

The May 2026 Epistle



A publication of St. James Lutheran Church,
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MESSAGE from the VICAR

I am the way, the truth, and the life...
John 14:6

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

On the first Sunday in May we will run into the Apostle Thomas again. The last time we heard from Thomas was just a few weeks ago when he was in the closed room with the other disciples shortly after Jesus was resurrected. To refresh our memories, I thought it might be good to review the three times Thomas pops up in Holy Scripture.

The first time is in John 11. *Then Thomas said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."* He boldly and courageously offers to die with Jesus as they head to Jerusalem to face the final days before Jesus' crucifixion.

The second time is in John 14 - the text we will look at on the first Sunday in May. He asks Jesus, *"Lord, we don't know where you are going. How can we know the way?"* And Jesus replies, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life."* I'll save the full treatment of this dialogue for the services this weekend, but I'll share with you the question I've been pondering so you can ponder it with me: How do we participate in the way, truth, and life? Jesus tells us he IS the way, truth, and life. How do we get in on that good stuff? How do we participate in his program?

The third time Thomas pops up in Scripture is in the closed room after the resurrection when he says, *“Unless I see the marks of the nails in his hands and the hole in his side, I will not believe.”* Thomas was broken-hearted. He wanted proof that the person the other disciples saw was truly Jesus before he would risk believing again. Jesus appeared in the closed room and said to him, *“Here I am. Do not doubt, but believe.”*

You may recall, when we looked at this text a few weeks ago, I encouraged us not to consider doubt as the enemy of faith. Doubt isn't at the opposite end of the spectrum from faith. It's really just the other side of the coin.

God is patient with us in our struggles to believe, just like he was with Thomas, because doubt is still engagement with God and can lead to true faith. Sure, doubt is a convoluted and bewildered engagement with God, but it's engagement nonetheless. It's the kind of engagement that, like Thomas, still gets us to show up to church and receive the gifts of grace - even if you can't bring yourself to believe in the same way that we may have once believed.

Doubt means we haven't given up yet. And we can be sure God never gives up on us. So I encourage you to bring your doubt to God, even if that's all you have, and let God transform it into faith.

I'm looking forward to continuing our celebration of the resurrection of our Lord all the way to Pentecost at the end of the month!

Grace and peace to you,
Vicar Bryce Hewlett, SAM

P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

Happy May, St. James!

I am so thankful for the warmer weather and sunshine we have been receiving lately! I've been spending more and more time in my garden, either actually working on it or studying with the fresh air and sun. It is such a nice change from the dark and cold days of winter.

As the calendar turns, I invite you to pause and embrace the vibrant shift of the season. May is here—a golden bridge between the rains of spring and the warmth of summer, a time when nature wakes completely, and the air is filled with the scent of new life and blossoming possibilities.

Grace is a term I like to explore and think about during May. God provides us grace to help us with a plethora of things, including fresh beginnings, strengthening our faith, and the strength to achieve what human effort alone cannot. As you walk through these 31 days, I encourage you to yield to this season of growth, both in the natural world and in your spiritual life. Isaiah 43:18 tells us to forget the former things and not dwell on the past. The winter is over; the rainy season has passed, and it is time for your efforts to blossom. The month of May is a wonderful time to renew your faith and set your intentions for the rest of the year.

Be good. Do good. God Bless,

Madeline Schmidt

PUT GOOD INTO THE WORLD

BLOOD DRIVE

 **ImpactLife**

St James Lutheran Church

Monday, May 4th

2:30pm - 5:30pm

Church Basement

1705 Oak Street, Bettendorf

To schedule an appointment, contact Frieda Houldsworth at 563-355-1628 or Janene Anderson at 563-370-8710

Group code: 028

Last date to donate elsewhere: 3/09/2026



Men's Prayer

Breakfast

8:00 A.M
SECOND SATURDAY OF
EVERY MONTH IN THE
LOWER LEVEL

*Iron sharpens iron, and one man
sharpens another.*

Proverbs 27:17



MAY BIRTHDAYS

5/4 JEFF SEITZ

5/11 JEAN ROWE

5/13 BEAUEN BILEDDO

5/13 KELLY WAINWRIGHT

5/16 REX RIDENOUR

5/16 DARRYL WORLEY

5/21 SCOTT WENDELL

5/24 LISA MEKALSON

5/24 ASA PESSEIN

5/27 HOLLY GARCIA

5/29 JUDE HEWLETT

5/30 PAT SORENSEN

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

5/12 VERNOL & BARBARA JACKSON

5/21 LORA & MARK GWIN

5/26 JEFF & SUZIE SEITZ



Rummage

SALE



**May 21-22
8:30AM-3:30PM**

**Item Drop-off
May 18th**



**Come
Help!**

Items Needed:

- Paper Grocery Bags
- Baked Goods
- No big furniture!



If you would like to volunteer or want to make a donation after hours, please contact Judy Larson at (563) 340-7902



LUTHERAN SUMMER DAY CAMP

COST: \$50
SCHOLARSHIPS &
FAMILY DISCOUNTS
AVAILABLE!

LOCATED AT TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
18137 CRISWELL ST. BETTENDORF, IA.

BUS TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE!
SEE BELOW

**AGES 4 years
to 6th grade**

**JUNE
15TH -19TH**
**9 a.m.
to 3 p.m.**

**Scan QR code
to register**



ACTIVITIES:

ARTS & CRAFTS / FUN SPORTS
BIBLE STUDY / GAMES / SKITS

Bus Schedule:

Departs from St. James at 8:30 a.m.

Returns to St. James at 3:30 p.m.

St James Lutheran Church
1705 Oak Street Bettendorf

**Questions? Contact St.
James Lutheran Church**
at 563-355-4161



Feast of Pentecost Celebration

Sunday, May 24th

9:00 a.m. Service

10:00 a.m. Brunch - Waffle Bar!

Confirmation
Sunday!

Come join us as we celebrate
the Feast of Pentecost &
Kick Off to Summer!

Bounce
House!

Chalk &
Bubbles

St. James Lutheran Church
1704 Oak Street Bettendorf

May 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9AM Worship	2:30-5:30PM Blood Drive 4PM Social Min. Mtg.	8AM Worship & Music Mtg.	1PM Finance Mtg. 6-8PM Food Pantry	9-11AM Food Pantry 11AM Service at BHCC		8AM Men's Prayer Breakfast 5PM Worship
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
9AM Worship 10AM Muffins with Moms		4PM Property Mtg. 7PM Photographing God's Creation	6-7PM Confirmation 6-8PM Food Pantry	9-11AM Food Pantry 11AM Service at BHCC		1:30-5:00PM Mary Meumann 90 th birthday open house at The Suites 5PM Worship
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
9AM Worship 10AM Council Mtg.	8:30-3:30 Rummage Sale Items Drop-Off	8:30-3:30 Rummage Sale Items Drop-Off 1PM Sarah Circle (in conference room)	6-8PM Food Pantry	8:30AM - 3:30PM Rummage Sale 9-11AM Food Pantry 11:30AM GANG 2:30 BING at BHCC	8:30AM - 3:30PM Rummage Sale	NO 5PM Worship due to Pentecost & Confirmation Celebration
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
9AM Worship Feast of Pentecost & Confirmation	<i>Memorial Day – Office Closed</i>	12-4PM Quilting	6-8PM Food Pantry	9-11AM Food Pantry 11AM Service at BHCC		5PM Worship



JOHN DEERE CLASSIC BIRDIES FOR CHARITY 2026

We are very grateful for the 11 donors who supported the 2025 Birdies for Charity program last year. We raised \$740 and received a 9% bonus for a total of \$806.60. I would like to double that this year! Last year, Council directed where the funds were to go but this year, I would like to try something new. Funds received are designed to support our programs and

services. A list of 2-3 ideas will be compiled to be voted on by anyone who pledges in this event. Sound like fun?

It's easy! Grab one of the forms located in the narthex and pick one of these options:

- 1) Complete the form and place it in the offering plate, the Birdies box in the narthex, the church office, or you can mail directly to the Birdies for Charity office.

The deadline to return to the church is Sunday, June 21st.

This gives time for the forms to be mailed to the Birdies for Charity office to be received before tournament week begins. Cash, checks, and credit card payments are accepted for pledges.

If you do not include your payment, you will be invoiced by the Birdies for Charity office.

- 2) Donate online at <https://birdiesforcharity.com/donate> - or Scan the QR code which is on the form; be sure to search & enter our Bird Number 960: St. James Lutheran Church.

Please consider contributing to this event – we are guaranteed a 5% bonus on all pledges.

Please contact Ellen Hogbin (309-519-9936) for further information or questions or if you have an idea on where to direct these funds.

Gratefully,
Ellen



Sarah Circle will meet Tuesday, May 19th at 1:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. All women are welcome to join (we also have dessert!)



St James GANG

There will be NO St. James GANG due to the Rummage Sale! Check out the Social Ministry Article and flyer for more info on the Rummage sale!

Pat Larson
563-343-2142



From the Quilt Block

For Lent we, as a congregation, we collected Personal Care Kits. Last year we collected 54 kits. To date (April 28th) we have collected 30 kits. Thank you for your continued support.

Quilters did **not** meet in April.

There is a basket in the narthex containing quilt kits. If you would like to help with this ministry and have a sewing machine, you can pick up one or more of the kits supplied, take it/them home and, at your leisure, sew the strips together with ½ inch seam allowances. Return the finished tops to the office at church and look for your tops in finished quilts on the quilt rack in the Narthex.

Pieces be with you.
Shirley Richlen



Social Ministry News

Social Ministry met on April 6th.

We played Bingo at Bettendorf Health Care Center on April 16th. **We play Bingo again on May 21st**. The residents win prizes such as small stuffed animals (Beanie Baby size), and quarters. We enjoy calling the numbers for them and they are always happy to see us!

On April 22nd we served a meal at Zion Lutheran Church for Churches United. Currently we are looking for people to help with serving the Zion meals! It takes less than an hour. It is very fulfilling and the they are so grateful for whatever we serve! If you would like to volunteer, please contact Judy Larson at 563-340-7902!

We are looking forward to the **Rummage Sale! Set up is May 18-20th with the sale happening on Thursday and Friday, May 21st and 22nd**. Please save your stuff and your energy!! We need all the help we can get! Proceeds from the sale fund our outreach for serving meals at Zion, buying gifts for the Angel Tree at Christmas, and providing prizes for Bingo!

Our meetings are at 4:00 p.m. on the first Monday of every month – please consider joining us and thanks for your continued support!

The next meeting is May 4th at 4:00 p.m. in the conference room.

Judy Larson



Exterior clean-up completed - Thanks to everyone who helped!

- Waiting for all parts to come in and then we will install new audio system.
- A/C prep has been completed and window units installed.
- Construction on the retaining wall – lower level walk-out door
- Gutters have been cleaned out
- Seeding by trees using a “shade mix” grass seed
- Sanctuary window is being repaired
- The bearing seal on the pump is completed
- Elevator inspection/repairs - pending
- We are waiting to hear on decision from Iowa American Water regarding over charges

Thank you to everyone who helps maintain our church building property. We appreciate all of you!

Next meeting – Tuesday, May 12, 4:00 p.m.

May Worship Assistants

Date	Assisting Minister	Reader	Acolyte	Usher	Usher
5/3/26	Shirley Richlen	Judy Larson	Eli Pessein	Dee Worley	Darryl Worley
5/10/26	Jason Forari	Judie Brooks	Jude Hewlett	Melissa Forari	Ana Forari
5/17/26	Tom Sladky	Amanda Southwell	Edi Southwell	Ryan Martin	Kelly Crooks
Day of Pentecost 5/24/26	Anna Forari	Kaylee Pessein	Jude Hewlett & Eli Pessein	Fritz Voss	Judy Larson
Holy Trinity 5/31/26	Judie Brooks	Ellen Hogbin	Velvet Collison	Pat Larson	Shirley Richlen

Altar Guild: May 3 Ellen Hogbin & Audrey Lovelle
 May 10 Shirley Richlen & Audrey Lovelle
 May 17 Ellen Hogbin & Judie Brooks
 May 24 PENTECOST Shirley Richlen & Judie Brooks - **FD* NSS***
 May 31 HOLY TRINITY Marilyn Pieart & Diana Worley - **FD***
 *FD – Feast Day *NSS – No Saturday Service

*Please Note: If you find you cannot serve on the date/time scheduled, please arrange for your replacement, then **call or email your scheduler** to advise the name of your replacement. Your gracious cooperation is very much appreciated! Thanks!*

Prayers for Healing and Support

Congregational Members

Ed Arp, **Bev** Chappen, **Maxine** Duhm, **Sandy** Henry,
Frieda Houldsworth, **Jeryl** Krumbholz, **Jim** Krumbholz,
LaVonne Mienke

Family and Friends

Amanda (friend of Melissa),
Annette & Rick (Steve & Sue Miller & Pat Sorenson's sister
& brother-in-law), **Brenda** (Friend of Janene Anderson),
Donna (Ed Arp's sister),
Drew (Pat Larson's friend), **Emmett** (friend of Diana Worley),
Hattie (Frieda's sister), **Karen and Ed** (Shirley's Aunt and Uncle), **Lylah**
(friend of Noa), **Mark** (friend of Jason Forari), **Michelle** (friend of Joleen & Erik
Bakken), **Phil** (Steve Miller and Pat Sorensen's brother), **Sloane** (friend of
Deb Crooks), **Stan** (relative of Fritz Voss), **Steve** (friend of Pat Larson), **Wally**
(Frieda's nephew)

Those Whose Duty it is to Protect Others

Anthony Karasek (Judy Larson's great nephew)
LT. **Chris** Tribble USN (Erik & Joleen Bakken's friend).
CPT **Eli** Smith (Jerry and Myrna Mattly's grandson)
Nathan Pearson USAF (Jenna & Kane Schmidt's friend)
Tyler McLaughlin, First Responder (Family of Pat Larson)

*If you need to add or remove someone from
the prayer list, please contact the church office.*