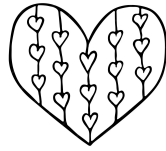


Mustard Seed

February 2026



Rick's Ramblings...

To the congregations, members, and friends of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Minnesota: We, the six ELCA bishops in the state of Minnesota, are writing today with a word we hope will anchor and sustain all of us in the days to come. In recent weeks, several thousand ICE and Border Patrol agents have been sent to our state. Their tactics of stopping and questioning our neighbors and their aggressive interactions with the communities where we live have caused fear and anxiety. We grieve the killing of Renee Good on January 7. All of this comes after other experiences of devastating violence in recent months and years. We are tired, and our hearts are broken. Yet we are not deterred. At every act of violence, we have seen you respond with compassion and resilience. This has been a season marked by profound grief. It is also a season in which we have refused to be defined by what the baptismal liturgy names as "the forces that defy God." To our pastors, deacons, chaplains and ministry leaders, we say this: we are with you. We give thanks for your faithful leadership, for your courage and discernment, and for all the ways you live into the vocation we share. Dear friends, we believe you have been called and anointed for ministry in this time and place. It is our honor to serve with you. To all members of our congregations, and our neighbors throughout Minnesota, we say this: we commit ourselves to continue to pray, to advocate and act alongside you, and to use the resources and gifts we have to work toward the fulfillment of the reign of God, so that all may know the abundance of life Jesus comes to give (John 10:10). We encourage you to remain connected to one another and actively support the efforts in your communities to meet the needs of those directly impacted in this time of fear and intimidation. This past Sunday, congregations across our state marked the Baptism of our Lord. It is a celebration and remembrance of the moment when Jesus himself was baptized, and the voice of God broke through the heavens to declare, "This is my Son, the beloved, with him I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). We believe the voice of God still speaks. We know that all our neighbors bear the image of God. Through the waters of baptism, we have been named and claimed as beloved children of God. It is our sure confidence in this truth that sustains us. We know we are God's children, and we know that you are, too. We pray that this truth will continue to anchor, guide and compel all of us as we work for justice for all people in every place. We also know there are voices around us that challenge the truth of who we are and who our neighbors are. It is our fervent hope that every one of us would remain deeply rooted in our identity as God's beloved.

To that end, we write with a word of encouragement: go to church or your place of worship, ground yourselves in Scripture, and surround yourselves with those who will echo the voice of God for you. This is the nourishment that will sustain us. Along with Presiding Bishop Curry, we "join calls for a thorough investigation into this case, accountability for the shooting and a de-escalation of ICE enforcement across the United States." When the challenges that surround us are overwhelming, we cling to what is true. We serve a God who sees us and who enters into the beauty and messiness of human life in the person of Jesus the Christ. Because of what God in Christ has done, we know that God is with us and we are not alone (Romans 8:38-39). Until the day the reign of God arrives in full, we continue to work for justice and peace, grounded in prayer, rooted in Scripture, and compelled by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In sure and confident hope, Bishop Regina Hassanally Southeastern Minnesota Synod, Bishop Patricia Lull Saint Paul Area Synod, Bishop Jen Nagel Minneapolis Area Synod, Bishop Amy Odgren Northeastern Minnesota Synod, Bishop Dee Pederson Southwestern Minnesota Synod, Bishop Bill Tesch Northwestern Minnesota Synod

February Happenings

February 8	Annual Meeting 10:30AM
February 10	Quilting 9-11AM
February 11	Bible Study 6PM
February 14	Valentine's Day
February 16	President's Day
February 17	Mutual Ministry 5PM Council Meeting 6PM
February 18	Quilting 1-3PM
February 22	100 Year Anniversary Service New Member Installation
February 26	Bethany's 100 Year Anniversary

Birthdays and Anniversaries

February 3	Jim Ellingson	Birthday
February 13	Mark & Michelle Anderson	Anniversary
February 19	Joan Straw	Birthday
February 26	Arden Virnig	Birthday



Sunday Helpers

February 1) Hosts: Dakota & Haylee Lector: Haylee Communion Asst.: Dakota & Haylee Counters: Dakota & Judy W.	February 8) Hosts: Dixie & Bruce Lector: Dixie Communion Asst.: Dixie & Bruce Counters: Bruce & Patti W.
February 15) Hosts: Mark & Michelle Lector: Mark Communion Asst.: Mark & Michelle Counters: Dakota & Judy V.	February 22) Hosts: Patti W. & Bella Lector: Colleen Communion Asst.: Patti W. & Bella Counters: Patti W. & Velma

Council positions

The Bethany Lutheran Church council has 2 council seats open. It entails volunteering at events, voting on issues, and being a face of our church community! If you are interested or have questions please talk to Michelle, our council president, or Vicar Rick.

New Website

Check out our website! We revamped the website with a new look and some new features! You can now send us messages and prayer requests right from the website. We will also be adding a live stream feature in the near future so that you can watch Sunday services anywhere! Use this URL to check it out;

<https://www.onamiabethanylutheran.org>

Annual Meeting

Bethany's annual meeting will take place after service on February 8th. The meeting will go over things such as reports, financials, last year, and the upcoming year.

Tickling Churches to Life

About 10 o'clock one cold February morning a man was in bed sound asleep. His mother came into the room.

"Son, it's time to wake up, you gotta get ready for church," she implored.

"I'm too tired, leave me alone," he said.

"Son, you gotta get up and get ready for church."

"I'm not going to church. Give me one good reason why I have to go to church." he protested.

"I'll give you two good reasons to go. One: it's Sunday. Two: you're the pastor!"

-Deacon William McAvoy

On a very cold, snowy Sunday in February, only the pastor and a farmer arrived at the village church. The pastor says, "Well I guess we won't have a service today."

The farmer replied, "Heck if only one cow shows up at feeding time, I feed it."

The pastor obliged and did the entire service. As the farmer was leaving the pastor shook his hand and said, "How did I do?"

"It was okay", the farmer said, "but if only one cow shows up at feeding time I don't drop the full load on it."

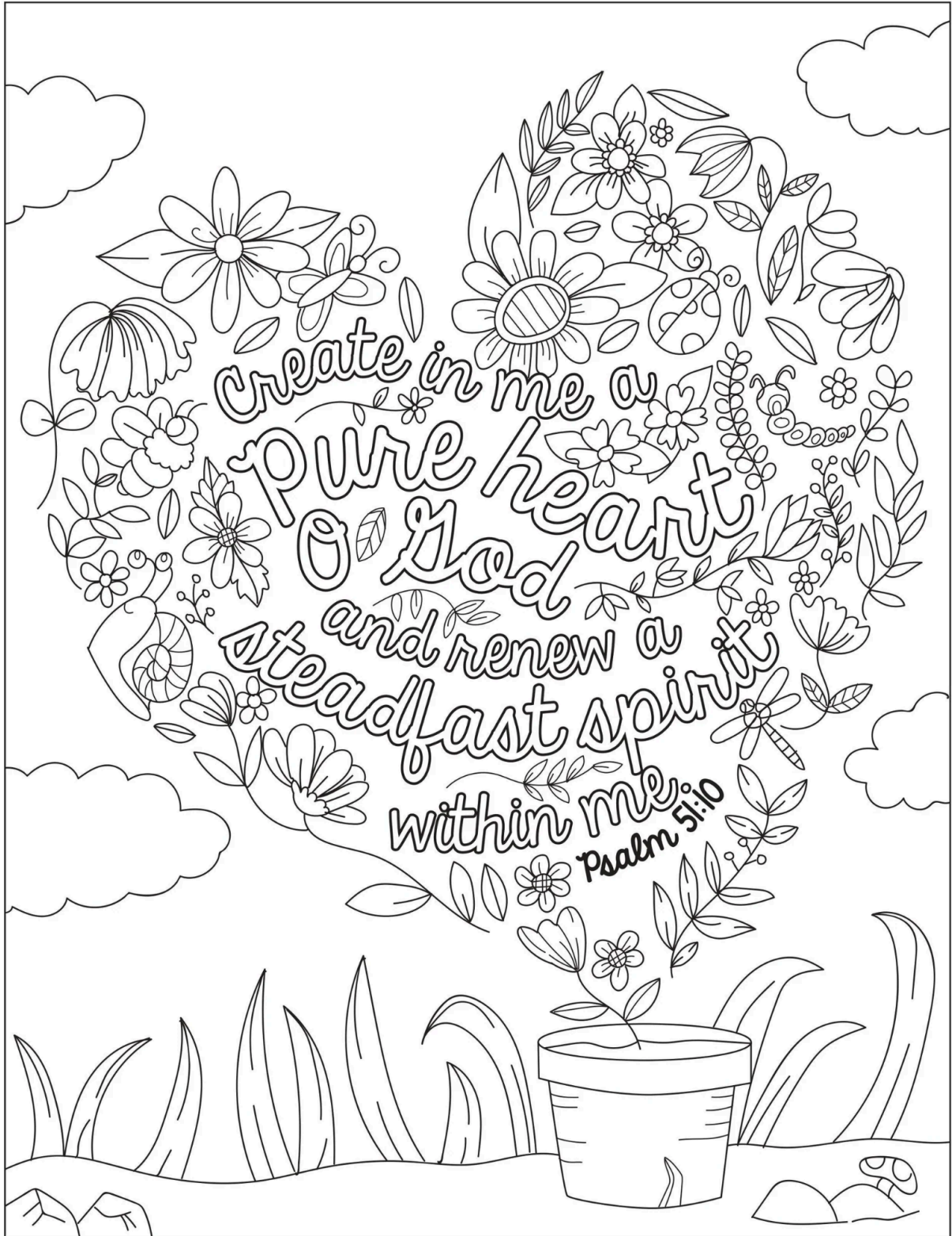
-Roland E. Leese

When God was creating the animals, a group of angels remarked that it looked like fun, so God let them form a committee and create one animal. The committee created the platypus- an animal with the bill of a duck, the fur of an otter, the tail of a beaver, and the feet of a frog.

"Enough!" said God, and ever since then there have been no committees in heaven.

-Msgr. Joseph P. Dooley





Create in me a
pure heart
O God
and renew a
steadfast spirit
within me:
Psalm 51:10