



## Country Chronicles March 2026

Cannon River and  
Cross of Christ Lutheran  
Parish, ELCA

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It's no accident that we start each Lenten season with the story of Jesus in the wilderness tempted by Satan for forty days and nights. It is from this story of privation that our own 40-day Lenten journey comes (it's actually 46 days if you count the Sundays, but that's a story for another day).

This idea of wilderness testing and trying those who enter it is a narrative arc we see again and again in scripture. Wilderness is a scary place filled with dangerous creatures, scarce resources and seen as a desolate unforgiving environment. It is however also the place where things come into focus, a prophet's mission is made clear, a people is formed around a holy mountain. When God's people are in those wilderness places we are renewed, transformed, broken down and remade.

Lent then for us today cannot and should not be a reset of our new year's resolutions, nor should it be a miserable trudge of self-flagellation wallowing in self-hatred or impenetrable despair. Instead, it is a wilderness time that is not without its hardships of course, we are facing down our sin and its consequences after all. But this journey is also one of self-discovery and renewal, of letting go of what was and embracing what will be. That's the

funny thing about new life, you must die first. We need those wilderness places to challenge us to grapple with what is broken, die to those things, so that with Jesus we can be raised on that resurrection morning. Blessings on your wilderness journey.

As Ever in Christ,

Pastor CJ

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*Contact Information for Pastor CJ Boettcher:*  
*Church Phone: 651-388-3464 Cell Phone: 920-858-7066*  
*Email: pastor@cccchurch.com*

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### **The Grief Lectionary: A Lenten Journey**

Our Lenten experience continues with the resource entitled the Grief Lectionary authored by Rev. Collette Broady Grunde. The theme texts for each session will be used in our time of midweek worship and then be the focus of a bible study at the conclusion of the service (around an hour in length). The Grief Lectionary is informed by the author's own experience with grief and the value she has found in the exploration of grief throughout scripture. The remaining schedule is as follows:

**Wednesday March 4th** (Cannon River): 6:30PM Service, 7:15PM Session 3 Elijah's Depression

**Wednesday March 11th** (Cross of Christ): 5:30PM Soup Supper, 6:30PM Service, 7:15PM Session 4 Ruth and the Grieving

**Wednesday March 18th:** (Cannon River): 6:30PM Service, 7:15PM Session 5 Jesus' suffering and Acceptance of Death

**Wednesday March 25th** (Cross of Christ): 5:30PM Soup Supper, 6:30PM Service, 7:15PM Session 6 Resurrection and Making Meaning

Maundy Thursday- **7:00pm, Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>** at Cannon River

Good Friday Service- **7:00pm, Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>** at Cross of Christ

Easter Sunday Service:  
**9am at Cannon River**  
**10:30am at Cross of Christ**

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### **Women's Connection Event**



We will be playing Bingo with the Residents at Potter Ridge located in Red Wing.

Date: **Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>**

Time: Be at Potter Ridge **by 1:45 pm.**

(Bingo starts at 2pm and lasts about 1 hr.)

Location: 1971 Neal Street, Red Wing, MN

After Bingo, we will gather at Shirley Hanson's apartment for desert and fellowship. We had a great time last year doing this activity, it was requested to do it again! Come join in on the fun and fellowship! If you have any questions, contact Cheryl Fox 651-755-7807.

### **Mark the Date: Upcoming Women's Connection**

**Event** Hope and Harbor is a nonprofit organization serving individuals and families in Goodhue County who are experiencing homelessness or other forms of instability. Through our rotating cold-weather homeless shelter, The Next Step Community Resource Center and the Community Care Fund, we will provide safe shelter, connection to resources, and financial assistance to help our neighbors move toward stability and self-sufficiency. -*Kenzie Reuter, Executive Director*

Join us on **Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>** after service for a short awareness outreach activity with light refreshments. All member welcome!

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## Women's Connection Group: Planning Party Summary

The Women's Connection Group kicked off the year with a lively and creative Planning Party—lead by Cheryl Fox. Women shared ideas on post it notes with an openness to dream together. They shared their suggestions aloud, with no judgment and plenty of encouragement.

Once all the ideas were announced, we grouped them into broad themes. Then came the voting round: each participant received five stickers to mark her top choices. In just 90 minutes, the room buzzed with energy, laughter, and collaboration—and together we filled the calendar with **seven meaningful activities for the year ahead**. Cheryl did an excellent job!

Each activity now has a designated point person who will help bring the event to life. These leaders may reach out to other women for support with the faith component, food, or other details. When they do, we hope you'll join in. Your gifts, presence, and creativity help make these gatherings warm, welcoming, and spiritually rich.

Janet Daley announced she would like to step back from the facilitator role within the next year or so, to allow someone 'younger' to provide leadership and would be happy to mentor someone. Use of the rotating monthly micro-leadership roles, combined with an annual planning party, is designed to be practical and sustainable—ensuring no one feels overwhelmed or stuck with the responsibility long-term.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the February meeting! Your contributions are recognized and valued. This year's Women's Connection Group calendar is truly a shared creation—and we can't wait to see how these events bless our church and community. Gather doable ideas for 2027 and don't miss out on next year's planning party!

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# Cannon River News

*Faith and Family first, helping others along the way.*

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## Attendance

February 1 <sup>st</sup>	12
February 8 <sup>th</sup>	14
February 15 <sup>th</sup>	17
February 22 <sup>nd</sup>	18

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## Financial Report

	Income	Expenses	Net
Jan	\$2,153	\$4,174	(\$2,021)
<b>Year to Date</b>	<b>\$2,153</b>	<b>\$4,174</b>	<b>(\$2,021)</b>

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## Coffee Church

Join us for Coffee Church on Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>. Fellowship will start at 8am and service at 9am. Hope you can join us.



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**Website-**Cannon River now has a website! Go check it out at: [www.cannonriverluth.org](http://www.cannonriverluth.org). It continues to be a work in progress. Let us know what you think and how it might improve. Thank you to everyone who contributed photos, verbiage and support in the process! Pastor CJ

Cannon River Lutheran Church  
Church Council Meeting  
February 15, 2026

The Cannon River Church Council met on February 15, 2026, at Cannon River Lutheran Church following the Annual Meeting. Members present were Les Anderson, Ellen Hartman, David Fremouw, John Niebur, Robert Klahr, Barbara Flynn and Pastor CJ.

Meeting was called to order by President Ellen Hartman.

**PASTORS REPORT:**

The person that is checking Cross of Christ's audio/visual equipment will also check out Cannon River's.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Both upstairs and downstairs pianos have been tuned.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

A stack pipe leaks when the air conditioner is running. Rick received a bid from Sellner Plumbing to repair the problem for \$2,370. Les and David are going to cut out the concrete and check it out.

Sellner also gave us a bid regarding the pressure tank. Rick replaced the gauge, but it did not solve the issue. Les will try to pressurize the tank. If this does not work Robert, David and Les will replace the tank.

**NEXT MEETING:**

Next meeting to be held on April 14, 2026, at Cross of Christ following the 6:30 Joint Council meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Flynn

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## **Cross of Christ News**

*We are called by the Spirit to be a lasting presence in our community, faithfully sharing the Word of God through worship, fellowship and service to our neighbors.*

***Faithful through Generations***

Assistants for March 2026

### **Readers**

March 1 <sup>st</sup>	Joan Slingsby
March 8 <sup>th</sup>	Jean Kehren
March 15 <sup>th</sup>	Doris Gruber
March 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Contemporary Service</b>
March 29 <sup>th</sup>	<b>OPEN</b>

### **Greeters**

March 1 <sup>st</sup>	Mary Fjetland
March 8 <sup>th</sup>	Alex Kitzmann
March 15 <sup>th</sup>	Doris Gruber
March 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Bob & Sandy Luhman
March 29 <sup>th</sup>	<b>OPEN</b>

### **Altar Committee**

Mar. 1 <sup>st</sup>	Cheryl
Mar. 8 <sup>th</sup>	Cathy
Mar. 15 <sup>th</sup>	Joan
Mar. 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Kelley
Mar. 29 <sup>th</sup>	Kelley

### **Council Person**

Anthony Nemcek

### **March Ushers**

Cheryl & Darwin Fox, Duke Bjorklund, Ken & Joan Slingsby

### **Kitchen Person**

Sandi Petrashek

**Kwik Trip Cards** Help support our Building Maintenance Fund by buying Kwik Trip scrip cards. **GROCERY ONLY CARDS** the church makes 15% on the purchase of these cards. The church makes 5% on the purchase of the usual gas and gift cards, which can be used to purchase anything at Kwik Trip from gas, groceries, and car washes to anything else they sell. Both are available in \$10, \$20, \$25, \$50, and \$100. You pay the amount of the card being purchased. Contact Julie Schreifels to purchase at [hjschreif@live.com](mailto:hjschreif@live.com) or 507-990-7024. **The next order will be put in on Tuesday, March 17th and will be available during church on Sunday, March 22nd.** Thank you to those who have ordered Kwik Trip Cards. Julie

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## **Missions**

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*Some call it Mission work . . .it's also called "Loving Others"*

We continue our paper bag collection in the back of the church. These are taken to **Hastings Family Service** where they have a great need for bags for their produce delivery!



## **Souper Bowl-Soup Collection**

Thank you for the great support of our "souper bowl" food shelf collection ! We were able to donate a total of 100 cans/ packages of soup. This was divided equally and delivered to food shelves in Red Wing and Hastings

## **Group Planning Meeting**

There will be a group planning meeting following church on **March 8**. Participation from WELCA, Sunday School, and Missions committee is most welcome. Also anyone interested in learning more about missions is welcome to attend! Bring any plans already in place for the year and possible ideas for projects we can work on together.

## Learning & Youth

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In February, we switched lessons due to the cold weather cancellation on January 25th. We felt that the lesson United in Christ was an important lesson in

these times. The basis was to keep us united, no matter what our trials may be. *1*

*Corinthians 1:10*

Brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: Agree with each other and don't be divided into rival groups. On February 8th, we had an early Valentine's with a special edition of



Sunday Funday. The kids also sang during Church. We ended the month at the beginning, with Adam and Eve.

### Schedule

03/01/2026 - Lesson: Jesus and Nicodemus

**03/08/2026 - Spring Break no Sunday School**

**03/15/2026 - Spring Break no Sunday School**

03/29/2026 - Palm Sunday - Sunday Funday Easter Edition –

**\*\* Sing in Church \*\***

Thanks,  
The Fox's

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The next WELCA meeting will be on ***THURSDAY, March 12<sup>th</sup> 7:00 pm. Dahlen Hall.*** We will discuss the March Blood Drives, review the Women's Retreat and updates regarding the Spring Event and triennial.

**Red Cross Blood Drive:** Our next drive is scheduled for **Thursday, March 5 12:00-6:00 and Friday, March 6, 8:30 am–2:30 pm.** Schedule your appointment at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org), 800-REDCROSS or use your blood ap. [welchmn](http://welchmn) to schedule an appointment. Thanks to all of our donors and volunteers.

**2026 Cannon River Spring Event/Salad Luncheon:** We will be hosting the spring event and combining it with our annual spring salad luncheon on April 25, 2026. **All women from Cross of Christ are asked to provide a LARGE salad or two if you can. If you would like to provide a dessert as well, please contact Julie Schreifels or Joan Slingsby. We will need help with set up and serving and Clean-up, please contact Doris Gruber or Julie to sign up.**

There will be two parts: The business meeting for the Cannon River Women of the ELCA 8:50-9:45, a break, then the main program starting at 10:00. If you want to attend the entire day, please fill out the registration form attached to the flyer. Our WELCA will pay the fee.

Bruce and Brenda Blair will be presenting the program "Village Partnership for Education" based on their mission in Sierra Leone. We have a trio of singers for our musical enjoyment.

**Love Offering Donations to:** *Village Partnership & First Choice Village Partnership:* dry erase markers, ABC cards, chalk & chalk board erasers, pencils, men's and women's underwear for the teachers (size: medium)

**For First Choice:** Baby Hygiene products: Body wash/shampoo diaper rash cream, Unscented wipes, Clothing 18 months to 5 yrs, Hooded towels and washcloths, gift cards to Target, Walmart or Amazon so they can purchase large baby items, **Clinic supplies** toilet paper, paper towels, disinfecting wipes, copier paper

**The 13th Triennial Gathering** is scheduled for July 16-19, 2026 in Des Moines, Iowa. The theme is “I am Worthy”. Check it out at <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/new-triennial-event-page> you can register on the website if you wish to attend. Janet, Doris, Tracy, Kelley, and Julie have completed the early registered. We will travel by charter bus.

**Future Events:**

**Red Cross Blood Drive: Thursday, March 5, 12:00-6:00 pm & Friday, March 6, 8:30 am–2:30 pm**

**2026 Cannon River Spring Event/Salad Luncheon:** April 25, 2026, 8:00 am-12:00 pm Cross of Christ

**The 13th Triennial Gathering:** July 16-19, 2026, in Des Moines, Iowa.

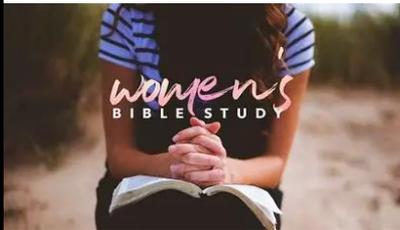
*Officers: President: Julie Schreifels Secretary: Joan Slingsby  
Treasurer: Jean Kehren*

*Julie Schreifels cell phone: 507-990-7024 email [hjschreif@live.com](mailto:hjschreif@live.com)*

Current **Funeral Committee** members: Doris Gruber, Jackie Martin, Patty Fox, Kim Chandler and Janelle Lahr.

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**WELCA Bible Study**



WELCA Bible study will meet on **Tuesday, March 10th at 9:00** in Dahlen Hall. We will continue our study of stewardship focusing on “How do we tend our treasure?” No homework required ! Study guides are provided.

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Women of the ELCA 

Cannon River Conference Spring Event &  
Salad Luncheon

Saturday April 25, 2026, 8:00-Noon  
Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Welch, MN

*Village Partnership for Education*



Speakers Bruce and Brenda Blair will share their experiences working with the Village of Mondema in Sierra Leone West Africa and helping them convert a vacant church building to this new Center for Education.

**8:00-8:50 - Registration, Coffee and Display Tables**

**This year's offerings will be distributed among:**

Good Earth Village, Churchwide-Women of the ELCA, Lutheran Campus Ministries - Winona, Crossroads Campus Ministries - Mankato, Village Partnership, & First Choice

**Love Offering Donations to:** *Village Partnership & First Choice*

**Village Partnership:** dry erase markers, ABC cards, chalk & chalk board erasers, pencils, men's and women's underwear for the teachers (size: medium)

**For First Choice:** Baby Hygiene products: Body wash/shampoo diaper rash cream, Unscented wipes, Clothing 18 months to 5 yrs, Hooded towels and washcloths, gift cards to Target, Walmart or Amazon so they can purchase large baby items, **Clinic supplies** toilet paper, paper towels, disinfecting wipes, copier paper

Please use the attached form to Register by April 15

Walk-ins welcome

Registration Form Cannon River Conference Spring Event  
Saturday, April 25, 2026, 8:00-Noon  
To be Held at Cross of Christ Lutheran Church, Welch, MN

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Home Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

List food/diet restrictions \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-Registration Preferred by April 15 - Walk-ins Welcome  
Registration fee- \$15.00 Checks to SEMN Synod WELCA  
Mail to: Kelley Mittelsteadt Cross of Christ Lutheran Church  
24036 County 7 Blvd.  
Welch, MN 55089

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Cross of Christ  
Council Meeting Minutes  
February 10, 2026

Present: Anthony Nemcek, Jim Gustafson, Jeff Meyer, Sherril Bjornson, Barb Peiffer, Hans Schreifels, Darwin Fox, Ross Nelson, and Pastor CJ Boettcher.

Meeting was called to order by Anthony Nemcek and the mission statement was read.

The meeting agenda was approved with changes and the January meeting minutes were approved as written.

**Unfinished Business**

\* **Pastor's Report** – Pastor CJ reported on the upcoming Lenten season, meetings he and Janet Daley have been having with Pastor Emily Carson at the Synod office about work related to vision and vitality of our church, bible studies being held at Tinta

Wita and Hasting Senior Health and Living Center, as well as upcoming events related to first communion and confirmation. Paster also reported that Audio Visual Electronics will be visiting the church to determine what is feasible for A/V upgrades. United Lutheran in Red Wing has used this group.

**\*Financial Secretary Position** – Anthony Nemcek received quotes for bookkeeping and payroll services through Clergy Financial Resources. This company is based in Maple Grove and works with over 100 churches to provide bookkeeping, payroll, and other financial services. Based on the church’s financials, they quoted an hourly rate of \$120 with a not-to-exceed monthly rate of \$480 for the bookkeeping piece and \$138/month for payroll. This does not include donation tracking and requires a point person to notify the bookkeeper of the allocation of specific deposits or bills that need to be paid. The church currently budgets \$760/month for the financial secretary position.

Deanna indicated she would be willing to take this on. A motion was made and passed to engage the services of Clergy Financial Resources and to approve compensation of \$250/month for Deanna to be the point of contact and to track giving.

As part of this conversation, giving envelopes were discussed. It has been a few years since personal giving envelopes were ordered. There are envelopes at the back of the church for those who wish to give in the collection plate. So long as there is a name written on the envelope or a check is used to give, the offering will be allocated to the giver.

### **New Business**

**\* March Council Person - Anthony Nemcek.**

\* **Election of Officers** – The Council elected the following as officers:

President:	Anthony Nemcek
Vice President:	Darwin Fox
Secretary:	Jim Gustafson

\* **Siding** – Council discussed next steps for the siding project. A taskforce to identify the scope of work and to review bids, including requesting updated bids as needed, was created with the members being: Oscar Daley, Hans Schreifels, Ross Nelson, Darwin Fox, and Jeff Meyer. It is expected that the specifics of the project will be determined within the next 2-3 months, at which time a congregational vote to move forward will occur. Anthony Nemcek reported an updated balance on the Dahlen Hall Exterior fund of \$23,434.41. This will be updated in the fund balance report going forward.

\* **Church Calendar** – Because our church is seeing more activity, it is important that events are not double booked. The use of a centralized calendar, or the development of a process for confirming dates of events was discussed. Anthony Nemcek will brainstorm ideas with the church secretary about how to best achieve the goal of ensuring events are not double-booked.

\* **Accessibility** – The Council discussed how to move forward with making use of the remaining funds in the kitchen/accessibility special fund. A task force like the one created for the Dahlen Hall kitchen/bathroom project and the siding project would be necessary to scope the project and get bids. Council expects this to begin in earnest later in the year but understands there is a sense of urgency surrounding this project.

### **Committee Reports**

\***Finance** – Council reviewed and approved the financial reports as written. There was discussion about providing updated giving statements to people who received incorrect statements. Anthony Nemcek will work with the financial secretary before her time with the church is up to get those out ahead of tax time.

\*Property Management – The line to the septic at the parsonage froze and was backing up. Pastor called Red Wing Plumbing to come out and they took care of the issue. The invoice will be sent to the church. A window on the porch needs replacing along with the screen.

\*Worship & Music – As stated in Pastor’s report, Audio Visual Electronics will be visiting the church to determine how best to upgrade the sound system and make improvements to the A/V technology.

\*Learning and Youth – The first communion class will be on 2/22 with First Communion Sunday falling on 3/1. Joan Slingsby and Mary Fjetland will help the students bake the communion bread that will be used for first communion. There are 3 students joining our communion table this year. Confirmation Sunday will be on 5/10, with the banquet held the Sunday before at 5:00 p.m. in Dahlen Hall.

\*Service and Witness – Pastor and Janet met with Emily Carson and will continue working on programming for financial and congregational vitality and renewal.

\*Missions – the Souper Bowl soup collection was a success with 100 cans/pouches of soup collected to be distributed to the Red Wing and Hastings food shelves.

***A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. - Motion Passed.***

The next meeting will be on March 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

James Gustafson  
Council Secretary

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