

THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF

The Parish Paper of Shepherd of the Glades Lutheran Church
6020 Rattlesnake Hammock Road (Corner of Santa Barbara)
Naples Florida 34113

FEBRUARY, 2026

Volume 29- Issue 2

Editors: Deanna Colbert & Lynn
Dickerman

Lenten Worship Services

Begin with

Ash Wednesday.

February 18th.

5:30 p.m.



**SHEPHERD OF THE GLADES
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

PASTOR'S PAGES . . .

How can it be time for Lent already? Ash Wednesday is February 18th. When we gather together for worship on Ash Wednesday, everyone - including infants - will receive ashes on their foreheads forming a cross and hear the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

These are powerful words of scripture from the book of Genesis that remind us of our mortality. Why would we begin these 40 days of Lent by being reminded of our mortality? Perhaps it is because death is not something we like to think about and often try to forget. Most of us really love Easter and the resurrection story, but we don't like thinking about the fact that in order for Jesus to be resurrected, he had to die first. The same is true for us and even our daily lives.



In order for our bad habits and behaviors to change, we have to stop doing them. Bad habits and bad behaviors need to be put to death in order to replace them with better habits. To be clear, bad habits and behaviors are simply things we do that are a conflict with what Jesus has taught us. Bad habits and behaviors - also known as sin - do not give us life. Yet we often continue our sinful ways because change is difficult. We become comfortable in our ways even when our actions are not life giving. Following Jesus and living as he taught us is the way to have life. Lent is a time of reflecting on what habits and behaviors (sin) we have formed that are not life giving and turn us away from God's desire and plan for our life. But it doesn't stop at acknowledging and confessing our sin. We are invited to turn away from our sin and reject the things in our lives that cause separation from God. That may be where the idea of giving up something for Lent originates. Some people feel like they are making a sacrifice when they give up something they enjoy during the season of Lent. But are you really growing closer to God by giving up something you enjoy? Will giving up something for 40 days draw you closer to God or is it just to make you feel better about yourself and your actions?

This Lent, I propose that you focus on the things that will help you grow closer to God and die to the things that turn you away from the teaching of Jesus. Instead of the time you spend on Facebook or your favorite social media site, look at a daily devotion and say a prayer. You don't have to give up your social media time, but give God equal time. Instead of watching the news channel, watch a faith based movie. You don't have to give up watching the news (unless you really want to 😊). You don't have to give up candy bars or chocolate, but instead give equal time to considering your body as a temple of the Lord and eat healthier foods. And my final recommendation is instead of watching television, come to Wednesday night prayer service during Lent. Each week on Wednesday at 5:30 p.m., we will experience the Holden Evening Prayer service that will include an opportunity and time for self reflection. Following the reading of scripture, instead of a sermon there will be some activities for you to participate in while you focus on a question that is available at each activity station that relates to the scripture that is read. The time after the scripture is read will be a time for personal spiritual growth through fun activities. Instead of your Pastor telling you what to think about the scripture, you will have the opportunity for personal spiritual growth.

PASTOR'S PAGES (CONTINUED) . . .

Lent is a time to die to the things that turn us away from God and be resurrected to new life in Jesus Christ. It is a time for us to remember that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Lent is a time for us to look at our priorities in life and seek ways to grow closer to our loving God. May these 40 days be a time you discover the joy that God has planned for you. Have a blessed Lent, and we will see you for evening prayer.

+ Pastor Jeff

CARING CONNECTIONS . . .

PRAYER LIST

Please keep the following people in your thoughts and prayers:

Rod Barikmo & Family	Colleen Glackin	Family of Rev. H. Peter Lyberg
Lily Braumoeller	Family of Lois Horky	Family of Marilyn Malinowski
Brenda Charleston	Sara & Andy Hundley	Patty Musielak
Barbara Carey	Janice	Aloise Olson
Chris Carlson	Family of Martha Jepsen	Sue Popovich
Family of Jan Connell	Kai	Family of Vernon Rasmussen
Kate Connell	Nadine Kelly	Susan Schacht
Erick Delreal	Family of John Krenz	The Swain Family
Family of Ellie	Elouise Larson	Carey Yaros
Family of Susie Espersen	Patricia Lussky	Victims of Hurricane Melissa
Family of Gail Fesnak	Anita & Nick Lehr	Prudy Waters
Family of Barbara Gega	Sandy Lofthouse	

Please let us know when someone should be added or removed from the Prayer list.

FINANCIALLY, HOW ARE WE DOING? . . .

PERIOD: One Month Ended January 31, 2026

	Actual	Budget	Difference: Favorable (Unfavorable)
Operating Income	\$33,696	\$63,765	(\$30,069)
Operating Expense	\$37,609	\$41,180	\$2,381
Net Income (Deficit)	(\$3,913)	\$22,585	(\$26,498)

In January we had \$4,600 in air conditioning repair bills. This caused us to operate in a deficit for this month. Our expenses exceeded our income. During season we plan on operating in a surplus to carry us through the lean summer months. We were not able to increase our net income yet for 2026. Instead, we are carrying a deficit already. Thank you to all our faithful, generous givers. You should have already received your giving statements for 2025. If you have any questions, please call Lynn Dickerman in the office.

COUNCIL CORNER . . .

SHEPHERD OF THE GLADES LUTHERAN CHURCH December 9, 2025, COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Members in attendance: Pastor Ungs; Penny Morken, President; Brad Caulder, Vice-President; Pam Bhathena, Secretary; Scott Krenz, Treasurer; Mary Winsor, Director for Discipleship; Becky McDanel, Council Member; Gunar Strungs, Council Member; Bill Nicklay, Council Member; and Tom Dunlop, Council Member. Absent: Sue Kautz, Council Member and Bonny Dery, Council Member. Call to order by President Penny Morken. Devotions by: Pastor Ungs

A motion to approve the minutes of November 11, 2025, and the December 2, 2025 Budget Meeting minutes was made, seconded and approved as written.

Pastor's Report:

Thank you to Bonny Dery and Charlotte Wahlig for serving 6 years on the church council! You have both contributed so much to the successes and growth we have enjoyed. We appreciate all you have done! Thank you to Kelli Ungs and all who made the Thanksgiving meal a huge success again this year. Please welcome our new secretary and office administrator, Deanna Colbert. Deanna began working on December 2nd. No weddings, *Memorial service for Marilyn Malinowski will be Saturday, December 14th, *Adult Baptism of James (Jim) Geddes on December 2nd. *Reception of 13 new members on December 7th. *Preparation for Congregational annual December meeting with emphasis on budget meetings and overseeing the nominations process. This year the following persons are being recommended by the nominating committee: Council 3 year term: Barb Tommingo, Sandy Haberman; Nominating committee for 2026 December meeting - Chuck Keller, Bonny Dery (3rd needed); Synod assembly voting members John and Mary Sherman. Thank you to the nominating committee for this year - Chuck Keller, John Sherman, and Doug Walck *Bake sale was a big success again this year - Thank you fellowship committee. *The grief support group (love never ends) continues to meet monthly. Church organ was tuned on December 9th.

Regular meetings: Caloosa Conference, Pastor's text study, SOTG weekly Wednesday bible study **Pastoral calls:** Congregation home bound communions (5) Member home visit (2) hospital calls (5) **New Business:** Vision to Action Dinner Church grant approved. More information will be coming in January **Upcoming events:** Paul Todd Jr. Concert December 15th. Traditional candlelight Christmas Eve services will be at 5:00 and 7:00 PM January 4th installation of all council members during Worship. January 4th-25th Stewardship campaign.

THEME: *"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."* – **Colossians 3:17**

Topics - Tentative schedule week 1 Vision to Action Grant we will receive; Week 2 Church Camp ministry; Week 3 Synod guest speaker - Pastor Rob Rose assistant to Bishop. FBSynod; Week 4 Ana Lugo ELCA gift planner speaking about our endowment fund and planned giving.

Director For Discipleship's Report:

Continue to be a part of weekly bible studies and the Sew Sews group. Sew Sews has made about 15 quilts between this summer and fall, all of which I will drop off at the women's shelter next week. - Made a visit to a homebound church member - Attended a worship and music committee meeting - Continued to fill in by answering the phone and tasks such as filling out the Usher schedule each month. - Will be taking the Sunday after Christmas off and a few days after that in order to spend time with family and extended family after Christmas. - Have been invited by the FL-Bahamas Synod through the Just Love Team that I am a part of to attend the ELCA Advocacy Days in Tallahassee in January.

FL-Bahamas Synod V2A Grant Update:

We have officially been awarded the Vision to Action grant that we applied for in August in order to start a "Dinner Church" Ministry here at Shepherd of the Glades. We have been awarded the full grant amount of \$10,000, minus a mandatory ELCA Coaching fee to help us through the

COUNCIL CORNER (CONTINUED) . . .

process. We have been informed that all coaching will be done virtually; therefore, there is no need for us to attend the previously noted V2A conference in January, as mentioned last month.

Treasurers Report:

Income exceeded expenses for the month of November. Income also exceeded budget amount for the month. However, year-to-date expenses still exceeded year-to-date income. The good news is we have almost halved our net deficit. All our faithful givers are so appreciated, especially those who have sent extra to help with the deficit. A motion to only indicate increases and decreases and to omit dollar amounts in the minutes was made, seconded and approved as written. Financial Reports are available on request to the church office.

Committee Reports:

Endowment Committee:

The Endowment Fund balance at the ELCA Growth Fund for the month of October 31, 2025 increased. There was also an increase for the year-to-date reporting period. Gunar Strungs will be the new chair of this committee as of January 1, 2026. Submitted by Charlotte Wahlig and Gunar Strungs.

Evangelism Report:

The Giving Tree is up and has been very well received. Thank you to everyone who selected a gift tag ornament. The wrapped gifts are due by December 16th. New member Sunday is scheduled for December 7th. We look forward to meeting our new members. The sew-sew group has completed 15 quilts to date. They are to be delivered to the Women's and Children's Shelter before the holidays. Becky also announced a new member joined the sew-sew group. Submitted by Becky McDanel

Local Missions Report:

Donations to St. Matthews House during October were outstanding, thanks to the generous and thoughtful donations supplied by our congregation once again. Submitted by Pam Bhatena

Property Report:

This committee is in the process of having all our trees trimmed. The mulch will be placed soon. The A/C units are still in the process of repairs.

Fellowship Report:

This committee has outlined what they will be doing for the year. They were very involved in the Bake Sale. Funds remaining will be used to purchase school supplies for the Back Pack Program in the spring for Grace Place. Their next big event will be the Welcome Back Luncheon in January. Submitted by Penny Morken for Sue Kautz.

A motion to approve the Pastor's Report, Treasurer's Report, and all Committee Reports was made for approval, seconded and passed.

New Business:

Appreciation was given of retiring Council members Bonny Dery and Charlotte Wahlig.

Old Business:

This committee will be working on creating Church Emergency Procedures. The Annual Congregational Meeting is scheduled for December 14, 2025.

Update on our new secretary, Deanna Colbert. She came to us as a retired church secretary and the gifts that she brings is exactly what we needed for this position. She will be working in the church office 9:30 to 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, Thursday, and noon to 5:00 p.m. On Friday afternoons. Pastor Jeff announced Deanna is a wonderful addition to the team.

Closing Devotions: Pastor Ungs. Next Meeting: January 13, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.
Devotions: Pastor Ungs. Meeting Adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Pam Bhatena, Council Secretary

NEWS IN THE SHEEPFOLD . . .



If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please call the office so we can update our information and not miss you next time! YOU are special to us!

HAPPY FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS TO . . .

February 1 Michael Kleiber
February 2 Ardelle Berthe
February 8 Gail Pacchiarotti
February 10 Yerry Madison
February 10 Kathryn Winters
February 11 John Speidel
February 12 Michael Cowles
February 18 Ron Limpus
February 18 Cindy Quehl
February 18 Ginger Welch
February 21 Bob Tidmore
February 23 Becky McDaniel
February 26 Kim Hasse
February 27 Patricia Clark

February 28 Jan Wolfe
February 29 Aloise Olson



FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES . . . HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

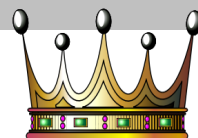
February 4 Lawrence & Maryann Buettner
February 6 Gary & Linda Salisbury
February 11 Rod & Marilyn Barikmo
February 15 Deborah Moeser & Andrea Tack
February 16 Larry & Barb Tommingo

PRAYER CHANGES THINGS . . .

February a month of love. We are excited and thankful for the time we choose to spend with those we love. God loves each and every one of us ALWAYS. God loves to have us choosing to spend time in conversation with our Creator. We are blessed to have a Creator who is always wanting to spend time with us in the ordinary of each day. We do this each time we whisper with hope, shout in excitement, or groan in pain; this is prayer. All are invited to join the Prayer Warriors in lifting up the whole body of Christ. Anyone interested in joining the Prayer Warriors, please contact the office.

RECEIVED THEIR VICTORY IN THE LORD . . .

Vernon Rasmussen passed away on Saturday, January 10, 2026 in River Falls, WI. A celebration of Vern's life will be held on Thursday, April 16, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. in River Falls, WI.



Barbara Gega passed away on Wednesday, January 7, 2026 in Austin, TX. Her celebration of life will be held at SOTG on Monday, February 16, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.

HAPPENINGS AT SOTG . . .

On Sunday, January 18th, Shepherd of the Glades held it's Annual Welcome Back Luncheon, where seasonal and full time folks could mingle, catch up, and enjoy each other's company! This annual event was hosted by Thrivent. David Contessa and Steve Mielke from Thrivent shared a wealth of information relating to money matters. Lynne Gervais and the Fellowship Committee put together the luncheon and arranged the logistics with the help of the Property Committee. Thank you for your hard work to make this luncheon a success!

Below are photos from January 18th:



Top, left are the Fellowship ladies (l to r) Lynne Gervais, Jennifer White, Liz McGuire, Linda Salisbury, Doris Marderness, Betty Sauer, Shari Presentin, and Marlene Grzywinski.

Above (l to r) are the presenters: Steve Mielke, Thrivent; Pastor

Jeff; Pastor Rob Rose, FL-Bahamas Synod and David Contessa, Thrivent. Over 100 people signed up for the lunch of fried chicken, cole slaw, and potato salad with cookies for dessert.



FUTURE HAPPENINGS AT SOTG . . .

The Fellowship Committee recently met to plan out activities for this season! So save these dates:

February 8, 2026 - Strawberry Sundae Sunday after worship

February 18, 2026 - Beginning of Lent with Ash Wednesday soup suppers following 5:30 p.m. Lenten worship each Wednesday in Lent

February 21, 2025 - John Sherman's Reunion Concert at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are \$20.

April 19, 2026 - 'Til We Meet Again Casserole Brunch after worship

February 22, 2026 - After worship there will be the Annual Congregational Meeting

Also to be scheduled are movie events in February and March. So stay tuned.

HUMOR IS MEDICINE FOR THE SOUL . . .

What candy never shows up on time? Choco-late!

What did the stamp say to the envelope? I'm stuck on you!

Did you hear about the two tennis players who fell in love? It was a courtship!

How do farmers celebrate Valentine's Day? With hogs and kisses!

Why do melons get married in church? Because they cantaloupe!

What did one drum say to the other? My heart beats for you!

Why did the skeleton call off the wedding? His heart wasn't in it!

Did you hear about the shoes who got engaged? They were sole mates!

AA & NA GROUPS . . .

Two Mixed AA Groups meet in Hanson Hall. One holds their meetings at noon on Mondays and the other meets at 7:30 p.m. on Thursdays.

Women's AA Group meets in Hanson Hall at 10:00 a.m. on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month.

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) Group meets in Hanson Hall at 9:00 p.m. on Saturdays.

If you or someone you know wishes to attend, please contact the office for more information.

REMEMBER THOSE IN SERVICE TO THEIR COUNTRY . . .

Staff Sergeant Adam Crown

Airman Corey Malinowski

Marine Tom McJilton

Army Sergeant Kendra Stofflet at Ft. Campbell Army Base, KY

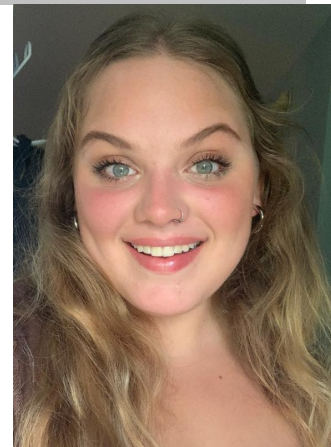
Warrant Officer Robert Stofflet at Ft. Campbell Army Base, KY

Lieutenant Sterling Payne, 205 Ming St. Warrensburg, MO



FROM OUR DIRECTOR FOR DISCIPLESHIP . . .

Happy February SOTG! I have now officially been here with you all for just a little over a year! Isn't that wild! The year has truly flown by. It's been a great one, full of lots of opportunities and learning. From assisting on Sunday mornings to the Blessing Bag Ministry, it's been a blast! Now begins the waiting, as I have submitted all the required materials for entrance into the candidacy process through our Florida Bahamas Synod and have sent in my seminary applications. I would greatly appreciate any prayers you might have for me regarding these processes as they continue to unfold.



Now, I'd like to take the rest of my newsletter article to touch on our new Dinner Church ministry. For those of you who don't know or maybe missed my article last month, Dinner Church is a new ministry that we are able to start due to a grant from our Florida-Bahamas Synod. As of now, we have completed two of the four trainings that have helped us better understand what Dinner Church is and how we will do it.

A main question that Dinner Church seeks to answer through its ministry is: *How do we do church for people who are not like us?* Now, we're all used to our typical church format where we sit, then stand, then sit and stand a bunch more times while we sing hymns, listen to scripture, and hear the gospel preached. But what about people who are not accustomed to this? Church spaces can feel intimidating for many. Maybe someone has never stepped foot in a church building. Maybe they have, but they had a bad experience. How do we bring church to them? Dinner Church will seek to create a church environment that is perhaps less formal, with a shared meal at its center. By focusing on the fellowship aspect of a church community, Dinner Church will seek to embrace God's children from all walks of life, creating a safe space of love and joy, where authenticity and understanding are at the core.

Although to us, Dinner Church is something new, it remains one of the oldest expressions of church, dating all the way back to Jesus Christ himself. Think, for a moment, about what Jesus was actually doing throughout his ministry. He was healing people and eating with them! Sharing a meal with his disciples and with the people he was ministering to was an essential component of his ministry. To share a meal with someone was no small thing then, and he ate with people of various walks of life. Some might wonder: *What makes Dinner Church different from regular fellowship? What makes it a church?* Well, Dinner Church IS Church because it fulfills all scriptural purposes of a church: worship, fellowship, discipleship, evangelism, and compassion. As we continue through the training, I hope to bring more understanding of what Dinner Church will be and what it will look like.

If you are someone who reads this and feels something stirring inside (perhaps fear, uncertainty, excitement, or joy), I encourage you to let me know! We are looking for people who want to do church in a new (to us) way. You don't need to be sure of anything, just interested. There are no special qualifications or requirements, because God doesn't call the equipped—He equips the called! And we are all called to bring Jesus' good news of hope and resurrection to the world.

Until next month,
Mary

**HOW TO ACHIEVE FINANCIAL GOALS: SHORT-TERM,
LONG-TERM & EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN**

As you look to the future, you can see yourself saving for a purposeful retirement, giving generously to your favorite causes and supporting your family through life's milestone moments. To achieve those financial goals, it helps to draw up a solid plan. By setting meaningful, concrete objectives, you can treat your money as a tool to help you attain what matters most to you, your loved ones and your community. It's a process that takes patience, persistence and a series of thoughtful steps:

- **Set SMART financial objectives**
 - Specific
 - Measurable
 - Achievable
 - Relevant
 - Time-bound
- **Consider short-term vs. long-term financial goals**

Not all financial goals require extended timelines. It's important to identify objectives you can check off within a few months or years, too.
- **Test for success**

Make sure each of your financial goals passes your personal "acid test"—that it's truly valuable to you and you're willing to go the extra mile to make it happen.
- **Draw up your plan**

SMART goals are a solid start. Next, you need a financial plan to map out the strategies to achieve them.
- **Put your plan in motion**

Once you have a plan, it will help you take action. The financial plan inspires action to help you work toward meeting your goal.
- **Sidestep roadblocks**

To help you avoid and recover from stumbling blocks, your financial plan could include establishing separate accounts based on specific financial goals or expenses.
- **Keep your emotions in check**

Acknowledge any feeling of financial stress, but don't let it fuel rash decisions that could alter your long-term trajectory.
- **Find your source of support**

As you set SMART goals and draw up plans to reach them, consider all available resources. Connect with a Thrivent financial advisor for insights and collaboration.

For future Thrivent events and for additional disclosures, see [Thrivent.com/social](https://thrivent.com/social). Contact us at SoutheastTMN@thrivent.com or see what's happening at thrivent.com/southeast or at Facebook.com/SoutheastTMN. For More Info Call Thrivent Financial Associate David Contessa at (239) 300-5139

MONTH AT A GLANCE . . .

FEBRUARY, 2026



SUN	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1 FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY 9:30 A.M. LIVE STREAMING WORSHIP PASTOR DOUG WAHLBERG PREACHING	2 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 12 NOON AA MIXED GROUP	3 8:30-11:00 A.M. SEW-SEWS	4 9:00-11:00 A.M. EMBROIDERY GROUP 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 10:30 A.M. PASTOR JEFF'S BIBLE STUDY	5 7:30-8:30 P.M. AA MIXED GROUP	6 9:00-11:00 A.M. WOMEN'S AA GROUP	7 10:00 A.M. FELLOWSHIP PREP 9:00 P.M. N.A. GROUP MEETING
8 FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY STRAWBERRY SUNDAE SUNDAY 9:30 A.M. LIVE STREAMING WORSHIP	9 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 12 NOON AA MIXED GROUP	10 8:30-11:00 A.M. SEW-SEWS 6:00 P.M. CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING	11 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 10:30 A.M. PASTOR JEFF'S BIBLE STUDY	12 7:00-8:00 P.M. AA MIXED GROUP	13	14 VALENTINE'S DAY 9:00 P.M. N.A. GROUP MEETING
15 TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD 9:30 A.M. LIVE STREAMING WORSHIP	16 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 12 NOON AA MIXED GROUP 1:00 P.M. BARBARA GEGA'S SERVICE NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION	17 8:30-11:00 A.M. SEW-SEWS	18 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 10:30 A.M. PASTOR JEFF'S BIBLE STUDY 2:00-3:30 P.M. GRIEF SUPPORT 5:30 P.M. ASH WED. SERVICE W/ SOUP SUPPER FOLLOWING	19 7:00-8:00 P.M. AA MIXED GROUP	20 9:00-11:00 A.M. WOMEN'S AA GROUP	21 6:00 P.M. JOHN SHERMAN'S REUNION CONCERT 9:00 P.M. N.A. GROUP MEETING
22 FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT 10:45 A.M. ANNUAL MEETING 9:30 A.M. LIVE STREAMING WORSHIP	23 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 12 NOON AA MIXED GROUP	24 8:30-11:00 A.M. SEW-SEWS	25 9:00-10:00 A.M. BONE BUILDERS 10:30 A.M. PASTOR JEFF'S BIBLE STUDY 5:30 P.M. ASH WED. SERVICE W/ SOUP SUPPER FOLLOWING	26 7:00-8:00 P.M. AA MIXED GROUP	27 10:00 A.M. WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY	28 9:00 P.M. N.A. GROUP MEETING

Shepherd of the Glades Lutheran Church
6020 Rattlesnake Hammock Road
Naples, FL 34113

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Current Resident or

**This Parish Paper is from:
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**Sunday Worship Service: 9:30 a.m.
Office Hours: Monday - Friday: 9:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.**

**Pastor Jeff Unga, Pastor [cell phone: 641-529-2479]
Mary Winsor, Director for Discipleship
Megan Cianflone, Director of Music
Penny Morken, Council President
Deanna Colbert, Administrative Assistant to the Pastor
Lynn Dickerman, Administrative Assistant to the Pastor**