



The Monthly Newsletter of  
Ebenezer Reformed Church  
of Morrison, IL

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## Ebenezer Reformed Church

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Our Mission: Helping people  
find & follow Jesus

## Dear Friends of Ebenezer,

April begins with the most glorious proclamation the world has ever heard: "He is not here; He has risen!". Easter Sunday stands at the very center of our faith. Without the resurrection, Christianity would be nothing more than a memory of a good teacher who died long ago. Christ's resurrection is not merely something we celebrate once a year—it is the living foundation of our hope every day.

Later in the month, I want to encourage every member of our church family to come together for our All-Church Prayer Meeting on Tuesday, April 14th. Prayer has always been the heartbeat of the church. We live in a time when prayer is needed more than ever. As you watch the news, it is impossible not to notice the ongoing conflict and violence in the Middle East and in Ukraine. War continues to bring suffering, instability, and fear. Our prayer gathering on April 14th will be a time for us to come before the Lord together—lifting up our world, our nation, our community, and the needs within our own church family. There is something powerful about God's people gathering with one voice before the throne of grace. If you are able, I encourage you to make this night a priority. The church that prays together grows stronger together.

As a church family, let us continue to stay faithful, serve joyfully, and give wholeheartedly to the work God has entrusted to us. On that note, I want to share a word of encouragement regarding the organ fund. The generosity of this congregation has been wonderful to see. Donations have been coming in steadily, and we are making excellent progress toward our goal. Your faithful giving is helping ensure that our worship ministry will continue to bless the church for many years to come.

You should also know that discussions and plans have been going on with Emmanuel Church about starting up a "Dinner Fellowship" here in Morrison. The idea is to invite unchurched members of the community to a free meal and sharing of a brief Jesus-themed devotional message. At this point we're still in the development stage but it is something you can commit to pray about as we move forward in faith seeking a new ministry that will reach those in our community who do not attend church and/or do not yet know Christ. It is a unique outreach opportunity in partnership with our sister church here in Morrison.

So, as we step into this new month, may we keep our eyes fixed on the risen Christ. Because of Easter, we know that no matter how dark the world may seem, the final word belongs to the Savior who conquered the grave. Let us rejoice in that victory, pray with urgency, and serve with faithfulness.

To the Glory of God,

# Sunday Worship - April 2026

## Easter SUNDAY

5

**Series:** Famous First Words

**Sermon:** "Who is it You're Looking For?"

**Scripture:** John 20:1-18

**Speaker:** Pastor J.T. Bean



12

**Series:** Stand-alone Sermon

**Sermon:** "Everlasting, Loving Kindness"

**Scripture:** Psalm 107:1-3

**Guest Speaker:** Mark Holtrust



19

**Series:** A Study of Philippians (Part 1)

**Sermon:** "A Chip Off the Old Block"

**Scripture:** Philippians 1:1-11

**Speaker:** Pastor J.T. Bean



26

**Series:** A Study of Philippians (Part 2)

**Sermon:** "Traits of a True Believer"

**Scripture:** Philippians 1:12-26

**Speaker:** Pastor J.T. Bean

## Silent Art Auction

The Oil Paintings of Duane "Barney" Habben



**Final Bidding - April 11  
2-4 pm**

Proceeds to go to Ebenezer Organ Fund  
For the purchase of a new organ

### What EASTER Means To Me

by Pat Pessman

**E** Is ETERNAL! Christ died once for ALL!

**A** Is AMAZING! As on my knees I now fall!

**S** Is SALVATION! Christ died for me!

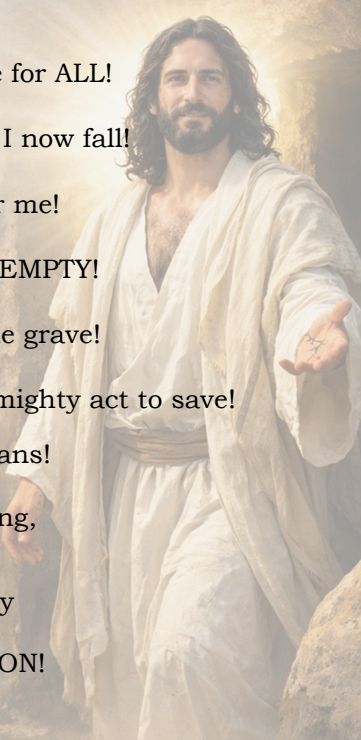
**T** Is the TOMB! Praise God! It's EMPTY!

**E** Is a EULOGY To death and the grave!

**R** Is RESURRECTION! Christ's mighty act to save!

Easter is HOPE for all Christians!  
A time to CELEBRATE!  
Because death has lost its sting,  
And Heaven now awaits!

On Easter Day I can firmly say  
With faith and certainty  
This is Christ's RESURRECTION!  
Easter is VICTORY!





# April 2026



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
MARCH 29 Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. ↓	MARCH 30	MARCH 31 Worship Team Mtg. 5:15 p.m.	1 Women's Bible Study 1:30pm	2 <b>Mauudy Thursday</b> Communion 6pm Fellowship Hall	3 <b>Good Friday</b> "The Witness" at Crossroads 7pm	4 Men's Bible Study 7:30am
5 <b>EASTER</b> Worship 9:30am	6 Church Life Cmt. 10pm	7 Bldg/Property Cmt. 6pm	8	9 Food Bank 9:45am Exec. Mtg. 6:30pm	10	11 Men's Bible Study 7:30am Silent Auction Final Bids 2-4pm
→ Pastor J.T. on Vacation →						
12 Youth/Ed Cmt. 10:45am → Pastor J.T. returns →	13 Elders 6pm Consistory 6:30	14 O.M.E. Task Force 3:30pm at Emmanuel Church All-Church Prayer Mtg. 6pm	15 Ladies Aid 1:30pm	16 Food Bank 9:45am Diners Night Out 5pm	17	18 Men's Bible Study 7:30am
19 Worship 9:30am Mid-High Class 10:45am	20	21	22	23 Food Bank 9:45am	24	25 Men's Bible Study 7:30am
26 Worship 9:30am Mid-High Class 10:45am	27	28	29	30 Food Bank 9:45am	MAY 1	MAY 2

## April Birthdays

**4/1 Diane Boelkins**  
**4/1 Rodney VanZuiden**  
**4/2 Amie Behrens**  
**4/3 Andrew Remrey**  
**4/4 Luann Morine**  
**4/5 Cooper Wiersema**  
**4/6 Lisa Bland**  
**4/9 Cheryl Kullerstrand**  
**4/9 Mark Yarbrough**

**4/12 Michelle Taylor**  
**4/15 Dash Damhoff**  
**4/16 Lisa Wiersema**  
**4/17 Amanda Blasdell**  
**4/17 Judy Hook**  
**4/19 Collin Bland**  
**4/22 Marguerite Clark**

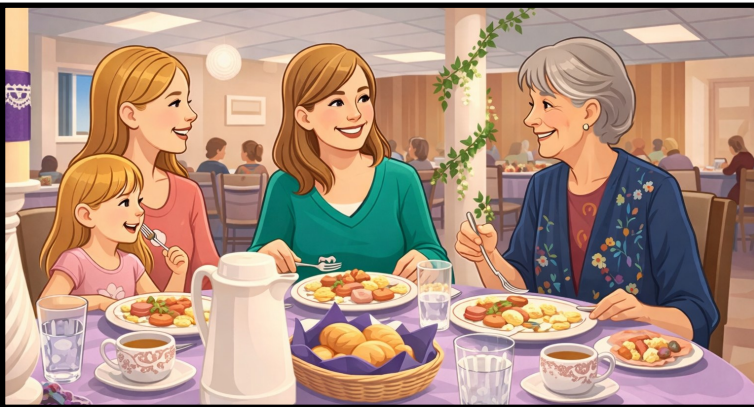
**4/23 Mark Ardapple**  
**4/24 Joan Zuidema**  
**4/27 Mary Jo Tichler**  
**4/27 Risa Weets**  
**4/28 Loretta Temple**  
**4/30 Kenzie Bruckner**  
**4/30 Madisyn Smith**

→ Contact the church office if your birthday is not on our list.

♥ Also: If you are married, tell us your wedding anniversary.

## April Meetings At-a-Glance

Tues. 3/31 - Worship Team 5:15 PM  
 Wed. 4/1 - Ladies Bible Study 1:30 p.m.  
 Thur. 4/3 - Maundy Thur. Service 6:00 p.m.  
 Mon. 4/6 - Church Life Cmt. 10:00 a.m.  
 Tue. 4/7 - Building & Property 6:00 p.m.  
 Thurs. 4/9 - Executive Cmt. 6:00 p.m.  
 Sun. 4/12 - Youth & Education 10:45 a.m.  
 Mon. 4/13 - Deacons/Elders 6:00 p.m.  
 Mon. 4/13 - Consistory Mtg. 6:30 p.m.  
 Tue. 4/14 - O.M.E. Task Force 3:30 p.m.  
 Tue. 4/14 - All Church Prayer Mtg. 6:00 p.m.,  
 Wed. 4/15 - Ladies Aid 1:30 p.m.



**Coming in May...**

## Mother-Daughter Banquet

**Tuesday, May 12 | 6:00 p.m.**

Guest Speaker: **Aubrey Krueger**  
 "Rise Up Again" Ministry

Meal includes: Hamettes, cheezy potatoes,  
 corn, salad and dessert.

Cost: \$20 for adults, \$10 for kids 12-under.  
 Mark your calendar. Tickets on sale soon!

## Nursery Schedule



April 5 - Shawn/Kevin Soenksen  
 April 12 - Beth Milnes & Kinlee Prins  
 April 19 - Jackie/Alicen Wiersema  
 April 26 - Angie Tichler / Allison Weaver

## Sunday Greeters

April 5 - Marcia Blean / Jane Haan  
 April 12 - Harvey Zuidema / Barb Prins  
 April 19 - Deb Adolph / Pepi Allen  
 April 26 - Diane Wiebenga / Pat Pessma



## Welcome Center

April 5 - Michael & Marica Blean  
 April 12 - Ken J & Sharon R  
 April 19 - Jack & Susan Bland  
 April 26 - Keith & Joyce Hamstra



## Tech Team

April 5 - Jenny & William Patton  
 April 12 - Scott Meurs & Phil Ardapple  
 April 19 - Gregg Wiersema & Todd Kullerstrand  
 April 26 - Scott Meurs & Jovie Patton



## Fellowship Hour

April 5 - EASTER  
 April 12 - Tim & Patty Bush  
 April 19 - Ken Glenda Jansma  
 April 26 - Pat Pessman & Barb Prins



## Bell Ringers

April 5 - Randy Renkes  
 April 12 - Jon Kophamer  
 April 19 - Jon Brackemyer  
 April 26 - John Dickey



**\* Please call the church office if you would like to be added as a volunteer on any of these service teams.**

## Ladies Aid

Meeting is Wednesday, April 15 at 1:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Pastor J.T. Bean will provide the program, and Diane Wiebenga will provide refreshments.

## Women's Bible Study

Please join us for a Bible Study the first Wednesday of the month at 1:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Our leader is Doris Bielema. This month we will meet during Holy Week on April 1st.

## Men's Bible Study

The Men's Bible Study meets every Saturday morning at 7:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Bring your Bible. Coffee and donuts will be served. We are currently studying the New Testament book of 1st Corinthians.

## Mid-High Bible Study

The Mid-High class will meet in the Upper Room on April 19th and 26th.

## Heaven's Express

"Children's Church" for grade school kids on Sunday morning will be held each Sunday. Kids will be dismissed at the offertory.

## AfterShock

Thank you to all who served in the kitchen and classroom. AfterShock is on a break and will resume in September.

## Consistory Mtg.

The Consistory meeting for this month will be on Monday, April 13th starting at 6:00 p.m. for deacons and elders; 6:30 for Consistory.

## Prayer Concerns

- Pray for those who need restored health, healing, and encouragement: Laurie Peterson, Joanne Peterson, Sandi Gorzney, Marguerite Clark, Ruth Rosenow, Ron Wiersema, Keith Morine, Neva Baar, Fred Hadley, Barb Geerts, Elmer Huizenga, Diane Boelkins, Jeg Weets, and Joyce Wilkins. Pray also for those with special needs or unspoken prayer requests, as well as our shut-ins and nursing/assisted-living residents.

- **Pray for our military men** serving in the U.S. Armed Forces:

**Elijah Bean** (Air Force)

**Gregory Bush** (Air Force)

**Tyler Haan** (Air Force)

**Brevin Pruis** (Navy)



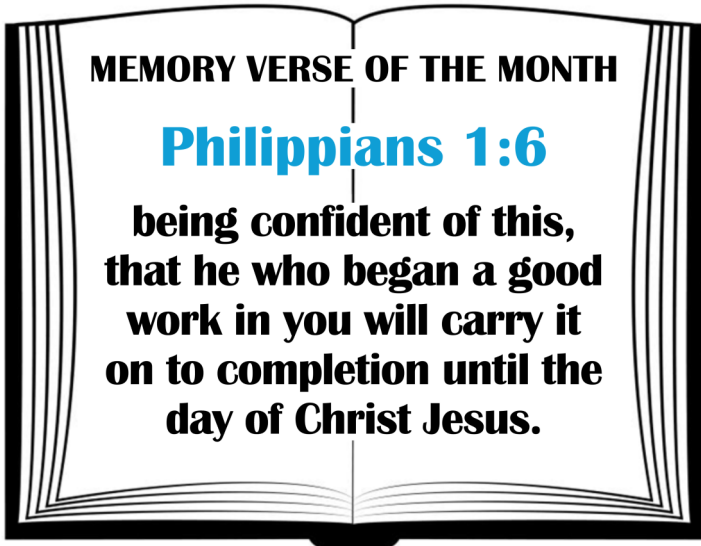
- **Pray for our missionaries:**

Andrew & Sophia Pitcher in South Africa, Ben & Kelita Johnson in Honduras, Jeff & Chelsea Lampen in Germany, Angel Lopez in Mexico, and Joel & Seiko Lovestrand in Japan, Roger & Sue Scheenstra in Africa, and Chosen People Ministries.

- Prayer is available after each Sunday worship service. There is always an elder there to meet in the prayer room to pray about whatever concerns are on your heart.

- Contact the pastor or church office to put a prayer request on the email "prayer line". Prayer requests will be sent out as soon as the pastor is able to do so.

- Join us for our monthly prayer meeting on Tuesday, April 14th from 6-7 p.m. We will meet in the fellowship hall to pray for our church, our community, our country, and our world.



## Maundy Thursday



### Worship Service

April 2 • 6:00 p.m. • Fellowship Hall

VICTORY CENTER PRESENTS:

# The Witness

"A powerful musical drama of the life of Jesus Christ"

— Good Friday —

**April 3 | 7 PM**

Crossroads Community Church  
300 W South St Morrison, IL

Join us

## Easter Sunday

April 5

Worship Service at 9:30 a.m.

The Easter service will include a children's sermon as well as an Easter egg hunt afterwards on the East lawn. Bring your kids and grandkids to the service to celebrate Jesus!



MONTHLY ALL-CHURCH

## PRAYER MEETING

📅 APRIL 14 | 6:00 PM

in the Fellowship Hall



## Missionary Spotlight

# Joel & Seiko Lovestrand



Our Missionaries for this month's newsletter are JOEL & SEIKO LOVESTRAND, who serve in Sendai, Japan with Overseas Missionary Fellowship. They have two children, Akari (*married last June*) and son Leo, who attends high school. Here are a few highlights and prayer requests we've received from the Lovestrand's in January and February...

### JANUARY:

JOEL & SEIKO enjoyed a wonderful Christmas celebration, which included Seiko doing an outreach event with some ladies, who enjoyed making gingerbread men in Seiko's special cooking class. Later, Seiko was able to explain the significance of the birth of Jesus. Later on in the month, ten children who attend their English class, came to a Christmas Party and enjoyed listening to a ventriloquist from Joel's church—they too heard the Christmas story. Another highlight was hosting a Christmas lunch for their adult students and introducing them to mince-meat pie and hot apple cider, *along with explaining the true meaning of Christmas to them*. Joel and Seiko were encouraged by their positive response to the message—but sadly, this was slightly dampened as many of them would later attend a Shinto shrine to pray to their gods during Japan's celebration of the New Year.

Finally, Joel and Seiko enjoyed a visit from Seiko's sister during the New Year holiday and had a wonderful visit! Rather than going to a Shinto shrine or a Buddhist temple to pray for a blessing in the New Year, she allowed them to give her a tour of their church building! She even picked up a Gospel tract written by their co-worker! What a great encouragement that was to Seiko!

PRAYER REQUESTS: Would you continue to pray that God will guide more people to us, who are SERIOUSLY interested in knowing about God—also, that Seiko's sister's heart would be softened to the message of the Gospel. And, they ask for prayer that God will continue to bless Joel's study with Mr. Marsh and that he and his family will grow in their commitment to Christ.

### FEBRUARY:

Joel underwent a double hernia repair! But thankfully, he was able to go home after a few hours and was back teaching English the following day. He is still struggling a bit with his mobility as he recovers from the effects of the surgery. Joel was happy to welcome two young men, who had once been attending the church, back to the church and to join them in worship. They were also encouraged by two new attendees last month, Mr. Montcape, *who moved back to Sendai*—and Mrs. Riverside, *who moved into her daughter's home just a few miles from the church*. Joel continues to meet with Mr. Marsh who is so eager to study the Bible. Another new attendee has expressed an interest in being baptized, which will hopefully happen in the near future. This is all GOOD NEWS! What a blessing to see the number of worshippers growing!

Joel also reports that in March, Rod & Glenda Thomas will be returning to Japan and Joel will be handing the reins of church leadership back to Rod. This will allow more time for Joel to focus on evangelism in a nearby town, Hitokita. (*Joel was asked to serve as an advisor to a church there, which is two hours north of Sendai, while their missionary pastor is on home assignment in the U.K.*) As a result, Joel and Seiko will be making a trip there once a month.

They also report that Leo will be graduating from high school soon and is beginning to think more about his future—a trip to the U.S. to visit colleges may be needed soon.

PRAISE GOD: We praise Him for Joel's excellent care during his recent surgery; also for the new attendees coming to church and for the ones who wish to be baptized. GOD IS GOOD!

PRAYER REQUESTS: Please pray God will move our English students from a casual interest in the Bible to a deeper interest—and to a saving faith in Christ. And pray for God's guidance in Leo's life to use all that he has and is for God's glory.

**A VERSE TO PONDER FOR ALL GOD'S CHOSEN**-- As we focus on our missionaries serving in various parts of the world each month, let's never forget our "mission field" is right outside the doors of Ebenezer Church—in Isaiah 6:38, God spoke these words to Isaiah, saying—

*"Who should I send? Who will go for us?" Then Isaiah said, "Here am I. Send me."*

## Instant Church Directory



Our online and mobile app directory needs more photos to help us identify and know each other better. Call the church office for help with how to upload the photo of your choice to:

[www.onlinechurchdirectory.com](http://www.onlinechurchdirectory.com)

## Join the E-mail List

Stay informed of everything that's going on at Ebenezer: J.T. sends out a weekly **"Note From the Pastor"** as well as regular prayer chain emails as they come in to him. To get on the list, simply email Pastor J.T. and request to be added: [pastorjt@ercmorrison.com](mailto:pastorjt@ercmorrison.com)

## Note & Disclaimer

All *Ebenezer Happenings* article submissions need to be received by the 21st day of each month to guarantee inclusion in the next edition. We apologize for any missing or inaccurate information within this newsletter. If there are additions or corrections to be made, please call the church office at (815) 772-2472 or e-mail Sue Bond at [office@ercmorrison.com](mailto:office@ercmorrison.com)

## Giving & Attendance

Here's an update on our numbers for the month of March

Date	Attendance	Offering
March 1	110	\$9,137
March 8	118	\$3,580
March 15	131	\$14,491
March 22	134	\$4,237
March 29	130	\$17,419
	<b>Avg. 125</b>	<b>Total: \$48,864</b>

### MARCH Breakdown:

General Offering: \$48,864  
 Aftershock: \$2,697  
 Assistance: \$2,500  
 Tithe.ly (online giving): \$2,178  
 Organ Fund: \$12,410

**Total: \$68,649**



This newsletter is a publication of:

### Ebenezer Reformed Church

309 E. Park St. | Morrison, IL 61270

Phone: (815) 772-2472

◆ **Rev. J.T. Bean, Lead Pastor**  
 pastorjt@ercmorrison.com

◆ **Sue Bond, Office Manager**  
 office@ercmorrison.com

Office hours: M-F 9am to 1pm

### Sunday Morning Worship:

Worship Celebration - 9:30 am

Fellowship Hour - 10:45 am

Youth Bible Study Hour - 10:45 am

*Helping people  
 find and follow Jesus*

2026 Consistory

**Elders:** J. T. Bean, Phil Ardapple, Barney Habben, Jon Kophamer, Keith Hamstra, Melinda Hamstra, Sandi Wilkens

**Deacons:** Jenny Patton, Randy Renkes, Darlene Schipper, Brian Tichler, Dave Weber, Gregg Wiersema

2026 Executive Team

J.T. Bean (Pastor)  
Sandi Wilkens (Vice President)  
Dave Weber (Deacon Chair)  
Gregg Wiersema (Treasurer)  
Melinda Hamstra (Clerk)

**Elders Meeting Minutes: March 9, 2026**

**Attendance:** Jon Kophamer and Keith Hamstra were absent.

**Devotions & Prayer:** Pastor JT opened the meeting at 6pm with scripture from Psalm 2 followed by questions and prayer.

**Grieving Members in need of care:** Members in need of care were discussed.

**Sacraments Update:** We served 128 in church with 12 at the nursing home and 3 shut-ins for Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> communion. Communion will be served next on Maundy Thursday (April 2). At Home communion will be served the week of March 29, Holy Week. We will have a foot washing ceremony at the Maundy Thursday service.

**Membership request:** Pat Fuller

**Membership Care Groups:** Reminder to review assigned care group and make proper contacts as needed.

**Elder Prayer Room Assignments:** Reminder to review assigned dates for prayer room.

**Approve Minutes from February Meeting: M/S to approve minutes. M/C**

**Next meeting:** April 13th @ 6pm

**Motion to Adjourn: M/S to adjourn after closing in prayer M/C**

**Closing Prayer:** Phil Ardapple closed in prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Melinda Hamstra, Clerk

**Consistory Meeting Minutes: March 9, 2026**

**Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 6:30pm. Absent were Jon Kophamer, Keith Hamstra, Brian Tichler, Gregg Wiersema and Dave Weber. A quorum was established.

**Devotions & Prayer:** Pastor JT opened the meeting with devotions from Psalm 2, followed by discussion and prayer.

**Pastor's Report:** 6 mo. review with Craig Sipes went very well with positive feedback from the congregation. Also having him available to fill in the pulpit when JT is gone is a great asset. Thank you, Craig! It was discussed if there is a death in the congregation that we need to hear from a direct family member before announcing it in church. The silent auction for Barney's paintings will be held here at the church March 21<sup>st</sup> and April 11<sup>th</sup>. Flyers are being distributed around town as well as advertised on Facebook. The proceeds are to go toward the Organ fund. Pastor JT will be taking a vacation after Easter April 6-April 12. Mark Holtrust to fill pulpit. FCA group from the MJH will have a Passion Pizza Night here in the fellowship hall to watch "The Passion" movie on March 16<sup>th</sup>. The Youth chapel has been rescheduled to March 29<sup>th</sup> at 3pm. Hopefully we will have a good turnout. The church is in need of a couple more nursery helpers on Sundays. If anyone knows of anyone interested, please let Sue in the office know. Iron Sharpens Iron is coming up this Saturday March 14<sup>th</sup>. There will be a Men's breakfast the following Saturday (3/21) and will be watching the video "Dragon's Prophecy". JT Plans on visiting the nursing homes Thursday March 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Where have we seen God at work at ERC?** -Organ fund is growing -Lenten lunches a good addition to the community -Father/Son banquet had a good turnout -FCA event bringing kids to the church

**Deacons Report:** No report as Dave Weber and Gregg Wiersema were absent

**Elders Report:** Melinda (see Elders minutes)

**Finance:** No report from Gregg given but printed copy provided **M/S to Approve Financial Report MC**

**Building/Property:** It was discovered there was a leak in the kitchen which has been repaired. New lights are being installed in the sanctuary. The price of the trash pickup has been reduced until the contract is done.

**Church Life:** Phil Ardapple – there has not been a meeting yet this month so nothing to report at this time.

**Worship/Music:** Thank you Pastor Craig for preaching Sunday March 1<sup>st</sup>. Palm Sunday March 29<sup>th</sup> there will be a parade of palms by the children. Maundy Thursday April 2<sup>nd</sup> will be held in the fellowship hall. There will be a foot washing service where the elders were asked to help participate in washing of the feet. We will also partake in communion that night also. On Good Friday April 3<sup>rd</sup> there will be a presentation of “The Witness” performed at Crossroads church where everyone in the congregation is encouraged to attend. Easter Sunday April 5<sup>th</sup>, you won’t want to miss it as we will be having a blackout service and a special dialogue from two of our own women of the church. There will be an easter egg hunt after the worship service for the kids. JT also reported the organ installation is to begin October 1<sup>st</sup> and we are getting close to our fundraising goal PTL!

**Youth/Education:** Aftershock is wrapping up and will be having a swim party at the high school March 18<sup>th</sup>. Camp Manitoqua is right around the corner. We will be sharing a bus with Emmanuel as they are going the same week. Youth Chapel has been rescheduled for March 29<sup>th</sup>. Discussion has begun regarding summer events for the youth. We also will be needing a list of names of graduates from 8<sup>th</sup> grade and high school so we know how many gifts we need.

**Assistance/Memorial:** Nothing to report at this time

**Sacraments:** We served 128 in church with 12 at the nursing home and 3 shut-ins for the week of Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**O.M.E. Task Force:** They are meeting 3/10 with Emmanuel Church to compare notes on the dinner church experiences they had and decide where to go from there.

**Approve minutes:** **M/S to approve February Meeting minutes. MC**

**Old Business:** -UMV Annual Network Gathering – June 12-13 in Sully, IA (would like some consistory members to attend)

-ARC Gathering 2026 – Aug 19-21 in Zeeland, MI (suggested for some consistory members to attend, if interested let Pastor JT know.) -Organ fundraising update going very well

**New Business:** Endowment Committee vote: Doug Vanderlaan and Keith Hamstra has said they would be on the committee. **M/S to vote Doug and Keith on the committee M/C**

-Camp Manitoqua is July 13-17.

-VBS: August 3-7 at Emmanuel Church

**Next Meeting:** Monday April 13, 2026

**Adjournment:** **M/S to Adjourn post prayer. MC**

**Closing Prayer:** Melinda Hamstra closed in Prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Melinda Hamstra, Clerk

