



"What Is Church?" is our theme for Wednesday Lenten services this year. In collaboration with the people of Glenwood Lutheran Church (by the Toledo Museum of Art), we will explore the ways we think about the body of believers, consider the influence of our culture on church life, and maybe develop some new friendships with fellow Lutherans! Evening services will be at 7 p.m. and the services on March 4th and 11th will be at Glenwood.

"Church Is Not the Building" Ash Wed. - Feb. 18th 12 pm & 7 pm at St. Mark

Text: John 2:13–22 **Focus:** Jesus disrupts the idea that God is confined to a place. Lent begins with ashes, reminding us that what we often cling to must die so something truer can rise. We will take part in the imposition of ashes; prayer of confession for how we've confused church with property, power, or permanence. (There will be two services this day at noon and 7 pm at St. Mark.)

"Church Is the Body of Christ" Wed. Feb. 25th at 7 pm at St. Mark

Text: 1 Corinthians 12:12–27 **Focus:** Church is not a group of consumers but an interdependent body. Every part matters—and suffering is shared. We will invite congregants to name gifts and griefs; prayer for those who feel unseen or unnecessary.

"Church Is a Community of Forgiveness" Wed. Mar. 4th at 7 pm at Glenwood

Text: Matthew 18:21–35 **Focus:** The church exists because of mercy. Forgiveness is not optional - it is the air the church breathes.

"Church Is for the Sake of the World" Wed. Mar. 11th at 7 pm at Glenwood

Text: Luke 10:25–37 (Good Samaritan) **Focus:** The church does not exist for itself. Jesus continually moves faith outward, toward neighbors in need.

"Church Is Formed By the Spirit" Wed. Mar 18th at 7 pm at St. Mark

Text: Acts 2: 1 – 12 **Focus:** The church is shaped by responsiveness to God's Holy Spirit.

"Church Is a People on the Way" Wed. Mar 25th at 7 pm at St. Mark

Text: Luke 19:28–40 **Focus:** The church follows Jesus not just in celebration, but toward the cross. We will be preparing spiritually for Holy Week and distributing palms. After worship, we will teach how to make palms into crosses and discuss the symbolism.

On February 25th and March 25th, our neighborhood dinner meal will be served at 4:30 pm to allow volunteers ample time to attend worship.
Guests will still be admitted to the building at 4 pm.

Council Corner

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM JANUARY 20th, 2026



President Diane Lorenzen called the meeting to order, and welcomed the newest council members: Kathy Agoston (In-Reach), Jason Fletcher (At Large), and Tom Ritter (Finance Chair).

Judy Zimmerman (Secretary) presented the December 2025 meeting minutes, which were approved.

Kelda Vernatter (Treasurer) reported that church expenses in December were under budget by 1.0% (\$369.68), and that expenses for the month were also under the month's income (\$10,685.25). We ended 2025 with expenses under the remaining annual budget by 1.7% (\$7,520.58). The report was approved.

Pastor Beth reported that 19 women will attend the weekend retreat in Adrian, MI February 20-22, 2026. Pastor, Emily Hemminger, Beth Rokicki, and Sherry Krieger are going to attend an event in Ocala, FL with two pastors from South Toledo. The council voted to pay up to \$1,000 p/person for airfare.

Pastor Cindy's current duties at St. John's will prevent her from attending St. Mark's council meetings. However, she will send a report each month. She reported that she has made many pastoral care visits. The Bible study for Lent will focus on the Gospel of John.

Emily Hemminger (Youth/Family Life Director) reported that 17 students came to the New Year's Youth Event. She is planning for upcoming youth events (including attending a Walleye Game). She reported that the Family Easter Celebration will be Saturday, March 28.

Old Business: Originally the Annual Congregational Meeting was scheduled for January 25 at 9:30. Now the congregational meeting will be held after second service on February 1.

New Business: Andrew has found a projector screen (~130 inches wide) that can sit in front of the chancel and come out of its base using a remote control. Andrew and Diane Lorenzen will talk with a prospective interested donor about its purchase.

Tom Ritter (Finance Chair) wants to reestablish an endowment committee and already has four people who are interested in serving.

Beth Rokicki (Property Board Chair) reported that plaster repair and painting in the church offices is under way, in all areas except the window walls. Beth reminded the council that she wants to give away or sell (~\$2 per) about 500 of the older folding chairs. She recently called Campbell to fix a recent water pipe leak in the fellowship hall. Mike Rokicki would like to replace the can lights in the chapel that frequently blink with flat panels, which should cost less than \$500.

Jason Fletcher (New At-Large Chair) had nothing to report at this meeting.

Kathy Agoston (New In-Reach Chair) reported that she has a list of people who are now sharing the tasks for the first worship service each Sunday. Heidi and Lloyd Lind have volunteered to prepare communion and get servers for the second service. Kathy also told the council that she needs volunteers to help change the seasonal paraments, the banners, and taking the flowers down from the altar.

Karen Johansen (Out-Reach Chair) reported that in December the church gave away 22 of 24 bags at Kids' Night (including fresh eggs, sausage, and milk), and 80 of 120 grocery bags. Karen said that she gave some of the leftover fresh foods to Mike to use in the kitchen.

For the Good of the Order: Council members engaged in a lengthy discussion about how a dilemma is reported by one of the council members. Some church members may hold the perception that council membership and committee membership seem to always include the same people. Some parishioners were also uncomfortable about having contested council elections.

Sunday School pre-K through fifth grade

Our theme "Let Your Light Shine" is so important today. We want our kids to realize that they can make a positive difference in someone's life each and every day. They help spread that light and message each and every time they treat people with kindness and love, and hopefully, that light will be passed on and on.

We have collected \$77.00 in our offering so far. This money will help support ELCA's God's Global Barnyard which helps others around the world in need.

In January, we learned about the Magi who went to find the baby Jesus so they could worship Him. They did not tell king Herod where he was, like he asked them to do, so that they could protect God's greatest gift from danger. We also learned how Jesus wants us to follow Him, by sharing His love and compassion with others. He wants us to work hard to do the right thing and to repent when we don't. Jesus knows we are not perfect, but He gives us grace when we ask for forgiveness.

February Lessons:

- 1 - Jesus Teaches how People Receive the Good News
- 8 - Jesus Teaches about Conflict; Jesus Talks about God's Grace
- 15 - Lent lesson
- 22 - Jesus Gathers Disciples



Our team members are Tess Bourgeois, Megan Buehler, Wendy Johnson, Jess Kamelesky, Dana Sabback and Leslie Welling. Please thank them for all of the time and energy they put into educating our youth about God's gospel. They have been committed to this mission for quite a few years. We would love for others in our congregation to prayerfully consider joining our team.

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven", Matthew 5: 16.

Kim Kruse
Superintendent

Hello Friends,

2026 has already brought some additional work for us. While Campbell Mechanical was here to do their quarterly maintenance work on our boilers they found a few items that need to be replaced. This is at no extra cost to us as it is part of our contract. However, I will say that we have sailed through the last two years without issues. I would like to keep on that trend.

A water leak was discovered in the Fellowship Hall which was coming from the cold-water pipes. I called Campbell for pricing, to be on the safe side. Mike Rokicki was able to fix it. This doesn't mean it will last forever, but for the time being, it doesn't leak anymore. Thank you, Mike!

At the beginning of January, Emily had a lock-in with 17 youth kids. Some of the kids smelled something they referred to as "burning marshmallows." It was discovered that an old ballast was burning up. No fire occurred luckily. The Toledo Fire Department were called for safety measures. They checked everything and highly recommended having it repaired. That light was turned off at the breaker for the rest of the weekend. Thanks to Mike Rokicki for disassembling and then replacing it with a new one.

The St. Mark Snow Patrol has been extremely busy. I know that we all appreciate their willingness to get the job done. If you are interested in helping out, reach out to Brad Isbell. It's always nice to have back up help when needed. I have also had the parking lot salted several times. Because the lot is so new, it is like a skating rink. While it seems to be a little costly, I would rather have everyone be safe. Hoping for a quiet and safe February!

As always, please reach out with any questions/suggestions.

Beth Rokicki – Property Board Chair



JUDY BEE age 94, passed away on January 18th. Interment at Restlawn Memorial Park.



Memorials

MARK & NANCY MURPHY by Robert Todd Jr. Judith Todd, Marty Limmer, Neal & Rita Carter, Barry & Ann Ramlow, Mark & Sue Padley, Jeff & Kim Kruse, Tom & Cindy Ritter, Quentin & Kelda Vernatter, Tim & Wanda Volland, Jim & Angie Sigurdson, Mike & Tina Deehr, Joy Roecker, Jim & Diane Lorenzen, Carol Kinsel, Thomas & Luann Schuffenecker, Kathleen Gladieux, Jan Livingston, and Bob & Kathy Agoston.

JUDY BEE by Bob & Kathy Agoston.

MADONNA BURY by Neal & Rita Carter.

DIANE DEEM by Joy Roecker.



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The church is currently seeking an additional part-time Building Supervisor to assist our current Supervisor, Tony. This is not a volunteer position; it is a paid position. If you are interested or know someone who may be interested, please contact Ryan in the church office at (419) 691-3597. Thank you!

New Bible Study!

During the season of Lent, we will explore the study titled "John The Gospel of Light and Life" by Adam Hamilton. This book/DVD study is open to anyone who would like to participate. Reading the book is optional. It is recommended that you read the Gospel of John prior to attending the class.

We will meet at 9:30 am Wednesday mornings in the St. Mark Lounge off the gym on:
Feb. 11, 18, 25 & Mar. 4, 11, 25
(There will be no class on March 18th)

Zoom sessions will be offered on Tuesday evenings at 5 pm on **Feb. 10, 17, 24, & March 3, 10, 17**

To get connected to Zoom session or if you have questions please contact Pr. Cindy Ritter via email at:
PastorCindyRitterToledo@Gmail.com
Or call the church office (419) 691-3597.

January Weekly Giving Totals

1/1 - 1/9

General Fund: \$3,040
Dedicated Funds: \$1,760
Total: \$4,800

1/11 - 1/16

General Fund: \$7,762
Dedicated Funds: \$660
Total: \$8,422

1/18 - 1/23

General Fund: \$8,153
Dedicated Funds: \$355
Total: \$8,508

1/25 - 1/30

General Fund: \$2,907
Dedicated Funds: \$1,005
Total: \$3,912

*"General Fund" is used for everyday church expenses.
"Dedicated Funds" are contributions directed to specific ministry areas and can only be used for those areas.*

*Weekly General Fund amount needed
to meet annual budget: \$8,293*

The Still Ringing the Bell Capital Campaign has received commitments of \$762,300 with \$634,051 cash received as of Friday, January 30th.

Sunday In Person Attendance

1/04 Early: 40 Late: 69 Total: 109

1/11 Early: 46 Late: 89 Total: 135

1/18 Early: 35 Late: 73 Total: 108

1/25 Cancelled due to snow

December Financial Report

Capital Campaign Income: \$5,956
General Income: \$46,453
Dedicated Accounts Income: \$25,611
Expenses: \$35,767

2026 FEBRUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 <u>Worship Services</u> 8:30am Trad. Service 9:30am Sun. School 10:30am Praise Service Annual Meeting After 2nd service	2 Flag Football practice 6:30pm in gym	3 A.A. at 5:30pm in the Fellowship Hall	4 Flag Football practice 7pm in gym	5 Lucas Co. Board of Disabilities in hall 2pm Softball practice in gym 5:30 - 8 pm	6 O.C.T. 5:15pm in sanctuary Pickleball 7pm in gym	7 O.C.T. 12:30 pm
8 <u>Worship Services</u> 8:30am Trad. Service 9:30am Sun. School 10:30am Praise Service O.C.T. 1:30 pm O.C.T. Meeting 6pm in lounge	9 Flag Football practice 6:30pm in gym	10 Dartball practice 6:30pm in gym A.A. at 5:30pm in the Fellowship Hall	11 Bible Study 9:30 am St. Mark lounge	12 Lucas Co. Board of Disabilities in hall 2pm Softball practice in gym 5:30 - 8 pm	13	14
15 <u>Worship Services</u> 8:30am Trad. Service 9:30am Sun. School 10:30am Praise Service	16 Dartball game 7pm in gym Isaiah House Meeting 6:30 in brotherhood room	17 Council meeting at 6:30pm A.A. at 6pm in the Fellowship Hall	18 Bible Study 9:30 am St. Mark lounge Ash Wednesday Services at 12pm and 7pm	19 Lucas Co. Board of Disabilities in hall 2pm Softball practice in gym 5:30 - 8 pm	20 Pickleball 7 pm in gym	21
22 <u>Worship Services</u> 8:30am Trad. Service 9:30am Sun. School 10:30am Praise Service	23 O.C.T. 6 pm	24 Dartball practice 6:30pm in gym O.C.T. 6 pm A.A. at 5:30pm in the Fellowship Hall	25 Bible Study 9:30 am St. Mark lounge Lent Worship Service at St. Mark at 7pm Neighborhood Dinner 4:30pm O.C.T. 6 pm	26 Lucas Co. Board of Disabilities in hall 2pm O.C.T. 6 pm Softball practice in gym 5:30 - 8 pm	27	28