

LIFETIMES

September 2025

From the Pastor



Kai Nilsen
Senior Pastor

We are heading into a new season in our larger community as the state fair closes its annual run, the doors of our schools open, and the lush growth of summer turns to brilliant fall foliage. A new season.

Our preaching theme for the fall, *In This Season*, will invite us to enter deeply into the great paradoxes that are our

life companions as we navigate any new season. There are

seasons of asking and receiving, of community and being alone, of engagement and disengagement, of letting go and holding on. A maturing faith becomes more and more able to hold both extremes at the same time. That's our hope for this community, *In This Season*.

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.
Ecclesiastes 3*

Here are the themes for the upcoming Sundays. The first Sunday in September will draw to a close our current theme, *Grounded in Creation*.

September 7: *Grounded in Creation: Flora & Fauna.*

- The 9:00 Service in the sanctuary will be our ONE full worship service for the day.
- 10:30 Blessing of the Animals: This service will be a short service of blessing for you and your pets. There will be no communion or preaching that service. We will gather outside on the grassy area off of Hodgson Road and thank God for our pets, including a blessing for them. (Incarnation Hall will be our

rain site!) You can bring your pet or bring some other representation of them—a picture or stuffed animal—if they would have a harder time being around other pets. It's the first time we are doing it. It will likely be a little wild and wonderful!

September 14: *In this Season: The Inward and Outward Journey.*

- There will be a blessing for the new school year for children and families at both services.

September 21: *The Installation of Pastor Joy McDonald Coltvat at both services!*

- Pastor Joy will do a children's sermon as our kids through grade 5 begin their year of learning in Children's Ministry.
- Kristina Fruge, Managing Director of the Christensen Center for Vocation at Augsburg University, will be our preacher. Bishop Lull will preside over the Installation.

September 28: *In this Season: Being in Community and Being Alone.*

- During the service, we will also celebrate the work of the Solar Team and the completion of the Solar Installation!

October 5: *In this Season: Engagement & Disengagement*

- Pastor, author, and frequent contributor to the Star Tribune, Angela Denker, will preach on the threat of Christian Nationalism and a hopeful vision of following Jesus in this season.

In This Season will continue through the end of November. This fall will be such an important time for us to be together in community, to immerse ourselves in the Jesus story, and to imagine ourselves as co-creators of a better, more loving world.

And throughout this season, bring a friend!

Peace, Kai



Joy McDonald Coltvet
Pastor for Faith Formation



INCARNATION SMALL GROUPS

It's that time of year when we have a beautiful assortment of new resources for Small Groups—members of the Small Groups Leaders Team will be at a Small Groups table in the Gathering Space after worship on September 7, 14 and 21 with sign-ups and more details for these options. If you'd like to sign up and won't be at Incarnation in person those weeks, please feel welcome to email Grant Rykken at gdrykken@gmail.com or Pastor Joy at jcoltvet@incarnationmn.org

The Way of Love



How do we shape our life in a way that follows Jesus? Explore and try out intentional faith practices that guide us closer to a Christ-centered life. This in person group will use a faith study created by the Episcopal Church with Bishop Michael Curry. You'll see engaging videos that illustrate how others are living out each faith practice creatively in real life today. Join with others in learning about and trying faith practices to deepen your faith. No preparation is needed to participate in this group, a willingness to show up and share as we go through the study together. We'll meet on Wednesdays for 5 sessions beginning October 8 and finishing November 5.

Leaders: Donna Rauch and Deb Morey. Watch a preview video at: [The Way of Love](#).

King Solomon's Ecclesiastes 3 — A Time for Everything Devotional by Dr. Anton Dormer



Complementing our "In This Season" worship theme this September & October, Ecclesiastes 3 is a poetic masterpiece that resonates with the universal human experience. This devotional invites readers into the rich tapestry of life's seasons, offering insights on time management, spiritual growth, and the pursuit of a balanced and purposeful existence. In this small group, we'll notice the complexities of joy and sorrow, work and rest, planting and harvesting. Be guided through the symphony of life's seasons, gaining wisdom on how to navigate each with grace and purpose.

Leader: Emily Schwieters

Our Money Story - Remember, Release & Reimagine



This is our worship theme in November, in the days between All Saints and Advent. Join in this group that will use the Our Money Story Study Journal to explore the focal scriptures through art, reflections and writing prompts.

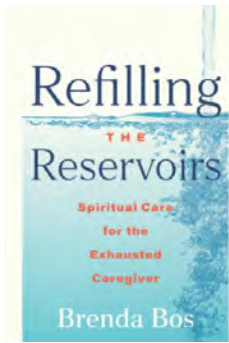
Leader — TBD; Day/time: TBD by interested group—Let us know your preferences.

Grief Group

Offers support for people coping with the death of a loved one. Compassionate support from others is an essential component of the journey of grief. This Grief Group will meet to listen to each other's stories and memories, provide an environment of acceptance, personal growth and resilience, prayer and care for one another.

Leader: Patty Nilsen; Day/time: TBD by interested group—Let us know your preferences.

Refilling the Reservoirs: Spiritual Care for the Exhausted Caregiver by Brenda Bos



Life as a caregiver is hard. There are no easy answers, and hope can feel elusive. Bos, a Lutheran pastor and a fellow caregiver, shares a spiritually grounded message of solidarity stepped in the conviction that God meets us in the hard places—even when it's difficult to see beyond our pain.

Leader: TBD; Day/time: TBD by interested group—Let us know your preferences.

Hungry for Hope: Letters to the Church from Young Adults

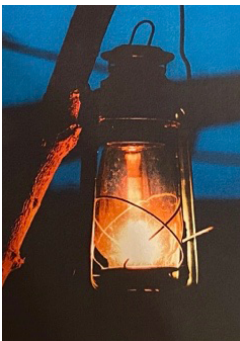


It's more than a book—it's a movement. Born from the stories, struggles and dreams of young adults, the collection of letters speaks to the most pressing issues of our time, including climate change, mental health, marginalization and the pursuit of abundance and intimacy in faith.

*Priority for participants who are 18-30—if you are beyond that age, let us know of your interest but indicate *eager listener*

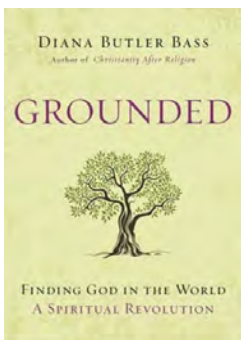
Leader: Mike Sell; Day/time: TBD by interested group—Let us know your preferences.

Advent Group(s) — What Do You Fear? Insisting on hope this Advent



When we find ourselves in fearful times, can we acknowledge our fears while also insisting on hope? This is a booklet that takes seriously the angels' message and trusts that Christ's birth truly is good news of great joy for all people. We'll look closely at the fear and terror looming in the background during the time of Jesus' birth and invites us to consider the fears that we hold now. Fear can divide and paralyze us, and even be used as a tool for oppression. This booklet gently invites us to identify where fear is present—both in the Advent story and in our lives-while also finding our way toward hope. Our hope is not flimsy or fleeting. It's gritty, resilient, and can endure.

Grounded in Creation: Finding God in the World—A Spiritual Revolution by Diana Butler Bass



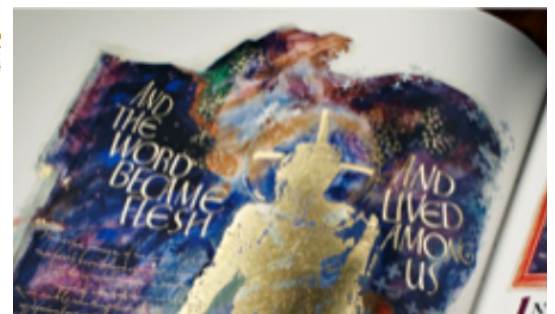
Attentiveness to the question, "Where is God?" takes us on a journey into the spiritual geography of our own lives and finding God in nature and neighbor. An original eco-spirituality with a call toward caring for both the earth and the commons.

Leader: TBD; Day/time: TBD by interested group—Let us know your preferences.



Saint John's Bible Group

Explore the illuminations (artwork) and calligraphy (written text) of The Saint John's Bible. Hear how this illuminated Bible was created and experience the faith practice of Visio Divina. Discover how the illuminations speak to you and to others. *Led by Grant Rykken.*



Preschool Parents Small Group

An invitation will be coming soon — let Pastor Joy know if you are the parent of a preschooler and would like more info about this opportunity.

Are you interested in being a Small Group Leader?

We offer training to those who have not already led groups at Incarnation or are you interested in a group that's not represented here? Let [Grant Rykken](#) or [Pastor Joy](#) know!

Senior Ministry



Patty Nilsen
Senior Ministry Leader

In his 2018 book, *Elders Rising*, author and former Luther Seminary Professor Rollie Martinson states that older adults significantly influence, and in turn, are profoundly shaped by religion. Approximately 42 percent of church members in the United States are sixty-five years or older. More seniors attend worship than

any other age group. They make up huge numbers of congregational volunteers and give generously to their churches. A recent Pew research study revealed that for seniors, faith is a prime factor in their identity, and their faith practices are sources of meaning and hope.

During these first few weeks, I have been delighted to attend small groups and meet with many individuals and senior ministry leaders, listening to their hopes for ministry specific to older adults at Incarnation. Recurrent themes I am hearing relate to navigating life transitions that occur as we age, including finding meaning and purpose in retirement, support during times of grief and loss, companionship during times of illness and isolation, fellowship and fun, and the importance of meaningful service opportunities.

I am thrilled to join the staff team at Incarnation and look forward to getting to know you all better. Look for an announcement regarding dates to join me in September for coffee and conversation to continue this discovery process and begin to turn our ideas into action.

Peace and Joy,
Patty Nilsen

ILC Kids: Help Kids Grow in God's Grace—No Lesson Planning Required!



ILC Kids' Ministry is looking for caring adults to serve with our kids (Preschool – Grade 5) on Sunday mornings or Wednesday evenings.

All lessons and activities will be fully planned — your role is simply to show up, engage with the kids, and help create an

environment where they feel welcomed, safe, and loved.

When & Where:

Sundays from 9:00–10:00 am (during worship)

Wednesdays from 6:00–7:00 pm (Midweek Connect)

The Wednesday evening program uses the same Bible story from Sunday but with new activities, so kids who attend both days will have a fresh experience each time.

Commitment:

Serve weekly, twice a month, or on a rotation — whatever works for your schedule.

September 21, 2025 – April 26, 2026.

Come be part of helping kids connect with God, build friendships, and discover God's love in a fun and meaningful way!

Interested? Email [Lydia Holden](#) to sign up or learn more.



Tracy Strantz
Council President

Our Incarnation Community is ready to wish you well and celebrate with you!

Please join us for the 3rd Annual Block Party on Friday, September 5, from 5–8 PM. It's a free event with great food, live music, inflatables, and more! If you are interested in volunteering, please see the remaining volunteer needs in the [sign-up link](#).

Our ILC Kids programming kicks off with one of my favorite worship services. **The Back to School Blessing will take place during worship on Sunday, September 14.** Please invite your children, grandchildren, etc., to proudly bring their backpacks as we all pray for them as they start another school year. Seeing all those excited faces always makes me smile and remember when it was our kids heading off to school. This picture was from 2009 when Rachel was starting Kindergarten and Cory was starting 3rd grade. Enjoy the ride, parents, the time goes so fast!



We've been seeing the reminders in the stores since July. Back-to-School is right around the corner! We hope all our Incarnation families have enjoyed their summer activities, and students are looking forward to returning to school and our ILC Kids and confirmation programs. Our Incarnation

The Wednesday ILC Kids programming starts Wednesday, September 17, and the Sunday programming starts Sunday, September 21. Both options focus on the same weekly curriculum using different activities. Students may attend one or both. Classroom Guide volunteers are still needed. Anyone who has completed confirmation can participate as a Classroom Guide. Both Cory & Rachel were guides for several years after their confirmations. It's a nice way to mentor youngsters who look up to high school leaders. For those students in the National Honor Society, it's also a great way to log volunteer hours. Please contact Lydia Holden, our Director of Children & Family Ministry, at lydiaholden@incarnationmn.org to learn more about volunteer options to support the CYF Ministry and ILC Kids programs.

We had our 3rd Quarter Council/Congregation Discussion forum on Sunday, August 17. **One of our Three-Year Plan pillars is Deepening Faith, which focuses on innovating ways to encourage spiritual formation across the life stages.** We shared exciting updates on how we are looking to grow the Incarnation Preschool Ministry. If you were unable to join us for the discussion, you may review the materials, which are published on our Council Webpage (right above our Council Member Bios). <https://www.incarnationmn.org/about/council/>

For everyone returning to classroom learning, our K-12 students, college/technical school students, teachers, paraprofessionals, volunteers, our summer interns, our ILC Preschool staff and families, and everyone who supports our students (classroom guides, bus drivers, lunch servers, etc.) we hope you enjoy a wonderful school season ahead and wish you all the best.

We welcome any comments, feedback, or questions you may have for Council. You may connect with us through email at council@incarnationmn.org or come visit us in person at the Welcome Kiosk after Sunday worship services.

Incarnation's Music Ministry Has Opportunities for People of All Ages



Sean Turner
Minister of Worship,
Music & the Arts

Incarnation's Music Ministry has opportunities for people of all ages, offering great ways to use your musical gifts to help lead worship as part of an ensemble and to connect with one another within this faith community. Whether you are an advanced musician or new to music, vocalist or instrumentalist, there is a place for you to use your passions for music to glorify God.

Vocal Choirs

Senior Choir

Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 7:00 – 8:30 PM in the Sanctuary.

The first rehearsal is on September 10. Contact director Sean Turner at sturner@incarnationmn.org for more information and to join.

Joyful Noise (Children's Choir)

Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 5:30 – 6:10 PM in the Fireside Room.

The first rehearsal is on September 17. Children in Grades 1-5 who love to sing are invited to join this joyous singing ensemble. Contact director Kathleen Johnson at kjohnson@incarnationmn.org or Amy Maakestad at amaakestad@incarnationmn.org for more information and to join.

Handbell Ensembles

Alleluia Ringers (Adult)

Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 6:15 – 7:15 PM in the Handbell Room.

The first rehearsal is September 10. Contact director Amy Maakestad at amaakestad@incarnationmn.org for more information and to join.

Bells of Praise

Youth in Grades 5–12

Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 5:30 – 6:10 PM in the Handbell Room.

The first rehearsal is on September 17. Contact director Amy Maakestad at amaakestad@incarnationmn.org for more information and to join.

Grace Notes

Children in Grades 1–5

Rehearsals are on Wednesdays from 4:50 – 5:30 PM in the Handbell Room.

The first rehearsal is on September 17. Contact director Amy Maakestad at amaakestad@incarnationmn.org for more information and to join.

Prime Chimers

Rehearsals are on Mondays from 10:00 – 11:00 AM in the Handbell Room. The first session will be three weeks, September 29 – October 13.

Making music is fun! This group will play hand chimes, sing, and probably laugh while enjoying fellowship, devotions, and light snacks. Our primary purpose is to encounter God's gift of music without the stress of preparing for performance. No music background is necessary, but a desire to learn through experience is a plus. Contact director Amy Maakestad at amaakestad@incarnationmn.org for more information and to join.

Instrumental

ILC Brass Ensemble

The ILC Brass Ensemble is open to brass instrumentalists from an intermediate to advanced level. This ensemble provides musical support for services at specific times throughout the year. We hold rehearsals two weeks in advance of each service date. Contact director Sean Turner at sturner@incarnationmn.org for more information and to join.



BACH SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 20, 2025, 3 PM

Freewill offerings gratefully accepted

Our season begins hosting the Bach Society of Minnesota with a concert featuring beguiling music by Antonio Vivaldi - the "Red Priest" - a mad genius of virtuosity, bringing "follia," craziness, and boundless fun. Vivaldi's love stories were followed with bated breath by his contemporaries—one of his loves, a beautiful singer!

(Performance time: 1 hour, 50 minutes)

Incarnation Lutheran Church
4880 Hodgson Rd, Shoreview, MN 55126
www.incarnationmn.org

INCARNATION
MUSIC SERIES

Volunteers Wanted for Incarnations Feed My Starving Children Action Group

Are you called to serve?



As we wind down the summer of 2025, the FMSC Action Group is jumping into planning for the 2026 All Hands on Hope MobilePack™, which will be held April 22 – April 26, 2026, at Incarnation Lutheran Church.

Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) was founded in 1987 and is a Christian non-profit organization dedicated to seeing all of God's children whole in body and spirit. This is accomplished by providing nutritionally complete meals

specifically formulated for malnourished children. Donations fund the meal ingredients, and volunteers hand-pack the meals. Meals are donated to FMSC food partners around the world who handle distribution. Kids are fed and lives are saved! FMSC has just released its 2024/2025 Annual Report, summarizing its goals and accomplishments. Thank you to all who have contributed to their success!

Incarnation Lutheran Church and FMSC have been in a Ministry Partnership since 2013, and have hosted MobilePacks™ since 2007. During those years, we welcomed more than 33,000 volunteers, packed 9.8 million meals, and fed over 27,000 kids one meal a day for a year.



As we prepare for our 19th MobilePack™, we are looking for volunteers of all ages who are passionate about the FMSC mission who can help us plan and/or execute this exciting event. Specifically, we are looking for those who are called to help recruit and organize volunteers, fundraise, and assist with social media. Our kickoff meeting will be held at Incarnation on September 23 from 5:00 to 6:30 pm. All are welcome to attend this meeting to see if they are interested in helping in any aspect of the planning process. During the meeting, we will conduct a quick review of the 2025 MobilePack™ and brainstorm new ideas to help us fundraise, recruit volunteers, and effectively communicate throughout the year to accomplish

our goals. We are considering developing sub-committees for various tasks, which would streamline tasks and lead to easier scheduling and meeting time management.

If you are interested in attending this meeting (no obligations or commitments required!), please contact [Mike Vant](#). To stay up to date on happenings throughout the year, see the monthly Lifetimes newsletter, weekly worship emails, follow us on the social media channels below, or visit our [web page](#).

Facebook: @IncarnationMobilePack | Instagram: @fm_sc_at_incarnation

Hunger Awareness and Advocacy

Incarnation's Hunger Awareness and Advocacy group continues to meet to learn, support ongoing hunger-related ministries at Incarnation, connect through the [ELCA World Hunger](#) program and [Bread for the World](#), and continuously advocate with local, state and federal officials in support of ending hunger everywhere in god's world. Our study material this year will be the ELCA World Hunger kit for summer Bible school — we will be learning what some congregations use for their summer programming.

We meet monthly, September – May, on the third Tuesday of the month. **Our September gathering is on September 16. We are meeting at 10 AM in the church library** (to avoid dark and wintry nights!) and are always open to new people joining in this effort. Questions? Contact Vernita at: dvkennan@aol.com.

Welcome to the 2024-2025 Kairos season. The Kairos logo, the Jerusalem cross, is a universal symbol for Kairos/God's time. Kairos sessions will be held at 10:15 AM in the Fireside Room.



Presenter: Rev. Dr. Siri Dale Erickson, Learning, Strategy and Experimentation Manager, Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE)

September 21: Hope in Difficult Times: Patriotism, Democracy, and How to Talk Bridgey

The language we use to talk about faith and democracy has the power to make connections and deepen divisions. How do we know what to say to keep hope alive in our relationships and communities? Drawing on the ELCA's newly adopted "Social Statement on Faith and Civic Life" and research from the Civic Language Perceptions Project, she will provide data, insights, and practical tools for employing language to bridge divides in our communities and in our nation.

Prior to her work at PACE, she served for nine years as Chaplain of the College at Gustavus Adolphus College, where she founded the Gustavus Academy for Faith, Science, and Ethics.



Presenter: Rev. Angela Denker, ELCA pastor, author, and Minnesota Tribune columnist

September 28: Confronting Christian Nationalism and Violent Masculinity

Join Angela Denker to discuss the growing popularity and influence of American white Christian Nationalism, its influence on Trump's second term, and the white men and boys in our communities who face radicalization and violent misogyny in media and politics.

She will help us define Christian Nationalism in theological terms, understand its roots, and how it's being weaponized in American politics. She will also offer using the Theology of the Cross as a tool of resistance against Christian Nationalism and a framework for a healthier masculine identity.

Denker's first book, *[Red State Christians](#)*, was the 2019 Silver Foreword Indies award-winner for political and social sciences. Her latest book, ***Disciples of White Jesus***, was released in March. She has shared her research on politics and Christian nationalism in numerous publications, as well as on CNN, BBC, Sky News, and NPR.

2025 Tons of Love for Ralph Reeder

The totals are in, and the 2025 Tons of Love campaign yielded \$22,072 and 1335 pounds of non-perishable donations for the Ralph Reeder Food Shelf! This is a generous response to the needs of our neighbors this year. HUGE THANKS!

While this year's campaign has officially come to a close, food insecurity, unfortunately, has not. Please continue to support the Ralph Reeder Food Shelf and those they serve here in our community.

<https://www.incarnationmn.org/ministries/ministry-partners/ralph-reeder/>



Winter Coat Drive | August 31–October 12

Winter can be a challenging time. Your generosity can help provide warmth and comfort to our neighbors at Solid Ground. We're collecting new or gently used winter gear, including **coats, hats, boots, gloves, snow pants, and scarves**. All sizes are needed!

Monetary donations are also especially helpful for purchasing specific items when we don't have the right sizes. Any unused donations will go to the Alley Shoppe.

Volunteers are needed! If you'd like to help sort and package donations, or assist with our "shopping experience" event for families, please contact [Claire Gilbert](#).

Among the Congregation

PUBLIC PRAYER CONCERNS: Elizabeth Swanson; Shirley Clare; Sue Odell; Karen Stauder; Anna Thorstad; Guy Ahlstrom; Pastor Joy McDonald Coltvet; Kara, Jackson, Michael & Kaitlyn Genia; Jon Nelson; Kate Tollefson & family; Kirsten Blaseck; Carol Beckerleg; Marian Ness; Lowell Odland, Linda Hudepohl, Dan Kratz's nephew; Lynn McGinty's father; Stacy Rodriguez's grandmother; Nicole & Troy Heller's brother-in-law; Kay Leerssen's daughter, Angie Herr; Tom Henk's brother; Deb Rykken's brother; Sue Bernlohr's mother; Mike Wielenberg's mother; Al and Carolyn Ek's son; Kara Johnson's friends Ken & Trish;

Nancy Haugen's friends David, Michelle & family and Colette & family; Kim Wielenberg's friend, Cindy; Dede Mattison's friends, Allan and Yvonne; Caregivers

SYMPATHY TO: Dennis & Kathy Erno on the death of Dennis' twin brother, Donald; Lana Bergin & family on the death of her brother; Denise Floe & family on the death of her father, Glen; Katie Solfest & family on the death of her father

RECENTLY BAPTIZED: Hadley Grace Niemela, daughter of Madeline & Nicholas Niemela

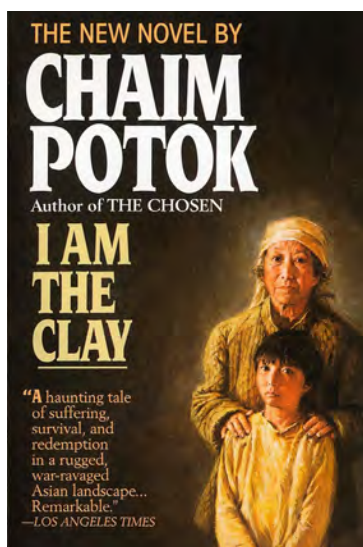
Emergency Response Team (ERT)



The purpose of the Emergency Response Team (ERT) at Incarnation Lutheran Church is to provide leadership, direction and aid during an emergency situation until emergency services arrive. The team is made up of ILC volunteers who have agreed to take a leadership role during an emergency. ERT members who are supporting a service will have a red lanyard on so they are easily identifiable.

Report emergencies that occur during a church service to either a member of the ERT or to an usher, who will then contact the ERT member present. The ERT will start supporting worship services September 7, 2025.

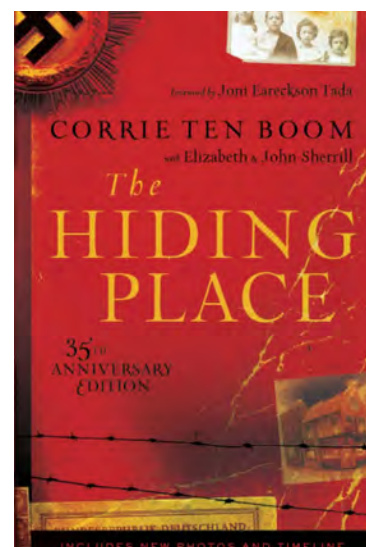
At this time, ERT is not able to cover every service due to being a small team. Additional members are still needed, especially for the 10:30 AM services. Contact the ILC office if you are interested in being a part of the team. Thank you!



The Men's History Group meets on the first and third Tuesday at 9 AM in Bethany Lounge to discuss a non-fiction history book selected by one of the members. Anyone interested in the subject is invited to attend any session, even if you have not read the book of that month. Here are the next books:

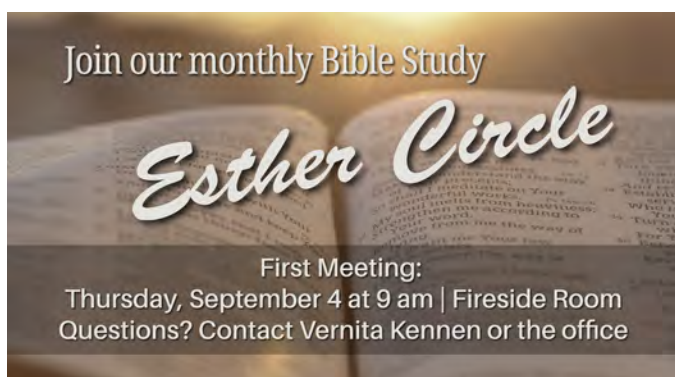
SEPTEMBER — *I Am the Clay* by Chaim Potok is the story of one man's family during the Korean War.

OCTOBER — *The Hiding Place* by Corrie Ten Boom and John and Elizabeth Sherrill. The extraordinary adventure of one courageous Christian woman who became a militant heroine of the anti-Nazi underground.



For more information, contact Jerry Gilbert at dacta49@msn.com.

Bible Study Esther Circle



Women at Incarnation meet monthly (September–May) at 9 AM on the first Thursday of the month for Bible study, using the study material from Gather magazine, a publication of Women of the ELCA. We meet in the Fireside Room, enjoy a morning treat with coffee and conversation, and then study together.

Women in the Esther Circle enjoy being together, support one another, and use our monthly offerings to support agencies/organizations within the church, community, and world.

You would be most welcome to join the women of Esther Circle. This longstanding women's study group has members who have been involved for many years, as well as others who are more recently part of the Incarnation community. No, you don't have to be an Incarnation member to be a part of Esther Circle — just a woman who appreciates studying scripture with other women.

We begin a three-month study of "generosity" during the fall months. Come and learn more on **Thursday, September 4**. Questions? Check with Vernita Kennen at dvkennan@aol.com.

Fresh Produce for Neighbors in Need

As gardening season is about to begin, we want to make you aware of a new donation opportunity to benefit the **Ralph Reeder Food Shelf**. Beginning in June and running through "harvest season" this fall, please consider donating excess garden produce to RRFS. Two options:

1. Bring it to Incarnation on Sunday and place it in the **RRFS Perishable Goods** bin. Volunteers will deliver it to Ralph Reeder Food Shelf on Monday.
2. Bring it directly to the back door of RRFS Mon–Fri between 9 AM & NOON. Do not leave it in the bins outside. Rather, ring the bell to get assistance with the drop-off.

Thank you for sharing your gifts!



Welcome to the Creation Care Corner, information from the Creation Care Action Group. Our hope is to keep you informed about Creation Care projects at Incarnation as well as provide ideas and resources for your own journey in creating a more sustainable world. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact Nancy Stutzman at nancystutzman@comcast.net or Mike Vant at mjvant@gmail.com

Today's Topic: The Environmental Costs of Generative AI

There is an abundance of news today about AI in various contexts. It absolutely is a powerful tool in our world. From healthcare to finance and more, AI is revolutionizing the way our world does business. However, like many new technologies, there are many sides to the growth of AI. One of the issues to consider is the impact the required AI data centers have on the environment. There are at least 11 data centers being proposed in Minnesota, so this is hitting close to home. Data centers consume large quantities of electricity to power networking and storage equipment. Data centers also consume large quantities of water to cool servers. An average Google data center uses 450,000 gallons of water every day. Electronic and toxic waste is a growing problem for these large data centers. Clearly, AI is here to stay and brings with it many benefits. As stewards of God's creation, however, let us be sure that we are balancing care for creation with our use of this technology. Did you know that when you do a "Google" search, you can disable AI for that search simply by adding "-ai" to the end of your search bar? That small action can help save AI uses for really important actions, like reading cancer diagnostic tests and more. As Christians, we are obligated to be aware of the risks of technologies like AI and to be part of the decision-making about caring for our world.

Sources:

<https://news.mit.edu/2025/explained-generative-ai-environmental-impact-0117>

<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2025/05/23/amazon-pulls-back-on-plans-for-large-data-center-in-becker>

<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2025/02/11/water-guzzling-data-centers-spark-worries-for-minnesotas-groundwater>

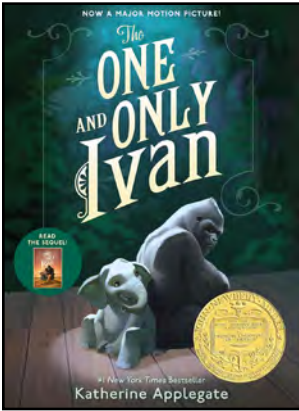
Blood Drive



Incarnation kicked off its third year hosting American Red Cross blood drives on Tuesday, August 12. With the help of our church staff, a devoted cadre of Incarnation member volunteers, and the excellent Red Cross team, our ninth drive was a success. Thank you to everyone in the congregation for your support—it's what makes these events possible.

We've already started recruiting donors for our upcoming drives in November and January 2026. If you're inspired to help save lives by donating blood, you can follow this link to schedule an appointment or call Gil Hartley at 651-270-5376.

<https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?zipSponsor=IncarnationLutheran>



The One and Only Ivan

By Katherine Applegate

These unforgettable novels from renowned author Katherine Applegate celebrate the transformative power of unexpected friendship. Inspired by the true story of a captive gorilla known as Ivan, this illustrated book is told from the point of view of Ivan himself.

Having spent twenty-seven years behind the glass walls of his enclosure in a shopping mall, Ivan has grown accustomed to humans watching him. He hardly ever thinks about his life in the jungle. Instead, Ivan occupies himself with television, his friends Stella and Bob, and painting. But when he meets Ruby, a baby elephant taken from the wild, he is forced to see their home and his art through new eyes.

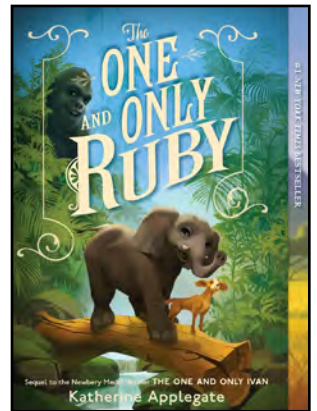


The One and Only Bob

Bob sets out on a dangerous journey in search of his long-lost sister with the help of his two best friends, Ivan and Ruby. As a hurricane approaches and time is running out, Bob finds courage he never knew he had and learns the true meaning of friendship and family.

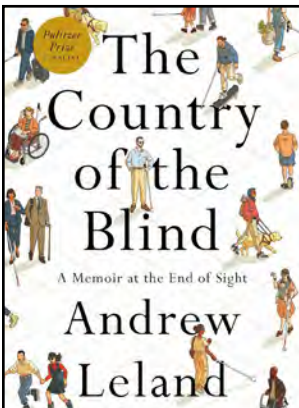
The One and Only Ruby

Ruby's story picks up a few months after the events of *The One and Only Bob*. Now living in a wildlife sanctuary, Ruby's caretaker from the elephant orphanage in Africa, where she grew up, is visiting. Seeing him again brings back



a flood of memories, both happy and sad, of her life before the circus, and she recounts the time she spent in the African savannah to Ivan and Bob.

In the timeless way that only Katherine Applegate could craft, this highly anticipated novel in verse is the perfect mix of heartfelt and humorous, poignant and sweet. Artist Patricia Castelao returns to the world of Ivan and his friends with gorgeous black-and-white interior illustrations to complete the story. *These novels are excellent choices for Tween readers in grades 5 – 8.*



The Country of the Blind: A Memoir at the End of Sight

By Andrew Leland

In *Country of the Blind: A Memoir at the End of Sight*, we meet author Andrew Leland as he's suspended in the state of the soon-to-be blind: he's midway through his life with retinitis pigmentosa, a condition that ushers those who live with it from sightedness to blindness over years, even decades. He grew up with full vision, but starting in his teenage years, his sight began to degrade from the outside in, such that he now sees the world as if through a narrow tube. Soon—but without knowing exactly when—he will likely have no vision left.

Understandably, full of apprehension but with amazing curiosity, Leland embarks on an exploration of what awaits him: not only the physical experience of blindness but also its language, politics, and customs. He has to deal with his changing relationships with his wife and son, and with his own sense of self, as he moves from his mainstream, “typical” life to one with a disability.

Part memoir, part historical and cultural investigation, *The Country of the Blind* represents Leland's determination not to merely survive this transition but to grow from it—to seek out and revel in that which makes blindness enlightening. By the end of the book, you will understand his conclusion, “The process of retinal degeneration has turned out to be one of the most generative experiences of my life.”

Thanks, Boy Scouts, for Cleaning Up the Preschool Playground!

A big thank-you to the Boy Scouts for helping clean up our Preschool playground this summer! They pulled weeds, leveled out the pea gravel, and made everything look great just in time for the start of school.



Shobi's Table Fundraiser



You are invited to Shobi's Table's annual fundraiser! Come and gather to support our pay-as-you-can food truck, one of the Synod's mission development sites. Together we will celebrate how the Shobi's Table community invites everyone around one table to experience God's love.

RSVP at shobistable.org/give/scratch/

"Bring It Home" Dinner and Auction

Solid Ground invites you to attend the **Bring It Home Gala** to support their mission of preventing and ending homelessness. Register now!

<https://www.solidgroundmn.org/sponsorship-opportunities-bring-it-home-dinner-auction/>



Woodworkers Meeting

The Woodworkers' small group will meet on **Tuesday, September 2, at 7:00 PM.** We meet at Dick Trapp's garage, 1045 Lake Oaks Drive, Shoreview. All those interested in woodworking are welcome. No skills or experience are needed. Open discussion and participate as you like.

We honor the memory of loved ones in the memorial gifts given below:

Date Range: 7/20/25 to 8/27/25

Donor	Fund Name	In Memory of:
Gary & Mary Ann Anderson	Memorial - Endowment	Kathleen Currie
Gary & Mary Ann Anderson	Memorial - Endowment	Glen Floe
Jim & Carol Fruehling	Memorial - Small Group Ministry	Glen Floe
Joyce & Erik Tyrrell	Memorial - Small Group Ministry	Glen Floe
Gary & Mary Ann Anderson	Memorial - Endowment	Carolynn Granquist
Jim & Carol Fruehling	Memorial - Esther Circle	Carolynn Granquist
Sue Krabbenhoft	Memorial - Undesignated	Carolynn Granquist
Barbara Bailey	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Steve & Kathy Belor	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Andrew & Katrina Benedict	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Shawna Berg	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Mary Birkeland	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Chris & Marilyn Bretoi	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Linda Brynjulfson	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Audrey Carlson	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Cathy Carter	Memorial - ELCA World Hunger	Ken Grosch
Mary Crawford	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Anne & Dave Cremons	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Luther & Roberta Dale	Memorial - Endowment	Ken Grosch
David & Linda Dehn	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Jerry & Sharon Dufek	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Roger & Susan Eggen	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Laurel Engelmann	Memorial - Global Health Ministries	Ken Grosch
Arvin & Jane Gehrking	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Sue Glennon	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Margaret Grittner	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Paula Harris	Memorial - Global Health Ministries	Ken Grosch
Deb Hartley	Memorial - Global Health Ministries	Ken Grosch
Jerry Hawkins	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Corey & Karen Husu	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Andrea Johnson	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Harry Johnson	Memorial - Endowment	Ken Grosch
Pati Kachel	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Shirley Kangas	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Carol Lacey	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Kay Leerssen	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Jan & Greg LeMay	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Donor	Fund Name	In Memory of:
Mary Lou Lindholm	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch

Gary & Mary Lunstad	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Wendy Magnuson	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Dede Mattison	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Rodger & Marcia McCombs	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Steve & Kris McCormack	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Carol Mickelson	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
John Miller	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Al Montgomery & Janet Karvonen-Montgomery	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Marlys J. Nelson	Memorial - Worship Music	Ken Grosch
Terry & Ruth Nordal	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Gerald & Mollie Nugent	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Lowell & Evie Odland	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Madison & Nancy Overmoen	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Ken & Connie Pederson	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Frank & Nancy Petersen	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Don & Wanda Peterson	Memorial - Undesignated	Ken Grosch
Larrie & Lou Ann Reese	Memorial - Worship Music	Ken Grosch
Mark & Liv Rosin	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Joseph & Arlen Rystrom	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Roger & Mary Schlichting	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Georgia Schultz	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Ron Sermon & Beth Hanson	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Sonja Sherburne	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
John & Kathy St. Martin	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Wyatt & Lynnett Stahl	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Dave & Sharon Stocker	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Dan & Tracy Strantz	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Lynda Thompson	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Paul & Ruth Tillquist	Memorial - Worship Music	Ken Grosch
Ted & Sharon Trahan	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Dick & Jane Trapp	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Unknown Donor	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Don & Claudia Wiebold	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Larry & Donna Wipf	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
David Yarusso	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Donna Yates	Memorial - Operating	Ken Grosch
Don Alsop	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Gary & Mary Ann Anderson	Memorial - Endowment	Jan Kuhrmeyer
George & Connie Aram	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Mary Birkeland	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Mary Blanchard	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Luther & Roberta Dale	Memorial - Endowment	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Bill & Kareen Ecklund	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Jim & Carol Fruehling	Memorial - Endowment	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Rosalie Grosch	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Marin & Kevin Hansch	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Donor	Fund Name	In Memory of:
Paula Harris	Memorial - Operating	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Bob & Bonnie Holewa	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer

Nicole Husnik	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Multiple Cash Donors	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Dan & Kathy Kvinge	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Robert & Jean Mallory	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Don & Martie Martin	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Sara McFee	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Jim & Julie Meinen	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Cathy Nelson	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Jon & Jill Nelson	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Marlys J. Nelson	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Steve & Bev Ogren	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Madison & Nancy Overmoen	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Linda Perske	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Thomas & Pamela Rasmussen	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Murt Seltz	Memorial - Mortgage	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Dan Stauder	Memorial - Undesignated	Jan Kuhrmeyer
Larrie & Lou Ann Reese	Memorial - Worship Music	Mike Miller
Larrie & Lou Ann Reese	Memorial - Worship Music	Roy Nilsen
Larrie & Lou Ann Reese	Memorial - Worship Music	Wayne Quehl

The list above reflects the donations that were made payable (or endorsed/transferred) to Incarnation Lutheran Church in memory of someone. Memorials are applied to whatever fund the donor designates.

If not designated, sometimes the family requests which fund they would like the memorials designated to. Note: If a memorial gift is received and the check isn't written out to Incarnation Lutheran Church, it will be forwarded directly to the organization that the check was made payable to. Those memorials are typically acknowledged by the organization that receives the donation.

Financial Report

Finance Report July 2025

July Actual Operating & Mortgage Revenue	\$182,763	YTD Actual Ops & Mortgage Revenue	\$1,427,185	YTD Budgeted Operating & Mortgage Revenue	\$1,524,942
July Actual Operating & Mortgage Expense	\$205,452	YTD Actual Ops & Mortgage Expense	\$1,578,917	YTD Budgeted Operating & Mortgage Expense	\$1,572,447
OPERATING TOTALS	-\$22,689		-\$151,732		-\$47,504