

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Happy New Year! Christ the King Sunday, November 25, was the last Sunday in Year B of our church calendar. Thursday, November 29, was the first day of Year C. So for us it is a new year.

The new year starts with the season of Advent. Advent is a season of longing and anticipation, during which we prepare for the coming of Jesus. The church year begins with Advent, as life begins with birth. The color that you will see on our altar for Advent is blue, which symbolizes waiting and hope.

Christmas immediately follows Advent. It is a day and a season when we celebrate God's coming among us as a human child. Jesus, Emmanuel (which means "God is with us"). The color for Christmas is white, which reminds us that Jesus is the Light of the world. Christmas lasts for twelve days, from December 25 to January 5.

Perhaps we should make new year's resolutions at the beginning a new church year. What resolutions would we make as a church? To faithfully follow our Lord Jesus Christ. To reach out with God's love to those around us. "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden." (Matthew 5:14)

Hopefully we have already been doing these things, but let it be our resolve to continue this path.

What resolutions would you make for yourself this new church year? I hope that your list would contain the resolve to be faithful in your worship attendance. "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting

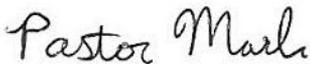
to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:24-25)

We’ve been talking a lot about gratitude recently, with Thanksgiving and our Stewardship emphasis. May our gratitude to God show with a resolution to share our time, talents, and treasures.

I am grateful for the many ways that you do this. I do pray for your openness to serve on the Council and/or a committee. To prayerfully consider what you can do to help us through some of our financial challenges.

All around us are people who do not know the Lord. Please make it your new year’s resolution to invite people to church. Like the disciple Philip may our words be “Come and see”.

Love in Christ,



Pastor Mark

## December Worship Schedule

### Sundays in December

8:00 a.m. *Prayer Time* in the Parish Hall

8:30 a.m. *Confirmation* in the parsonage (Dec. 2, & 16)

8:30 a.m. *Confirmation* in the church (Dec. 9)

8:45 a.m. *Sunday School* (Dec. 2, 9 & 16)

9:00 a.m. *Adult Bible Study* in the Parish Hall

9:15 a.m. *Choir* will practice & sing at Worship on Dec. 9 and Dec. 24  
Julotta Service at 11 p.m.

10:00 a.m. **Worship**

Now the Feast and Celebration (Dec. 9)

Children’s Program (Dec. 16)

5:00 p.m. **Christmas Worship** (Dec. 24)

11:00 p.m. Julotta Service at 11 p.m. (Dec. 24)

11:15 a.m. Luther League bake sale and Christmas shopping Dec. 2

## Wednesdays in December

7:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study

*You are encouraged to attend any of our church committees' meetings. Even better would be to join one of our committees. All committees meet in the lower level of the church unless otherwise stated.*

## Congregation Council and Church Finance Notes

The Congregation Council will meet at 7 p.m. on Thursday, December 20, 2018.

Financials: (through November 27, 2018)

Giving                \$172,617.91

Expense              \$195,763.98

Net LOSS            (\$23,146.07)

The most recent approved council meeting minutes follow. Minutes to the Council meetings are also posted on the bulletin board in the church narthex (entryway).

As many of you are aware, our general fund expenses have exceeded our income by over \$23,000. General fund expenses include payroll, benefits, propane, etc. Due to lack of funds we are also behind in paying our mission support and designated giving. Would you prayerfully consider giving extra in your year-end giving?

## Swedesburg Evangelical Lutheran Church Congregational Council Meeting October 18, 2018

**Present:** Karl Krueger, Wayne Rodgers, Ray Meth, Glenn Graf, Al Olson, Cathy Thurman, Johanna Crawford, Stacy Speidel, Lisa Kempf, Jackie Brawner, Pastor Mark and Julie Ostby

**Absent:** Alex Peterson

Host for the evening was Julie Ostby.

**I. Devotions.** Julie opened the meeting by sharing a devotion based on Isaiah 9:2.

### **II. Financials, Budget, Minutes, Pastor's Report**

The financial reports as presented by the Treasurer and Financial Secretary were reviewed and discussed.

Pastor stated he does not believe any payments have been made to benevolence this year.

Pastor stated the memorial fund balance is incorrect on balance sheet. Balance is currently \$6,787.41. Something was posted twice. Pastor has asked for a breakdown of what is in fund and hopes to have it next month.

Motion made by Glenn and seconded by Ray to approve the financials as printed. Motion carried.

The minutes of the September 20, 2018, Council meeting were distributed and reviewed. Minutes were previously approved by email. Jackie made a motion to reaffirm and accept the minutes and seconded by Cathy. Motion carried. Pastor's report was distributed. He reviewed his activities for the month and addressed questions. Pastor passed out a list of verses for advent devotional book. Pastor stated he will be taking vacation around Thanksgiving and Christmas. He also thanked council for Pastor Appreciation gift. Pastor also discussed a new program, Turning Point, which is an 18 month guided leader process with a cost of \$1,000.00, \$500.00 for each year. This is a program where we evaluate ourselves as a congregation and then go out to community. There was some discussion of maybe forming a Turning Point Committee or maybe Evangelism Committee could be involved. There is a December 1 deadline for application. Pastor said we could go to Southeast Iowa Synod website to learn more about this. This will be looked into and discussed at next month's meeting. Stacy plans to reach out and get more information and Evangelism committee will also discuss. Pastor also stated he was elected the chaplain for our conference and he will be available to other pastors to help. It was moved by Wayne and seconded by Ray that Pastor's report be accepted. Motion carried.

### **III. Committee Reports and Recommendations**

A. Audit Committee – will meet in January.

B. Cemetery – Karl stated he checked with Brad Benson and there is nothing to report.

C. Christian Education and Youth

1. Lisa stated that Emily Kann contacted her regarding the Sparkhouse Family Book Fair which was discussed at April meeting and which was already approved. Emily was thinking of holding the book fair from November 11 to December 8 with guaranteed arrival by Christmas. She suggests that we use funds raised to offset VBS expenses.

2. Sunday School Christmas Program is scheduled for December 16.

3. Pastor stated there are 6 youth in confirmation - four 8<sup>th</sup> graders and two 7<sup>th</sup> graders.

4. Pastor also stated that youth are going to Harvestville Farms on October 28 and are to arrive after 3:00. This is open to all congregation members, not just youth.

5. Pastor said eight Luther Leaguers (7-12 graders) attended the hayride and Bible Study. He also said Luther League is trying to do something every week.

D. Evangelism – reviewed minutes from 9/26/18 meeting. Approximately 75 attended hayride on 10/14 even though weather was not the best. There were 12 international students from Iowa Wesleyan who attended. Stacy said they had very positive feedback from them and they enjoyed being included. Leftover hot dogs will be used at Harvestville Farms. Stacy said there will be an International Conversation Cafe at Iowa Wesleyan on Thursday and she hopes to attend. There was discussion of inviting international students to Sunday School Christmas program and to Christmas service. The committee also discussed need of more signs to make visitors more welcome. This was also discussed at property committee and approved and signs are in the process of being purchased. Next meeting is November 12 at 5:30 PM.

E. Finance – nothing. Will probably meet in November or December.

F. Mutual Ministry – The additional person needed to serve on committee has been found. Jane Kruse has agreed to be on committee. Karl plans to send email out to committee and staff regarding meeting the first or second week of November.

G. Nominating – this committee needs to get moving soon. Stacy will try and get committee to meet soon so they can discuss names of people to ask to be on council so they can be asked and will have time to think and pray about serving on council. There are five seats open. Wayne and Glenn both stated they are not interested in serving another 3 year term. Ray stated he would be willing to serve another 3 year term. Julie Ostby is going off council and cannot serve again. Jackie Brawner's 1 year term is also up. There was discussion as to why there were five seats open and that maybe another 1 year term should be served. Jackie said she would maybe consider serving another 1 year term.

H. Property/Parish Improvement.

1. Landscaping – tabled until spring.
2. Landscaping policy – will be similar to cemetery policy – to go to annual meeting for approval.
3. Reviewing contract with Hirds for parsonage – will meet with them in February for input, discussion and concerns.
4. Looking for information regarding what jobs individual church members do and what they do, when they do it, etc.
5. North security light at Parish Hall is still not working.
6. Still working through lists from walk throughs – lists are getting shorter.
7. Parish Hall basement windows – Josh Sparrow will be doing and Cathy will check with him again regarding when he thinks they will get done.

I. Social Ministry – reviewed minutes from 9/20/18 meeting. They met again tonight prior to council meeting. Trip to Ronald McDonald House is coming up. Soup lunch moved to 10/28 from 11/11. Iowa WINS has asked for donations for auction and Social Ministry committee agreed to donate 2

Smorgasbord tickets. Johanna stated if anyone thought of anything else to be donated for auction to let her know.

J. Stewardship – reviewed minutes from 9/10/18 meeting. There will be a soup lunch on 10/28 instead of a potato bar. Committee met last night and got Stewardship packets ready to mail out and they went out today. Noisy offering starts 10/28 with half collected to go to hurricane relief and the other half to buy goats from Global Barnyard.

K. Tanzania – reviewed minutes from 9/27/18 meeting. Have sent money to the Diocese for Pastor Kinkoro and Harrison’s expenses to get passports and visas for their trip here in January. Pastor mentioned that Harrison, who is to come here in January with Pastor Kinkoro, had a son who only lived 9 days so they are not sure if he will still come. Next meeting will be 11/13/18 at 6:30 PM.

L. Worship and Music – reviewed minutes from 10/3/18 meeting. Three new banners were purchased with memorial money and will be used during the summer, baptisms and during Epiphany. Assisting Minister schedule will be made up for a whole year and put in 2019 church yearbook. Next meeting will be 1/9/19 at 7:00 PM.

\*\*NOTE: Full minutes of committee meetings are available for review in the church office.

It was moved by Lisa and seconded by Julie that the committee reports be accepted. Motion carried.

**IV. Bible Study.** The Council read the text for the evening which was Mark 10:35-45 and Pastor led us in the discussion of the reading.

**V. Old Business.**

A. Emergency Plan. Nothing right now.

B. Basement Noise Reduction. Never heard from Ryan. Tables were moved after last meeting and three stand up tables were purchased which were put out by library area. There was a lot of positive comments regarding the new tables. It was suggested that instructions for coffee cart be updated regarding the tables and to also update them regarding having ice water available and reducing the amount of lemonade to make.

C. Blood Drives. Stacy reported that there were 16 registered for blood drive on September 25 and 14 units were collected which will impact 56 lives. Next blood drive is December 28 from 3 to 6 and there are 10 preregistered.

D. Church Landscaping Plan. On hold for now.

E. Congregational Retreat. Scheduled for February 24 with Pastor Uthe and will focus on evangelism. There will be a potluck after church which council will be in charge of with retreat afterwards.

F. Pastor’s Health Insurance. Pastor stated that Christ The King council met and made the same determination to purchase the Gold+ plan.

G. LP Contract. Karl stated there was a miscommunication regarding LP and when Prairie Ag came to do summer fill we were at 85%. ChemGro had filled tank as we did not get taken off the fill list. Karl stated that summer fill

cost will be \$1.26 instead of \$1.20 because ChemGro filled instead of Prairie Ag.

## **VI. New Business.**

A. Room Temperature for Organ. Pastor stated that they learned from organ company that 24 hours prior to service the temperature in sanctuary should be at what where it is for service. Discussion was held regarding investing in a programmable thermostat. It was moved by Al and seconded by Julie that a programmable thermostat be purchased and installed in sanctuary. Motion carried. There was discussion on who would purchase thermostat and who would install the thermostat. Ray will purchase the thermostat. Not sure who will install it.

B. Thanksgiving and Lenten Offerings/Soup Supper Donations. These have previously gone to Luther League or where person designates if they want it to go somewhere else. It was moved by Stacy that this continues as in the past and was seconded by Ray. Motion carried.

C. Annual Meeting Date. This has previously been discussed and set for January 27.

E. Other - none.

**VII.** Adjournment and Prayer. It was moved by Wayne and seconded by Julie that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 P.M. with the Council joining hands and saying the Lord's Prayer in unison.

Respectfully Submitted, Lisa Kempf, Secretary

## **We are Swedesburg Lutheran Monte & Emily Kann**

### **1. Where were you born? Tell about your family.**

Monte: I was born in Maquoketa and raised in Lost Nation, Iowa. I have 2 sisters and 1 brother (I'm the youngest). My dad ran the Shell service station in town and my mom worked at a bank. I was the last graduating class from Lost Nation High School. I went college at Northeast Missouri State (now Truman) - I was also the last graduating class at NMSU too. (Coincidence or not???)

Emily: I was born in Boone, Iowa. I moved around a lot as kid, attending 6 different schools before we moved to Winfield when I was in junior high. My mom was the art teacher at WMU for many years; my Dad farms near Boone and drove truck for Fareway. I went to the University of Iowa.

Both: We have two daughters, Isabel (14) and Ella (11). Both were baptized at SELC. They go to school at WMU and are involved in all sorts of activities.

## **2. When did you become a member of Swedesburg? What are some of the ways that you have been involved here?**

Both: We became members of SELC around 2003. Monte was raised in the Lutheran church; Isabel hadn't been born yet, but we knew we wanted to raise our children the Lutheran faith.

Emily: I was baptized in the Catholic church, but didn't attend church regularly as a child. After my parents divorced, when I was 10 years old, we very rarely went church. After some very difficult years in college and my early adult life of feeling lost, insecure and anxious, I met Monte. I was struck by his calm demeanor, patience and strength of character. It was as if he truly embodied Paul's words in Philippians, "Let your gentleness be evident to all". He talked about growing up in the church and importance of his faith, even after losing both his parents early in life. I knew I wanted that assurance and security that comes from knowing God, not only for myself but also for our future family.

We have been involved in Christian Education, church council, stewardship, Altar Guild, Churchmen group, small group Bible studies and Monte is the church treasurer. We also enjoy serving in a variety of roles during worship as ushers, readers, nursery attendants, greeters and singing in the choir (Monte). We are proud to see our girls becoming more involved in worship service as well. Isabel is currently in her second year of confirmation; Ella is in Sunday School.

## **3. How have you seen God at work in your life?**

Both: We both feel we have seen God at work in our lives in many ways. First was meeting each other. Then, God opening doors to bring us to this community and continuing to open doors to allow us to stay here. Neither one of us had peaceful, idyllic childhood / early adulthood. Being here, being a part of SELC, has been a gift because it is a place we feel at home. We both think of you, our fellow SELC members, as family. We are so grateful that you have welcomed us, cared for us and for our daughters, mentored us in our faith and loved God with us. Simply put, we see God in you.

## **4. What do you think your purpose in life is? What has your life experience taught you about God?**

Emily: My life experience has taught me that God cares for me, God loves me and God is always with me. There was a time, more than once, when I walked away from God, but He's never let me stray too far. The hardest

thing for me to accept is that God cares for and about me, even when I don't deserve it. It seems too good to be true, that God could love a sinner like me. I've made many mistakes and hurt others. And, yet, time and time again, God has been there, shaping and refining me. There was a period, where my purpose was to be tested to find my faith and the courage to trust in Him. I see God was preparing me to be a wife, a mother, a community member and a disciple - all challenging things! Now, each day, my purpose is to serve God and seek God in whatever opportunity He puts in front of me. On the outside, my life may seem ordinary, but it's really pretty extraordinary.

### **Poinsettias**

To help decorate our altar, poinsettias are available through Hy-Vee. The Traditional red 6" poinsettia with gold foil will cost \$10 each. If you are interested in purchasing a poinsettia for the altar please place your order with Mary in the church office or Lynn Graf. Orders will be due by noon on Wednesday, December 12.

### **Luther League**

The Luther League will have a bake sale on Sunday, December 2, in the lower level of the church following worship. The proceeds of the bake sale will be used to buy Christmas presents for area children. Please support this worthwhile event.

The Luther League will go caroling on Wednesday, December 5. Meet in the church lower level at 6:30 p.m. After caroling we will return to the church for hot chocolate and snacks.

### **Annual Meeting Notice**

The Swedesburg Evangelical Lutheran Church will meet for our annual meeting on **January 27, 2019**. *Please remember that Confirmed members need to commune and have a contribution on record by the end of 2016 in order to vote at this meeting. Make certain you sign the friendship pads in your row.*

### **Tanzania**

Swahili phrase of the month: Good morning - habari ya asubuhi (habaaRee yaa aasuboohee)

The Tanzania Companion Coordinators have exciting news – Pastor Kinkoro and Harrison Nyang’ango are making plans to visit in January! This is a wonderful opportunity to continue developing our congregation’s relationship with our partners. In order for this to become a reality, much help is needed.

Following are some of the areas in which assistance is needed:

- money for flights/insurance approximately \$5,000;
- housing;
- meals;
- transportation;
- winter clothing – jackets/sweaters/boots/gloves and hats; and
- suggestions of places/people to visit.

Contact the church office with your ideas or offers to help. Please, please prayerfully consider giving to help make this time together a reality. We will need to purchase plane tickets by the end of November or early December. Thank you in advance for your generous response.

## **Radio Sponsorship**

Our radio sponsors for December:

- 2** Pastor Mark Youngquist
- 9** Mike & Jackie Brawner – *in honor of their 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary*
- 16** Craig & Peggy Grothe
- 23** Tom & Sharon Miller
- 30** OPEN

**Thank you** for sponsoring the radio broadcast. Opportunities remain to sponsor the radio broadcast during the coming months. One week may be sponsored at \$50. Please sign up on the sheet in the narthex (entryway).

If you like to listen to our worship services, you may really enjoy listening to a shortened service each Sunday morning at 11:30 a.m. on the radio at 105.5 KILJ FM.

## **Smorgasbord**

Swedesburg's long standing tradition of “Smörgåsbord” is on **Thursday, December 6, 2018**. Seating time available is now for 7 p.m. Ticket prices are \$17.00 each. **Advanced tickets are suggested.** You may call the church office at 319-254-2216 for tickets. *When purchasing tickets*

*in the church office, the church office will not have the ability to make change.*

## **Worship and Music Committee**

We have had our organ inspected by Levsen Organ Company from Buffalo, Iowa. They have tuned our organ, and have also suggested that it be cleaned. It appears that the organ had not been cleaned since 1971. The cost for cleaning is \$16,800. We have begun an Organ Fund to raise money for this expense.

Shown below is our weekly attendance:

November 4	74	November 11	97
November 18	69	November 18	7 p.m. 29
November 25	52		

The general offerings by week are shown:

November 4	\$4,194	November 11	\$1,576
November 18	\$2,592.80	November 25	\$1,720

## **Women of the ELCA (WELCA)**

The Swedesburg WELCA will begin their sewing at the Parish Hall in January. Everyone is invited to join in. They will begin on Wednesday, January 9, 2018 at 9 a.m. with a potluck lunch at noon.

## **Evangelism**

Remember that there are postcards in the narthex (east entrance of the sanctuary) to send to friends, family, and co-workers to invite them to worship with us.

## **Blood Drive**

The next blood drive will be December 28<sup>th</sup> from 3-6 p.m. at the Parish Hall. To schedule an appointment call Stacy Speidel at (319) 986-5128 or register online at [www.bloodcenterimpact.org](http://www.bloodcenterimpact.org). Use Sponsor Code 5185 to schedule online.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL IS HOSTING A BOOK FAIR!



**When:** November 18 - December 8 (items will arrive in time for Christmas)

**Why:** If we sell at least \$200 in orders, SELC Sunday School receives 20% of all sales proceeds + gets to keep all the books in the display (over 30 books) to stock our nursery library + anyone who orders gets 20% off list price...and if that weren't enough reasons, everyone who orders also gets entered into a monthly drawing to win \$200 cash!

Proceeds from the Book Fair will be used to help with Vacation Bible School expenses. Please contact Emily Kann ([kannfamily4@gmail.com](mailto:kannfamily4@gmail.com) or (319)-530-9736 with questions.) Books will be on display in the church basement starting November 15th. Thank you for supporting our Sunday School program!



Rehearsals are underway for **The Mouse's Tale**, a cute play based on the story of Jesus' birth from the book of Luke. The performance will take place on **Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup>** during worship. Rehearsals start at 8:45AM **December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup>** with a dress rehearsal and pizza party on **Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup> from 9 a.m.-noon**. We're looking forward to a fun production to share with our congregation. Questions can be directed to Becky Rauenbuehler; [rebeccarani@yahoo.com](mailto:rebeccarani@yahoo.com) or by phone; 319-931-1527.

Thanks to everyone who donated their loose change for the noisy offerings. The total raised from the noisy offerings is \$674.23.

Our Sunday School Thankful Tree. Psalm 9:1 says *"I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds."*



### Thank you's

Thank you so much for your kind gift. It will be applied to the account of a student who owes \$21 on his milk account. Mom was able to already pay \$10. With your gift the account will be clear with a \$4 balance towards his second semester milk. Your gift will bring happiness and relief to his mom. Thank you!

Many Thanks!  
Salem Elementary Staff

Dear Friends: On behalf of IowaWINS (Welcomes Immigrant Neighbors), I thank you for your donation of \$500 in support of the families affected by the I.C.E. raid in Mt. Pleasant. The families are so appreciative of this support. While it is heartbreaking to observe the pain and fear they are experiencing, it is heartwarming to witness their sincere gratitude. They will need ongoing support financially and emotionally. Thank you for your part in showing our neighbors solidarity and respect.

Very Sincerely,  
Rev. Trey Hegar, First Presbyterian Church  
Tammy Shull, IowaWINS Commission

My family and I would like to thank you for your prayers, cards, memorial gifts, and other acts of kindness at this time of the death of my mother-in-law.

Pastor Mark

Thank you sincerely for sharing our sorrow. Your kindness is deeply appreciated and will always be remembered. Thank you for the beautiful bouquet of flowers. They will adorn the altar at Bethlehem Lutheran. Thank you for your kindness.

The family of Bernita Spitzak

Thank you for your support as I continue my education at Iowa State University. I am in my senior year and majoring in Biology in the college of Agriculture and Life Sciences. After I graduate I am planning to start my toxicology PhD at Iowa State. Swedesburg was a wonderful community to grow up in, and I greatly appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Sincerely, Hannah Wickham

The WACO C.R.O.P. Committee wishes to extend a huge ‘Thank You!’ for recent donations to the 2018 Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty Drive. This year’s total was \$32,557.79, of which SELC donated \$1,130. The C.R.O.P. Drive allots 25% of the total for local needs. The WACO Ministerial Association oversees disbursement of these funds. God bless you for your giving!”



**Merry Christmas from LSI!**

*“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”*  
— John 1:5

As Christmas approaches, we give thanks to you! Every day, as a ministry partner of LSI, you help bring the light of Christ to others.

At LSI, we know many people experiencing deep darkness. We know parents who feel hopeless, with little to no resources to raise their young children. We know adults with disabilities who feel voiceless, with no support system or connection to their community. We know teens who are aging out of the foster care system, who fear they will never have a family to love them.

The holidays can be an especially difficult time for our most vulnerable neighbors. In the spirit of giving, the spirit of love, and the spirit of working together, let us stand with them and lift them up this Christmas season. If you would like to learn more about how you can support Iowa children and families, contact Deb Whitford, LSI director of philanthropy and church relations, at [Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org](mailto:Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org) or call 563-676-2065.

### **Wishing you a blessed and merry Christmas from LSI!**

*Our Mission:* Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at [www.LSIowa.org](http://www.LSIowa.org) and [www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa](https://www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa).

### **Giving Back to Her Community**

Two years ago, Sarah felt helpless. She struggled with her mental health, there was tension between family members at home, and she couldn't find support or resources that worked with her family's busy schedule.

Sarah connected with LSI's Early Childhood Services, and through a local program she received flexible in-home parenting education to help her family thrive. Her LSI parent educator worked with her to learn about money management, healthy communication, and skills for parenting her two young children.

Now Sarah feels confident raising her family. She has found a support system and is ready to give back to her community and help other young mothers in need. Whenever she can, she tells other moms about LSI and helps refer them for services.

Because she felt empowered by LSI's Early Childhood Services, Sarah is creating a ripple effect across her community. She is passionate about lifting up and strengthening other families in need of the hope and healing she received.

November, 2018

tryingsmall.com / tryingsmall@gmail.com

## TRYING SMALL

Brian Palmer – ELCA Pastor/Missionary serving in Totota, Liberia

### Liberian English

*Put your mouth on:* to talk about or gossip. "Don't put your mouth on me!"

*He-she glue:* epoxy

*chi* - drunk

*Dry* – skinny, this is normally a bit insulting as it is an indication of poverty and/or illness, "Look at you looking all dry like that."



### I Got My Pickup Back!

Liberians have been asking me if I'm happy to have my pick-up back. I tell them that before the accident she was an ugly woman with fine ways but now she is a fine woman with ugly ways. For the past couple of years I have resisted getting a new vehicle for the simple reason that cars are expensive. I was recently instructed to bite the bullet and do it. Apparently resistance really is futile and I will soon be assimilated.

### Mid-Term Elections

I don't have a lot to say about the mid-term elections other than I am very glad to be in Liberia!



### Is Bendu Rice?

I've written a book! Okay, maybe it's not so much a book as a booklet. It is entitled *Is Bendu Rice?* and is my attempt to help Liberians learn to read. Teaching adult literacy has been a part of my job since coming to Liberia and my ideas about how to do it have changed a lot. I tried phonics – what a disaster - phonics only works when sounds coming from your mouth are somewhat consistently correlated with letters and/or groups of letters. Where I've landed is giving folks a booklet that:

1. Depends on drilling (memorizing) words and their spelling. Liberians are great at this!
2. Uses grammatical structures common in Liberian English.
3. Uses vocabulary common in Liberian English.
4. Emphasizes practicing word identification over narrative. *Is Bendu Rice?* is just a bunch of random made up sentences that gradually introduces new words.
5. Requires a minimum of skill on the part of the teacher.
6. Encourages new readers by giving them an opportunity to succeed at something today. Maybe this should be #1?

I may be deluding myself but so far results are encouraging. My adult students who started with *Is Bendu Rice?* last January are going great guns. A couple of the hard-working ones are already reading the Good News Bible version of the Gospel of John, albeit with a lot of assistance. I have some connections with some elementary schools and have introduced *Is Bendu Rice?* to three 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms. At Christmas time I plan on doing an assessment of the children's progress. We shall see.

## December Anniversaries

We wish to offer these couples a **happy anniversary**:

10	Mike and Jackie Brawner	27	Arvid and Joan Anderson
	Kyle and Kailey Emerson	29	Craig and Peggy Grothe
14	Dan and Cathy Thurman	29	Steve and Mary Wettach
16	Jerry and Norma Lindeen	30	Jim and Shirley Krabill
18	Stan and Valerie Unkrich	30	Dennis and Susan Hult
18	Tom and Janet Erickson	30	Paul & Julie Ostby
20	Rod and Taryn Ryan		

## December Birthdays

We wish the following people a **very happy birthday**:

2	Joan Anderson	20	Betty Molander
	Dan Thurman	22	Dawn McClure
3	Katarina Niemann	23	Allison Lucas
4	Chad Daniel		Kathleen Lucas
5	Melissa Merrifield		Brandon Woline
	Caden Mullin	24	Dwight Hultquist
8	John Daniel		Michael LaBarbera
	Cheryl Orr	25	Margaret Molander
9	Carl Alvine	26	Eva Thomas
10	Kari Brownholland	27	Anthony Lackman
11	Joseph Taylor		Lincoln Naber
12	Vincent LaBarbera	28	Anna Beckman
13	Kris Emerson		Adam Bodenham
	Duston Ridinger		Doug Deardorff
14	Carson Graf		Khloe Emerson
	Michelle Hultquist	30	Aaron Lindeen
	BJ Wetherell	31	Ruth Thomas
15	Dalton Provino		
	Ana Thomas		
17	Marilyn Boal		
	Kyle Burnham		
18	Annika Kerr		

*Please help the church office update their records by submitting any birthday, anniversary or any other corrections. Thank you.*

We continue to pray for all our church members throughout the year. Each week we will pray for about five church families. [Please pray in December for:](#)

**December 2**

[Stan & Valerie Unkrich](#)

[Tyson Unkrich](#)

[Mary Lee Van Egdon](#)

[John Wagner](#)

[Zoe and Rory Wagner, Craig & Jenny McClenahan](#)

**December 9**

[Patty Waterhouse](#)

[Susanne Waterhouse](#)

[Travis Waterhouse](#)

[Trent Waterhouse](#)

[Mile & Karen Wells, Emily, Elizabeth](#)

[Reed Wenstrand](#)

[Tom & Karen Wenstrand](#)

**December 16**

[BJ Wetherell](#)

[Matthew Wettach](#)

[Steve & Mary Wettach](#)

[Julia Whitaker, JonViev, TaVence](#)

[John & Jane Wickham](#)

**December 23**

[Steve & Shelly Wickham, Blake, Hannah, Sterling](#)

[Kory & Megan Winsor](#)

[Brandon Woline](#)

[Richard Woline](#)

[Ryan & Christina Woline, Paige](#)

**December 30**

[Wayne & Leah Woline](#)

[Mark Youngquist, Connie Spitzack, Nathanael, Lydia](#)

[Jeff & Deidre Zihlman, Hannah, Charlie](#)

[Keith & Lana Zihlman](#)

[Paul & Darci Zoss, Andrew, Helen, Peter, Daniel](#)

# CONGREGATION REFLECTIONS

## CONGREGATION REFLECTIONS

### PRAY FOR:

- *ELCA missionary Rev. Brian Palmer in Liberia, supported by this congregation.*
- *the family of Mark Youngquist and Connie Spitzack upon the death of Connie's mother, Bernita Spitzack.*
- *for Bishop Mjema of the Pare Diocese, Pr. John Kinkoro and people of Ngaeni Lutheran Parish, our partner congregation in Tanzania.*
- *friends and loved ones experiencing health concerns.*

### THANKS ARE DUE . . .

- *to all who assisted with preparing the Ostkaka for the Smorgasbord.*
- *to all members of the Swedesburg Evangelical Lutheran Church.*

*Please remember that Confirmed church members need to commune and have a contribution on record by the end of 2018 in order to be eligible to vote at the next annual meeting. By signing your name on the friendship pad, you confirm that you have communed during that worship service.*

Swedesburg  
**evangelical**lutheranchurch  
*planting, nurturing, growing in Christ*

P. O. Box 88  
Swedesburg, IA 52652

*ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED*

Smorgasbord tickets are on sale now  
December 6, 2018 \$17 each  
**Children's Christmas Program**  
December 16, 2018

Join us!

Sunday Worship begins at 10 a.m.



website: [www.swedesburglutheran.org](http://www.swedesburglutheran.org)  
email: [office@swedesburglutheran.org](mailto:office@swedesburglutheran.org)

Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Swedesburg, IA  
Permit No. 4