

SPRING 2026

SHARING OUR STORY

MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Preparing for Advent Vespers

Welcoming a New Season

HAPPY SPRING

The Lenten season has begun and Easter is fast approaching. Soon we'll be hearing the familiar sounds of birds returning, feel the warm sun on our faces, and witness the renewed growth of nature. The return of children, home from college for the summer, and family heading back north for the warmer months are inching closer. Here at Memorial, the change in season brings special events — some new and some old — for us to enjoy together in Christ. As always, if you have a special event you'd like to see created for our Memorial family, reach out!

Enjoy this wonderful season with family and friends!



Intergenerational Christmas Pageant



Lefse Saturday



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Pastor's Message

PASTOR KAREN TREAT

One has to wonder what it was like to be the first followers of Jesus. The disciples had seen and touched Jesus after his death and resurrection. They had meals on the lakeshore with him and listened to his teaching before Jesus' final ascension to heaven. They were confident in who Jesus was—God, their salvation.

And then they were left alone (except for the Holy Spirit), left to teach about Jesus, hoping others would listen. On the day of Pentecost, the community was stirred around the house where the disciples were staying. They heard the disciples speak in languages they didn't know. It shook them. God's intention was for people of all nations to know Jesus. That moment revealed faith in Jesus did not require proof. The first believers trusted Jesus's message, and communities of believers grew.

That's the legacy of Memorial Lutheran Church of Afton, and we see it every day and every Sunday. The awe that comes in knowing God is revealed through our stories and the beauty outside. We experience God's salvation as we gather in worship and share a meal around the altar—and in the fellowship hall.

We are in our second year of the three-year Mission—Begin the Journey (25), Building Momentum (26), Maintain Momentum (27). This is when we enhance and strengthen what we started in 2025. There will be opportunities for all to share of themselves in whatever capacity they are able, to invite friends to worship with us, and to grow in relationship with God. I hope through faith we will realize what was started these past months is what keeps Memorial's legacy to be the "Beacon of Hope in our Community and Beyond."

Blessings,
Pastor Karen

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.”

ACTS 2:42–43 (NRSVUE)



News and Updates

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT MEMORIAL THIS SEASON

Addiction and Mental Health Ministry

ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS TEAM UPDATE

Awe, Resources, and New Connections

We continue with our efforts to support the well-being of our congregation and community.

Thank you to everyone who attended our recent Adult Forum led by Pastor Karen. We explored how practicing a sense of "awe"—finding wonder in the world around us—can significantly improve our mental health and overall well-being. It was a powerful reminder that looking up and out can often help us heal within.

We are happy to share that a generous donor provided several boxes of resources for our proposed Addiction & Mental Health Resource Center. We are moving forward with setting up this space to better serve you.

Community Safety: Naloxone (Narcan).

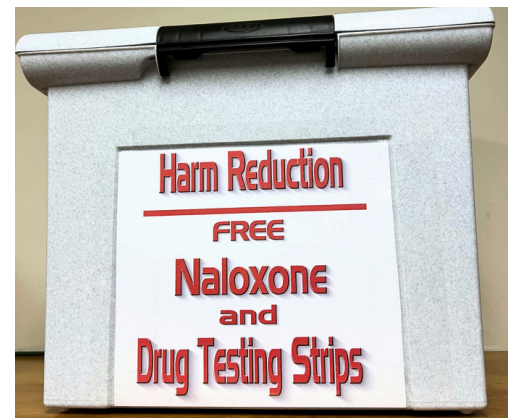
A vital reminder: Free Naloxone is available in our coat closet. We encourage you to take a kit to keep in your car or home. Having this on hand is a simple, life-saving step—especially if you have someone in your immediate circle who may be at risk of an overdose. Preparation saves lives.

New Partnership:

Mental Health Connect. We are officially joining the Mental Health Connect ministry alliance with Mike Miller as our Ambassador! This partnership allows us to support their vital work while gaining access to a wealth of professional resources and training for our own faith community.

Upcoming Event:

March 8 Family Systems Forum, following worship.
April/May Forum on Caregiver Fatigue date TBD.



News and Updates

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT MEMORIAL THIS SEASON



Memorial Prairie Ministry

TEAM UPDATE

We're looking forward to spring to see what emerges now that large areas of buckthorn and invasive cedar have been removed. With sunlight finally reaching areas that were once heavily shaded, we're excited to watch the prairie respond. This promises to be an exciting year for the project.

WHAT'S AHEAD IN THE COMING WEEKS:

Snow Seeding - winter is actually an excellent time to spread native seed — even directly on top of snow. The darker seeds absorb sunlight, gently melting into the snow surface. As the snow melts and the ground goes through freeze-thaw cycles, the seeds naturally work their way into the soil.

Invasive Vegetation Management - This year, we'll continue removing unwanted vegetation, but at a slower and more strategic pace. Too much sudden canopy loss can give invasive plants an advantage, so we're being thoughtful about next steps.

Labyrinth Planning - We're continuing to refine the labyrinth plans, including confirming the final design, perimeter plantings, and assessing whether additional soil is needed. A construction timeline will be established once these details are in place.

Prescribed Burn - We're aiming for a controlled burn in March or April, pending required permits from the Minnesota DNR, the Lower St. Croix Fire Department, and the City of Afton. We're fortunate to have experienced volunteers with years of prescribed burn experience ready to assist, which will help ensure a safe and successful burn.

Watch for announcements to join us as we continue the work to develop Memorial's Prairie Ministry!

News and Updates

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT MEMORIAL THIS SEASON

Memorial Visiting Ministry

MEMORIAL VISITING MINISTRY TEAM CELEBRATES AT THE AFTON HOUSE - AT HOME LIVING FACILITY.

Members Gary Palmen, Janelle Christmann, and Barb Werner visit the Afton House monthly, including celebrating birthdays and holidays, and were invited to celebrate 10 years of being open to the community. It was a festive event, lifting up the staff and residents of the house. Gary, Janelle, and Barb were touched by the gathering and felt honored to be there. Tish Rogowski and Crissa Knott are members of Memorial and residents at Afton House.

Memorial began visiting Afton House in the spring of 2023 with the urging of Interim Pastor Kelly. Janelle Christmann continued visiting, becoming friends of Tish Rogowski and Criss Knott (Memorial members) and the other residents. Since then, the Visiting Team has grown.

Janelle says why she continues visiting- "I believe that no act, no matter how small is ever wasted. So I choose to scatter kindness, hoping I will bring a little heaven to earth by being a helping hand to others in need."

The Visiting Team is welcome to more members, looking to bring "a little heaven" to those not able to attend weekly worship or need support during life transitions.

Contact the office if you are interested in becoming part of this important ministry.



Council President's Message

JERRY ENGBRETSON

I am honored to serve as Memorial's church council president for 2026.

As we start this new year, I'm confident that our church will continue the momentum that has been started and nurtured in the past couple of years. Our Building and Grounds team has started working on the preliminary steps to move forward with the Capitol projects the congregation approved. After we obtain the estimates from multiple vendors for our projects and decide the best paths forward, we will keep you updated on our progress. We will have multiple platforms to assist with communication.

As we journey through Lent and approach Easter, I wish you the hope that God's love provides us all.

Jerry



Finance Report

Look for Capital Campaign updates on our website.

DONATE TO THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN
Help us reach our goal!



WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS!



Wilderness

JOURNEY WITH US FROM LENT TO EASTER

LENTEN SERVICES

February 25 - March 25

**Wednesday Soup Suppers
and Fellowship**
5:30-6:15pm

**Wednesday Holden
Evening
Prayer Worship**
6:30pm

Sunday Worship
9:30am

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

Palm Sunday Worship
March 29, 9:30am

Palm Sunday Brunch
March 29, 10:30am

Maundy Thursday
April 2, 6:30pm

Good Friday
April 3, 6:30pm

Easter Vigil (outside)
Saturday, April 4, 6:30pm

Easter Service
Sunday, April 5, 8am and
10am

Community Support

Help support our ELCA Immigrant Congregations.

We are accepting donations for Valley Outreach to help support those unable to pay rent or purchase food.

Donations may be made online through our website or by check made out to Memorial Lutheran Church.

We are continuing our rotating monthly donations as well.



Mark Your Calendars

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS AT MEMORIAL.
INVITE FRIENDS AND FAMILY - ALL ARE WELCOME!

WHAT'S AHEAD

Wednesdays, Feb. 25 - Mar. 25 @ 5:30pm | Soup Suppers followed by
Holden Evening Prayer service

Sunday, March 22 @ 10:30am | Easter Rocks with Littles

Sunday, March 29 @ 9:30am | Palm Sunday worship followed by brunch

Thursday, April 2 @ 6:30pm | Maundy Thursday service

Friday, April 3 @ 6:30pm | Good Friday service

Saturday, April 4 @ 6:30pm | Easter Vigil (outside)

Sunday, April 5 @ 8am and 10am | Easter worship services

Saturday, May 2 @ 11am | "And Then There was You"
Memorial Women's Luncheon

Sunday, May 3 | Pentecost - Wear Red!

June 22-25 | Vacation Bible School -

"Rainforest Falls - Exploring the Nature of God"

VIEW ALL EVENTS ON OUR WEBSITE @ [MEMORIALLUTHERAN.ORG/EVENTS](https://www.memoriallutheran.org/events)

LOOK FOR POP-UP EVENTS IN OUR WEEKLY E-NEWS! TO SUBSCRIBE, CONTACT
LAURA, OFFICE@MEMORIALLUTHERAN.ORG



MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
15730 AFTON BLVD S
AFTON, MN 55001

WELCOMING WITHOUT EXCEPTION.

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU
SOON!

SUNDAY WORSHIP
9:30AM

JOIN US IN-PERSON IN THE
SANCTUARY

JOIN VIA LIVESTREAM ON
OUR FACEBOOK PAGE