

LENT

Alleluia! Lutheran Church, 4055 S. Book Rd., Naperville, IL 60564
www.alleluia!lutheran.org Phone: 630-904-3311
Our Mission: To enable all to come, connect, and commit to Jesus.

March 2026 Alleluia! NEWS



Lenten Dinners & Discussions are Ongoing.

All are welcome to join us for meals each Wednesday through Lent. Meals will be held from 5:00-6:00pm in the gathering area followed by bible studies and conversations designed for various age groups. The cost is \$5/person. Please [CLICK HERE](#) to sign up so that we can adequately prepare.

FEED THE NEED!™

Saturday & Sunday,
March 7/8

Benedictine University's Rice Center

[CLICK HERE](#) to see available time slots.

You can also use the link to make a donation toward the Alleluia! commitment to raise \$5000 to help cover costs.



Sidewalk Prophets Concert - page 6

Holy Week and Easter Schedule at Alleluia!



Palm Sunday Worship – March 29th, 9:00am & 10:30am
Jesus enters Jerusalem to shouts of “Hosanna!” * First Communion Celebration



Maundy Thursday Worship – April 2nd, 7:00pm
Jesus begins the sacrament of Holy Communion * First Communion Celebration



Good Friday Family Event (Geared toward PreK—Grade School) – April 3rd, 10:00-11:00am
Kid-Friendly Worship (but, all are welcome!) * Refreshments * Activities for Kids



Tenebrae Good Friday Worship – April 3rd, 7:30pm
The “Seven Last Words of Jesus” * Jesus gives His life on the cross



Easter Sunday Worship – April 5th, 9:00am & 10:30am
He is Risen! He is Risen, Indeed! Alleluia! * Celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ!

Message from Pastor Joel



“The human mind plans the way, but the LORD directs the steps...The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to want.”

~ Proverbs 16:9, 21:5

Over the last 12 months Kerry Hunnius, Kent Nelson, Gail Wheeler and I have been developing a Three-Year Strategic Plan. Our first task was to listen to you while paying close attention to where the Holy Spirit is already at work. We translated this information into achievable outcomes for the next three years. In February we presented this plan to our Church Council and talented staff to begin developing concrete goals. In what follows is a brief overview of how we did this work, and what the result of the work was.

You said . . .

This past May we conducted the congregation-wide “Holy Cow Survey.” With 172 individual responses four primary areas of focus began to emerge. We call these four areas: “Pillars” that will help us build a foundation of mission for our community. These Pillars include: 1) Children, Youth, and Family Ministries; 2) Outreach; 3) Community Building; and 4) Financial Health and Stewardship. Next, we held listening sessions for targeted groups to discover ways in which God is already at work in our community. Additionally, we held brainstorming sessions with our staff and Church Council to identify specific ministry ideas that could help us further develop these Pillars.

We translated . . .

Then, we translated this information into strategic outcomes for each of the Four Pillars. We intentionally created outcomes that are descriptive but not prescriptive. This allows for the staff, Council, and congregation to join in at the ground level, and leverage the talents, gifts, abilities, and resources of those involved. We have identified specific people on staff and in leadership positions to oversee and implement various outcomes of the Strategic Plan.

Next steps . . .

As we begin implementing the Strategic Plan we will be experimenting with different ministry ideas. Knowing that not all experiments will succeed, we will continually be evaluating the experiments and learning from them to help guide future decisions. One experiment we had involved a strategic outcome for the Outreach Pillar: “Collaborate with local faith communities for mission.” In November, we worked with Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church to host the Loaves and Fishes Benefit Concert, featuring Mix-Tape Junkies. Together we raised about \$12,000 for Loaves and Fishes! Through that experience we continue to grow in our relationship with Our Saviour’s and look to partner with them in future ministry opportunities.

What we need from you . . .

Continue to pray for our faith community as we experiment in implementing this plan. We know none of this can be achieved alone. So, when opportunities come up, engage in the process. As we evaluate the plan, we want to hear from you. What’s working? What’s not working? What can we do differently? As we seek to expand our ministries and impact, we intend to add new staff positions to help us better implement the Strategic Plan and keep us on the path. We are so thankful for your ongoing support of our ministries at Alleluia! as together we seek to “Enable all to Come, Connect, and Commit to Jesus!”

Children's Ministry

Sharing the love of God with children and families so they can come, connect, and commit to Jesus.

KidsConnect Church School - Every Sunday During Both Services

In March, KidsConnect children will participate in special lessons focused on Holy Week and Easter. These will be fun and engaging sessions, and we would love to have volunteers join us! Interested in helping? Please register [HERE](#).



NOTE: There will be no KidsConnect on Palm Sunday (March 29th) or Easter Sunday (April 5th).

There's Still Time to Register for the First Communion Instruction Retreat

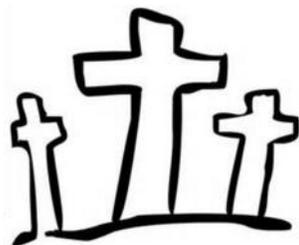
Sunday, March 8th, 1:00-5:00pm [CLICK HERE](#) to register a student for the retreat.



Designed for children in 4th-6th grades, this special event provides children with important instruction about the sacrament of communion and offers a chance to connect with God in a meaningful way. Sessions are led by Alleluia! staff with parent volunteers as small group leaders. An adult must attend with their student. Students will have the opportunity to make a personal communion banner and can receive their First Communion at one of the following services: **Sunday, March 29th at either 9:00am OR 10:30am worship, OR at the Maundy Thursday service on April 2nd at 7:00pm.** Questions to April Blair, ablair@alleluia.church

Join Us for the Good Friday Family Event - Friday, April 3rd, 10:00-11:00am

The Children's Ministry invites you to our **Good Friday Children and Family Event**. This special event will begin in the sanctuary with a child-friendly service that will help guide families through the meaning of Good Friday.



Following the service, we'll move to the gym where we'll dive into the creative and fun craft portion of the event. It's a wonderful opportunity for families to come together, reflect, and celebrate in a hands-on, meaningful way.

Your registration is requested for this event.

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to register. We look forward to seeing you there.

Help Make Our Easter Egg Hunts Successful!

We're preparing for the Easter Egg Hunts on Easter morning and need your help to make them great events! We're requesting candy donations and asking for volunteers to help fill eggs. Here's how you can help:

- **Donate candy:** Bring in individually wrapped peanut-free candy—small size treats work best. Please drop candy donations at the Welcome Center on Sunday or in the church office during the week.

- **Fill eggs:** We'll need many hands to stuff the eggs with all the donated goodies.

Contact April Blair at ablair@alleluia.church if you are able to volunteer to help fill eggs.

Thank you for helping bring joy to kids in our community!



Easter Egg Hunts will take place near the lower level Garden of Thanks on Easter Sunday, April 5th at 8:45 and 11:30am. Bring your Easter baskets to fill! In case of rain, the egg hunts will move to the lower level Rec Room.

More Children's Ministry Info on the following page

Children's Ministry



HOPE Marketplace at Alleluia! Sunday, April 12th, after Both Services

This engaging, hands-on event for students in 2nd-8th grade gives participants the opportunity to step into the role of a HOPE entrepreneur while gaining a deeper understanding of global poverty and economic empowerment.

During this experience, students will:

- Choose a handmade product to create
- Save money to purchase their supplies
- Advertise their business to family and friends
- Sell their product at the Alleluia! HOPE Marketplace



Alleluia! HOPE Marketplace 2025

All proceeds from the Marketplace will support HOPE International and their mission to end global poverty through Christ-centered economic empowerment.

Registration is now open! [CLICK HERE](#) to register a student.

There will be a mandatory student meeting on March 15th at 11:40am in the Rec Room. A parent must attend this meeting with their student. Important details, expectations, and next steps will be covered.

We're excited to see our students grow as young entrepreneurs while making a meaningful global impact!

Registration for Kingdom Quest Vacation Bible School is OPEN!

This summer, kids are guaranteed a fun-filled week created just for them.

Kingdom Quest will take kids on an exciting adventure to discover what it means to be part of God's Kingdom. Throughout the week, they'll learn how to live with courage, kindness, faith, and purpose through engaging Bible stories, energetic worship, creative crafts, and action-packed games.



DATE: June 8th-June 12th

TIME: Session 1 (9am-12pm), OR Session 2 (1pm-4pm)

3yrs-5th grade students are invited to participate. **Please note that preschool spots fill up quickly.**

[CLICK HERE](#) — Student Registration, Session 1: 9am-12pm

[CLICK HERE](#) — Student Registration, Session 2: 1 pm-4pm

Volunteers are needed! — middle school, high school, and adult volunteers.

A full week adult volunteer will only pay \$40 per child.

[CLICK HERE](#) — Volunteer Registration, Session 1: 9am-12pm

[CLICK HERE](#) — Volunteer Registration, Session 2: 1 pm-4pm

NEW THIS YEAR! - VBS Grand Finale Celebration

On the last day of VBS, June 12th, we'll go out with a splash!

To celebrate our incredible week together, we'll have:

- An inflatable water slide
- Popsicles for everyone

This will take the place of their Game Station that day as our way of celebrating all the fun, learning, and memories we've made this week at VBS.



Alleluia! Youth News!

Confirmation (6th - 8th Grade)



In February, we celebrated our Fall 2025 'Clash of the Classes' Champions—our 7th Graders! Students earn points for Sermon Notes, Confirmation Attendance, Weekly Volunteering, and a weekly competition known as the 'Clash of the Classes'. Topics we covered in February Labyrinth, Road to Emmaus, What is Lent?, Ash Wednesday, and Luther's Small Catechism.



In March, Confirmation students can look forward to conversation with ALL generations at our weekly Lenten Meals and discussions. Following this time of small group, students will head down to the Underground for lessons on the Apostles' Creed and Lord's Prayer.

We have a rolling registration! Want to get involved in this program? Sign up [HERE](#).



Attention All Middle School & High School Youth

Children's Ministry is in need of volunteers for VBS the week of **June 8th-June 12th!**

Can you help? See page 4 of this newsletter, or see info and signups here:

[Session 1: 9:00am-12:00pm](#)

or

[Session 2: 1:00pm-4:00pm](#)

Save the Date - Summer Camp at LOMC: July 19th-24th

We encourage all of our wonderful students entering 3rd - 8th grades to sign up for a week of fun at Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center in Oregon, IL.

Both Youth Director Kurtis Arndt and Children's Director April Blair will be visiting LOMC throughout the week to see our faithful friends and partake in the fun of a sleep away camp where over the week students will learn, laugh, play, sing, and have a ton of fun!

To learn more about this opportunity come to Alleluia! on April 12th when LOMC will be hosting worship!



High School Youth Group (9th - 12th Grade)

Students grades 9-12 meet on Sunday Nights in the Underground Youth Center from 6:30pm—8:00pm for fellowship, a lesson, and a wide variety of activities including games, community building, service projects, and more. As always—all are welcome to come as they are!



In our March lesson series, "Live Like That," we will have FOUR distinct weeks of hearing a Sidewalk Prophets song, then learning the scripture and theology behind each of these songs which we will hear on April 9th at the Sidewalk Prophets Concert:



3/1 - Prodigal (Luke 15:11-32)

3/8 - Live Like That (Hebrews 11 & Hebrews 12)

3/15 - Keep Making Me (CS Lewis & Psalm 51)

3/22 - Smile (James 1:2 and Psalm 30:5)

3/29 - Palm Sunday - No Meeting



Our High School Youth Group is always growing and welcoming new faces!

For more information or to be added to the email list scan the QR code or [CLICK HERE!](#)



See the next page for **Mission Trip 2026: Let It Shine!** open to all current 8th—12th graders!

Alleluia! Youth News! — continued

2026 Mission Trip: Let It Shine! June 27th—July 3rd [Register HERE!](#)



This little light of mine? I am going to let it shine!

This simple song from our younger years talks about letting the light of God shine bright through your actions, being, and the way you interact with the world around you. What also is fascinating is that this light we have is contagious...a spark can create a wildfire of love that spreads among communities and in our young people! Much of this trip theme is going to be getting away from the hustle and bustle, retreating to nature, exploring God's creation, and serving communities in a variety of ways!

Our 2026 Mission Trip will be to Iowa! Our basecamp for the week will be the Charis House at Camp Shalom in Maquoketa, IA (muh-kow-kuh-tuh), serving not only Maquoketa, but daily activities will also include the Quad Cities and Dubuque. This trip will conclude before noon on July 3rd.

All current 8th—12th graders are invited to join in this week of adventure, faith exploration, service, and fellowship!



Ushers are needed at both our 9:00am and 10:30am services. It's easy, fun, and a great way to meet more of your church family. Training is available. Please reach out to Deb Bostjancic at dbostjancic@alleluia.church.

An Acoustic Evening with Sidewalk Prophets Thursday, April 9th at Alleluia!



Get your tickets NOW! Over 430 tickets have already been sold!

This concert is expected to SELL OUT!—DON'T WAIT!

[CLICK HERE](#) -or- Scan the QR code - or- Visit alleluialutheran.org/events/upcoming



900 Million Streams
588,000 Monthly Listeners
Red Rocks
K-Love Cruise
Ryman Auditorium
Grand Ole Opry
National Anthem at Wrigley Field
Five #1 Christian Hits



Little Blessings News!

March 2026



From the Director's Desk

March is here, and with it comes the promise of spring! We are excited to welcome a new season filled with growth, learning, and joyful moments at Little Blessings. As the days grow longer and the weather begins to warm, our classrooms are buzzing with fresh energy and curiosity.

This month, our students will be exploring themes of **new beginnings, weather changes, and growth**. From hands-on science activities about rain and rainbows to creative art projects inspired by spring, our little learners will be discovering how the world around them transforms this time of year. As we move closer to the Easter season, we look forward to celebrating the joy, hope, and promise it represents.

Learning Focus - We continue to work on building strong foundations in literacy, early math skills, social development, and independence. March is a wonderful time to reinforce routines, encourage responsibility, and celebrate progress—both big and small.

Family Partnership - Thank you for allowing us to partner with you in raising children who feel confident, capable, and deeply loved. It is truly a blessing to serve your family.

As we step into spring, we are reminded that growth takes patience, nurturing, and love — the very things that make our Little Blessings community so special. If you ever have questions, concerns, or ideas to share, my door is always open.

With gratitude,

Shannon Webb

Little Blessings Preschool Director



Upcoming Dates

March 2-6: Lutheran School Week

March 10 & 11: Children's Chapel

March 16 & 17: **NO SCHOOL** – Parent/Teacher Conferences

March 19 & 20: Donuts with Dads, 8:15-9:00am

March 30-April 3: **NO SCHOOL** – Spring Break

April 6: **NO SCHOOL** – Easter Monday

Spring Reminders

- Please send your child with a jacket, as we will go outside as the weather allows.
- Labels all personal items to help us keep track of belongings.
- Extra clothes are always helpful during this season of outdoor play and occasional muddy fun!



Summer Camp Registration NOW OPEN

Summer Camp will start on Monday, June 1st and run through Friday, July 31st, 9:00am-12:00pm.

We will have Vacation Bible School (VBS) on June 8th -12th and no camp on June 29th -July 3rd.

Twos' Camp will be MWF, TTH, or M-F options, and Preschool and Kindergarten Camps will be M-F this year.

4055 S. Book Rd, Naperville - littleblessings.org - 630-904-9898

Little Blessings is a Ministry of Alleluia! Lutheran Church

All are welcome at Sunday Worship - Traditional: 9:00am - Contemporary: 10:30am



Welcome New Council Members

We welcome the following members to service on the Alleluia! Church Council:
Rob Elliott, Amy Freitag, Bruce Kallberg, Nathan Kocurek, and Gary Zoet.



Rob Elliott



Amy Freitag



Bruce Kallberg



Nathan Kocurek



Gary Zoet

They join previous council members: Nancy Hamera, Kent Nelson, and Roger Russell.

Many thanks to those leaving council:

Laura Bowler, Darcy Jasien, Carole Krush, Chris Sulzner, and Jenn Vrba.

We thank you for your service.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Alleluia! Lutheran Church currently seeks to fill the following positions:

- A **full-time Worship & Music Director** for Alleluia!
- A **part-time Music Teacher** for our Little Blessings Preschool Program
- A **part-time Weekend Custodial Technician** for Alleluia!

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information and full job descriptions for all positions.



Perfectly Imperfect Mamas is a fun and lively small group at Alleluia! that brings moms together through Christian fellowship. This group exists to connect, support, empathize, and grow friendships through the love of Christ and our church community. The next gathering is March 19th at 7:00pm at Traverso's in Naperville. Come for drinks, stay for dinner—a fun night out!

Questions? Please reach out to Megan Glassman at megan.amos@gmail.com or Sara White at sara.white00@aol.com. Come join the fun!

Laugh Your Socks Off - Part 2!

Thursday, March 12th, 7:00-8:30pm
The Alleluia! Underground



Join us for an evening of laughter, faith, and fun as we “laugh our socks off” with another hilarious video from Christian comedian Anita Renfro. We’ll enjoy games, snacks, and time in the Word together with the women of Alleluia!

You’re welcome to bring one personal item for a woman at our mission partner, Wayside Cross Ministries—shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, etc.

[REGISTER HERE](#) for this fun event!

Women's Ministry Enneagram Event

April 25th, 9:00-11:00am — Exclamations Room



During this morning event, we'll explore who God created us to be using a tool called the Enneagram. This ancient Christian tool offers meaningful insight, revealing both our strengths and blind spots that can hold us back.

When reflected on, the Enneagram can become a roadmap for spiritual development, identifying areas that God might be inviting you to deepen and develop.

No worries if you're new to the Enneagram! Together we'll discuss what it is, what the numbers mean, a brief overview of the nine types, and how this tool can help in your everyday life. We'll also talk about practical things you can do to lean into growth. You'll love this super-practical retreat with conversation, activities, and teaching. The cost is \$15/each. [CLICK HERE](#) to register.

Alleluia! women gathered in January for a half-day event led by Amy Jackson from The Perch in Aurora, who spoke on God’s gift of REST. It was a wonderful morning attended by more than 25 women.

*Alleluia!
Women*





Daylight Saving Time begins
 Sunday, March 8th at 2am.
 Remember to turn
 clocks **FORWARD 1 hour**
 before going to bed
 on Saturday night!

WAYSIDE CROSS MINISTRIES Collection Bin at Alleluia!



Please remember the Wayside Cross collection bin in our lower parking lot as you begin your spring cleaning! This bin is for clothing and shoes. Visit their [website](#) to request pickup of larger items.

Please do not leave items outside of the bin.

The Alleluia! Church Council members may be contacted via council@alleluia.church

Amy Freitag
AFreitag@alleluia.church

Nancy Hamera
NHamera@alleluia.church

Kent Nelson
KNelson@alleluia.church

Roger Russell
RoRussell@alleluia.church

Rob Elliott
RElliott@alleluia.church

Bruce Kallberg
BKallberg@alleluia.church

Nathan Kocurek
NKocurek@alleluia.church

Gary Zoet
GZoet@alleluia.church

4055 S. Book Rd.
 Naperville, IL 60564



Worship Schedule

All are welcome to join us
 for worship!

Sunday Morning
 9:00am & 10:30am

Stay Connected!

Website: www.alleluialutheran.org



Alleluia - Naperville, IL



Alleluia! - Naperville, IL