

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As I was driving along a county road a few years ago after the first snow of the season I came across a group of birds that were gathered on the road to get out of the snow. The birds flew away at my approach. Now you've experienced this, too, where the birds are flying right there in front of your vehicle, and then at the right moment veer off together out of danger's way.

That's what happens most of the time. But this particular day one of the birds, for some unknown reason, decided not to go with the others, and continued to fly solo in front of my truck. Not a good decision as the truck met the bird, and the truck won the battle.

Now I always feel bad when I hit a bird, even though I know that the bird has placed itself in harm's way. But it made me think that people are sometimes like that bird. Trying to fly solo instead of being a part of the community of faith. Thinking that they don't need the community of faith to worship and pray with, to learn with, to encourage and support one another. And in the process, placing themselves in the way of danger.

Now I am not saying to go along with the crowd, to follow the other birds, when the crowd is making bad choices. But when the crowd is a faith community that is striving to be faithful in following God and serving God, then that is a crowd to join.

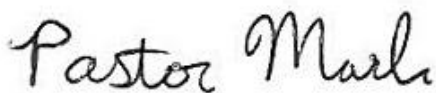
Perhaps that can be a New Year's resolution. To be a part of a community of faith. To be in worship every week.

Author King Duncan tells the story about one man who decided to make only resolutions this year he could keep. He resolved to gain weight, to stop exercising, to read less and watch more TV, to procrastinate more, to quit giving money and time to charity, to not date any member of the cast of Baywatch, and to never make New Year's resolutions again.

What we need, of course, is not another resolution, but a revolution. We need a turning point in our lives. Like the wise men of old we need to catch a glimpse of a guiding light, and we need to follow that light to Christ.

And it's easier to do this in a community of faith, where we can encourage one another, and be accountable to one another. That would be a turning point in many people's lives!

Love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Mark". The script is cursive and fluid, with the word "Pastor" written in a smaller, more compact style than the word "Mark", which is larger and more prominent.

Pastor Mark

Thank You

My family and I would like to thank you for all of the many ways that you have blessed us this Christmas season and throughout the year! Thanks for the cards, gifts, and words of love and encouragement.

Pastor Mark

Worship Schedule

Sundays in January

- 8:30 a.m. *Confirmation* in the parsonage (beginning January 8)
9:00 a.m. *Adult Sunday School* in the Parish Hall
9:00 a.m. *Sunday School* in the church lower level
(beginning January 8)
9:15 a.m. *Choir* rehearsal and sing in church
(check bulletin or online calendar for dates)
10:00 a.m. **Worship**
11:15 a.m. *Luther League* (January 8)

January 8 Now the Feast and Celebration

Congregation Council and Church Finance Notes

The Council will meet at 7 p.m. on Thursday, January 19, 2017. The Council meeting minutes are posted on the bulletin board in the church narthex (entryway). Council minutes are also available in the church office.

Giving	\$202,473.17
Expenses	\$186,066.77
Mission Support	\$12,892.71
Net Income	\$3,513.69

Any church committee meeting may be attended by *anyone*. You do not have to be a member of that group to attend their meeting. We encourage you to attend the meeting(s) of your choice. All committees will meet in the church lower level unless otherwise stated.

If you have any concerns regarding any of the committees, please direct them to a committee member, especially the council representative to that committee.

Annual Meeting Notice

The Swedesburg Evangelical Lutheran Church will meet for our annual meeting on Sunday, January 29, 2017 after Worship. There will be a potluck with sandwiches provided in the Parish Hall prior to the annual meeting, which will begin immediately after the lunch.

Please remember that Confirmed members need to have communed and have a contribution on record by the end of 2016 in order to vote at this meeting.

Treasurer's reports are due to the church office by January 11th.

Soup Supper

There will be a Soup Supper on Tuesday, January 10 serving from 5-7 p.m. at the Parish Hall. The Evangelism and Luther League will help sponsor this event. A freewill donation will be received.

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild would like to thank everyone who bought poinsettias to beautify the altar during the Advent season. You may now take your poinsettia home.

Be sure to sign up in the narthex to provide flowers during a Worship service in 2017. There are openings on January 15, 22, and 29. If you would like to provide flowers on a certain date in 2017 contact the church office at 319-254-2216 to see if that date is available. Mary will be glad to fill your name in on the chart for your special date.

Smorgasbord

Thank you over and over and over again! Not just for the hours of volunteer work, but also for the positive comments reinforcing the value for continuance of this worthwhile event that has served so many in need for the past 75 now 76 years, the annual Swedesburg Smörgåsbord. A special thanks to all the volunteers, I wish there were some way to express my appreciation to each of you individually, but I fear I might overlook someone, so I hope this note will reach you all and convey my profound gratitude. All the volunteers deserve thanks not only from me, but anyone who holds this event close to their hearts.

Ruth Meth





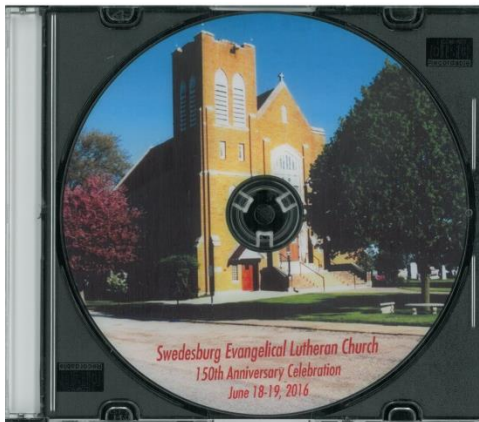
Social Ministry

This quarter Social Ministry Committee is encouraging through March the support of The Fellowship Cup.

To donate please note in the memo of your check “Fellowship Cup” Thank you for your support of this worthwhile mission! Ken Brown, director of The Fellowship Cup, will speak at our February 5th worship.

Women of the ELCA (WELCA)

The Swedesburg WELCA will begin their sewing at the Parish Hall in January. *Everyone is invited to join in.* Their first date for sewing is Wednesday, January 11, 2016 at 9 a.m. There is a potluck lunch at noon.



150th Anniversary Steering Committee

A DVD of the 150th Anniversary celebration on June 18-19, 2016 is available for purchase. These are available for \$5 with a Swedesburg anniversary calendar included for *free*. The DVDs are available in the narthex (entryway).

If you would like a DVD mailed to you, please mail your payment along with \$3 for postage. You may mail your \$8 check to Swedesburg Evangelical Lutheran Church, PO Box 88, Swedesburg, IA 52652. Please let us know if you wish to have a free calendar with the DVD.

Choir 2017 Schedule

Church Choir will practice and sing at church on: January 8, 22; February 5, 12; March 5, 26; and April 9 and 16 for Easter. Everyone is welcome to join in the choir!

News for Ngaeni



Dear pastor how are you. This is Mary my wife. We have two sons and three daughters. Their names are Sophia, Stanley, Jonathan, Happiness, and Ruth. Our first daughter and son are married. Kilango is working with The National Postal Bank after graduated his first degree in social science. Jonathan is a small scale farmer. Happiness is in Dodoma University taking her first degree in Nursing. Ruth our last born is preparing to join secondary education form one. I'm 61 years of age. Mary is 52 years old. I'm expecting to retire by 2020. This is my family and future expectations. Convey my greetings to your family.

Pastor John Kinkoro.

Women's Bible Study

Women's Bible Study meets at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, in the church lower level.

Sunday School

Just a reminder that there will not be Sunday School on January 1.

Stewardship

Each person of confirmation age and older should have completed their own time and talent form and submitted them. If you have not completed these forms, they are needed **immediately**. Later submissions may not be included in the yearbook for time and talents. Lists of duties and other responses are currently being processed.

Children’s Program Manger Tales

Thank you to Becky Rauenbuehler, teachers and all the children for the beautiful performance of “Manger Tales” at the Sunday Worship on December 18. Below are some pictures of the festive presentation.





Christian Education

The Sunday School students created Christmas cards. Below are pictures of the fun.





Worship and Music Committee

The Worship and Music Committee will meet on Wednesday, January 11 at 7 p.m.

Radio Sponsorships Available

This month's weekly radio sponsors are:

January 1 Ralph & Cherry Sandeen

January 8 Mary Benson

January 15 Doug & Donna Deardorff

January 22 Tom & Sharon Miller

January 29 Mike & Jackie Brawner

Thank you for sponsoring the radio broadcast. Opportunities remain to sponsor the radio broadcast during the coming months. A whole week may be sponsored at \$50 or a partial sponsorship costs \$25. Please sign up on the sheet in the narthex (entryway).

If you like to listen to our worship services, you may really enjoy listening to a shortened service each Sunday morning at 11:30 a.m. on the radio at 105.5 KILJ FM.

Our entire hourly weekly *worship service* may be listened to on the church website: **www.swedesburglutheran.org**. Click on “weekly worship services”, and then select “Launch Media Player”. Click on the weekly service you wish to listen to.

Each prior month's *newsletter* is available on our website: www.swedesburglutheran.org. Click on “calendar”, then “newsletter”, and then click any month to read it.

You may see the church calendar on the website. Changes are made to it as they occur. Check out our website!



Giving Voice for Iowa Children and Families Lutheran Day on the Hill

Families living in poverty. Iowa children who go hungry. Former refugees building new lives. These kinds of issues are rarely the center of attention at the Iowa State Capitol. Let's change that! Please consider joining Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) and the three Iowa synods of the ELCA for Lutheran Day on the Hill, an annual day of advocacy in Des Moines to uplift the needs of our neighbors. The event will be held on Tuesday, February 21. Visit www.LSIowa.org/advocacy next month for event details, online registration and an online toolkit for your congregation, including how to participate in this year's congregational letter-writing campaign.

If you are new to advocacy, come learn more about the legislative process and your role as a citizen. If you've attended before, join us again. We hope this year's schedule will also allow you more opportunities to connect with legislators.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at www.LSIowa.org and www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

A New Harmony

Zach has always had a love of the outdoors. In his free time, he can usually be found in his back yard, mowing the lawn or making sure his snow blower is working properly before the first snow. But when Zach began working with his hourly support staff, Shane, he found a new love: music.

Shane is an hourly support staff with LSI's Services for People with Disabilities. Each week, the duo works together to help Zach stay active in

the community, practice his coping skills, and achieve his personal goals. Music therapy has become a major part of their time together. “We play guitar quite a bit,” Shane says. “I think music therapy is very important. It just helps calm the soul down.”

During each session, Shane teaches Zach a few new chords or strumming patterns that Zach can practice on his own. “I know when I’ve had a long, bad day at work, I get kind of angry rather quickly,” Zach says. “If I can, I go to my room and grab my guitar and start strumming some chords. I’m not much of a singer, but I’ve started putting some words with some of the jamming out I do.”

Seeing Zach’s new appreciation for guitar is just one way Shane is constantly inspired to come to work. “A lot of motivation for hourly work is you only have a short amount of time with the individual, and it has to change their life,” he says. “When we can use our time to utilize music like Zach has, it can be a great coping skill, and it’s working for him.”

Thank you’s

We thank you for the prayers, thoughts, emails, cards and memorials given during the illness and death of Jackie's mom. The caring our church family has shown is one our greatest blessings. Thank you again.

Mike and Jackie Brawner

To my wonderful congregation, I cannot thank you enough for your contribution to my education here at Iowa State. It is truly a blessing and an honor that my congregation is supporting the furthering of my education. It means the world to think that my church back home is thinking and supporting me as I continue my path in life. Thank you so very much.

-Alexander Sandeen

On behalf of Young House Family Services, thank you for your recent donation of \$200 to Christamore. We greatly appreciate your kindness! Young House Family Services is grateful for your support and investment in our programs, helping us to make a difference in the lives of children and families.

For over forty years Young House Family Services has reached out to meet the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of children and families in our community. We have established a reputation for delivering high quality, effective services that help families achieve

safety, stability and well-being. It is only possible through the generosity and kindness we depend on from our community partnerships. Thank you.

Sincerely, Shauna Freitag, MSW, Executive Director
Young House Family Services

Thank you so much for your donation of \$200 to Community Action of Southeast Iowa for the food pantry. Today is a critical time for families with which we are working. Families are having a hard time making the decision on whether to pay utilities, rent or to buy food. In Henry County we served over 918 households last year. Of these families, 48% were working and were still living in poverty.

Because of people like you who care, we are able to make life better for families in crisis. Thank you for caring about families who are in need.

Sincerely, Sharon Ford, CCAP, Executive Director
Community Action of Southeast Iowa

Federal Privacy Laws

Because of Federal Privacy Laws (HIPPA), if you or a member of your family are hospitalized and would like the Pastor to visit, please contact the church office at (319) 254-2216, or Pastor Mark at (319) 631-8564.

Save the Date

Lifetouch will be here to take updated pictures for a new photo directory on **March 16, 17, and 18, 2017**. Each family will receive a letter with instructions on how to sign up soon. Sign up will be available onsite in the church narthex (entryway) and online. Watch the postal mail for your letter with details and instructions.

Lost and Found

We found in with the noisy offerings a silver token. It reads 'Angels Touches' and has an angel on it; and found in Pastor's office: one Poinsettia pin.

If either item is yours, contact the office.

We continue to pray for all our church members throughout the year. Each week we will pray for about five church families. **Please pray in January for:**

January 1:

Kirk & Leah Alliman
Carl & Janet Alvine
Karen Alvine
Kent Alvine
Kurt Alvine



January 8:

Malcolm & Glenda Alvine
Arvid & Joan Anderson
Dennis & Janet Anderson
Gary & Sally Anderson
Kim Anderson, Aaron, Hannah, Hayley, Madecyn and Hunter

January 15:

Mathew & Mirra Anson, Lena and Olivia
Luke & Heather Applegate, Kayleigh and Hannah
Joe & Bounmy Baccam
Roger & Marjorie Beckman and Anna
Dane & Karina Beichter and Grace

January 22:

Dustin & Kari Beichter, Khloe and Norah
Eldon & Lennis Beichter
Bradley Benson
Marc & Carmen Benson, Cole and Katie
Mary Benson

January 29:

Megan Bergman
Margaret Bergstrom
Vicky Bergstrom
Waldo Bloom
Marilyn Boal
John & Dawn Bodenham, Adam and Aaron

January Birthdays

We wish the following people a very happy birthday on their special day:

2	Waldo Bloom	21	John Bodenham
	Hannah Anderson	22	Ellie Caboth
3	Renee Ridinger		Jeff Olson
4	Lynn Graf	24	Aani Bourassa
	Joni Manske		Lori Daniel
	Hannah Applegate		Maverick Kerr
5	Susan Hult	26	Jackie Brawner
7	Jaci Peterson		Cyndthia Schrader
10	Peggy Grothe	27	Charlie Frary
	Mike Lund		Megan Jacobson
	Jean Molander	28	Malcolm Alvine
11	Tara Mullin	30	Tom Miller
12	Dawn Bodenham		Marvin Johanson
13	Kristofer Hult		Jessica Renken
	Aurora Hummell	31	Bob McClure
	Rylee Merrifield		Brittan Ostby
16	Jennifer Ehrlich		Melanie Simpson
17	Gwen Richardson		Beth Wells
	Derek Rodgers		
20	Dennis Anderson		
	Suzanne Hult		

January Anniversaries

We wish to offer these couples a happy anniversary:

4	Tom and Karen Wenstrand
11	Dan and Lori Hanze
25	Jim and Janey Lauer

Please help the church office update their records by submitting any birthday, anniversary or any other corrections. Thank you.

CONGREGATION REFLECTIONS

BIRTH:

Congratulations to Neil and Stacy Young on the birth of Kit Margaret-Jo Young born December 5th. Born 7 pounds and 17 1/2 inches. Grandparents are Bill and Jean Molander, Great Grandmother is Margaret Molander and Great Great Aunt is Betty Molander.

MARRIAGE

Kyle Emerson and Kailey Gibbs were united in marriage at Swedesburg on Saturday, December 10. We wish you many blessings!

Evan Honts and Lindsay Oswald were united in marriage on November 28. We wish you many blessings!

PRAY FOR:

- *ELCA missionary Rev. Brian Palmer in Liberia, supported by this congregation.*
- *for Bishop Mjema of the Pare Diocese, Pr. John Kinkoro and people of Ngaeni Lutheran Parish, our partner congregation in Tanzania.*
- *friends and loved ones experiencing health concerns.*

THANKS ARE DUE . . .

- *to the volunteers that assisted in so many ways to provide to the success of the Smorgasbord.*
- *the eleven people who donated blood at the December 13 blood drive.*
- *to Laura Craig, Ella Kann, Emily Kann, Makenzie Mullin and Helen Mullin, that made the bread loaves for the First Communion. There was enough to spare to use for communion on the weeks that we use individual glasses.*

The church wireless password: The church wireless password is: nrde4mxn. We now have internet at the Parish Hall that does NOT require a password.

Swedesburg
evangelicallutheran**church**
planting, nurturing, growing in Christ

1897 140th Street
P. O. Box 88
Swedesburg, IA 52652

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Annual Meeting January 29 after worship

Join us!

Sunday Worship begins at 10 a.m.



website: www.swedesburglutheran.org
email: office@swedesburglutheran.org

