faith in Place advocacy trip (Springfield)
- DuPage River cleanup opportunity
- Jesus Christ Superstar event rescheduled to April 19
- Pride Sunday (June 28):
 - Vote on RIC status
 - Vote on accessible doors

Old Business

Accessible (Handicap) Doors

- Anonymous donors willing to support financially
- Congregation vote required (June 28)
- Emphasis:
 - Transparency in use of funds
 - Encouragement of congregational contribution toward project

Synod Assembly (June 5-6)

- Attendees:
 - Linda (both days)
 - Arlene (both days)
 - Pastor (Friday)
- Others attending Pride event instead of second day

Pride Fest (Downers Grove – June 6)

- Time: approx. 11 AM – 3 PM
- Setup: 10:30 AM
- Participation model:
 - Flexible attendance
 - ~3–4 volunteers needed at booth at any time

Leadership Development Report

- Linda attended Synod Lay Leadership Day
- Key takeaways:
 - Practical training for lay leaders
 - Workshops included mental health and AI in ministry
 - Strong networking and encouragement
- Recommendation: send a group next year

New Business

Community Garden Proposal

- Proposal: raised vegetable garden on church property
- Maintained by Nancy (and spouse)
- Purpose:
 - Food donation (e.g., Mt. Carmel pantry)
 - Community engagement

Motion to approve garden installation → Motion carried

Audit Committee

- Need to reconstitute committee
- Bobbie previously expressed interest in chairing (pending confirmation)
- Volunteers needed
- Reminder: includes review of:
 - Financial processes
 - Safe deposit box
 - Records

Safe Deposit Box & Asset Review

- Annual review required
- Assigned to authorized signers
- Asset inventory list distributed:
 - Council encouraged to update missing or new items
 - Consider future categorization for high-value items (insurance purposes)

Rummage Sale Discussion

- Proposal to revisit church rummage sale

Key Reflections from Council:

- Past experience:
 - High labor
 - Low financial return
 - Organizational challenges
- Alternative ideas:
 - Fall timeline (more preparation)
 - Better structure and leadership
 - Potential hybrid (bake sale, outdoor sale, etc.)

Outcome:

- No immediate action
- Further exploration for Fall 2026

March Month in Review



April

SUN 29	MON 30	TUE 31	WED Apr 1	THU 2	FRI 3	SAT 4
Palm Sunday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Worship Service In Perso 1pm Loving Word Service 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5:15pm OA 	Sherry's Work Anniversary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Bible Study 4pm Personnel Meeting 7pm AA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7pm Maundy Thursday 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Card Group 7pm Good Friday Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9am SDA 12:30pm SDA Luncheon 3pm Holy Saturday Service anc
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Easter Sunday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Worship Service In Perso 1pm Loving Word Service 	Easter Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12pm RIC Committee Meeting 5:15pm OA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Bible Study 7pm AA 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Card Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9am SDA
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Jesus Christ Superstar 10am Worship Service In Perso 1pm Loving Word Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1pm Property Meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11:30am Lunch Bunch 5:15pm OA 7pm Church Council 	Tax Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Bible Study 7pm AA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12pm Senior Spirits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Card Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8am OA Workshop 9am SDA 2:30pm Karaoke & Krafts - Dar
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Worship Service In Perso 1pm Loving Word Service 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5:15pm OA 7pm Church Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10am Bible Study 7pm AA 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9:30am Card Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9am SDA
26	27	28	29	30	May 1	2
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