



March 2026

First the Cross, Then the Crown

(Senkbeil, Harold L. *Where in the World Is God?*
Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1999. pages 31-32.)

Anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. (Matthew 10:38)

The Scriptures teach, “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). And it’s true. There is hardship, tribulation, and affliction in life. The personal burdens we bear and the tough times we endure are not accidental. Remember, Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23). First the cross, then the crown. We sometimes get it turned around. We’d like to go right for the crown and bypass the cross altogether. We prefer glory and honor over suffering or distress.

These crosses come in different sizes and shapes for each of us. For some it may be the cross of physical suffering; for others the pain may be emotional. It may be a constant struggle against bondage to sin or the prison of bitterness. For others the cross may be the chronic ache of loneliness or some other gaping hole in life that threatens to engulf us. But whatever the shape of the cross, still it is a cross, and it hurts. Suffering is not optional in the Christian life; it is one of the identifying marks of the Christian. To know Christ is to know the fellowship of his sufferings. The amazing thing is that these burdens are instruments of God’s love and healing for us. We are not to shrink from our crosses nor retreat from our struggles.

God uses the hardships and reversals of life to crucify our sinful nature and drive us to his Word. God desires to kill the sin within us because it threatens our life with him. Through his Word our loving God brings us to repentance and encourages our faith. When we are broken and helpless, we often see God’s love all the more clearly. Along with St. Paul, we learn that God’s grace is sufficient for us. We see his power most clearly and seek it most earnestly when we are weakest. There’s suffering of one sort or another in store for every Christian, but the sufferings of this present world aren’t even worth comparing to the glories to be revealed in heaven’s glory.

The path of suffering for the Christian leads ultimately to glory; that's the encouragement. But it is not our cross-bearing that earns us a crown, and therein lies comfort. For one day at Calvary all hell broke loose. All the ugly power of sin, death, and the devil was unleashed on God's own sinless Son. All the weight and burden of our guilt was heaped on him. God himself was given over into death so that he might give us his own life to live. First the cross, then the crown. And there is a crown for everyone who trusts in him; that's what lies ahead for all Christ's own. But not yet. None of us knows what life may bring. But we do know what Christ will bring. "Be faithful, even to the point of death," he says, "and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

Gracious Lord, under the burden of bearing my cross, though the weight is great, I know I'm not lost. You designed my cross, so you know and understand my woe. You know how best to save me. I ask for your strength through Jesus my Savior. Amen.

Paul Gerhardt, adapted

Voters' Meeting on Sunday, March 22, 2026

Our next quarterly voter's meeting is scheduled for after next Sunday's worship/fellowship (at about noon). Physical attendance is highly encouraged. Please let me (pastor) know before the meeting if you need to attend via Google Meet so I can set it up.

SALVATION WEEK



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday, March 29

9 AM - Bible Study

10:30 AM - Worship with Communion

Maundy Thursday, April 2

7 PM – Worship with Holy Communion

Good Friday, April 3

10:30 AM - Worship (no Communion)

Easter Sunday, April 5

8 AM – Sunrise Easter Worship with Communion

9 AM – Easter Breakfast

10:30 AM – Regular Easter Worship (no Communion)

3:00 PM – Easter Service at Our Shepherd (Poltimore, QC) with Holy Communion

Sunday Bible Class

You are invited to join our Bible Class on Proverbs and Luther's Small Catechism. Even if you are a long-time member, this class will be great for you to review basic biblical doctrine and discover how all the passages in the Catechism can help you answer many of the questions your non-churched friends ask you about your faith. The Proverbs portion will help you grow in God's wisdom as you seek to navigate life in this crazy world. We hope you can join us in our meditation on God's Word.

Friday Fellowship Bible Class

We'd love for you to join us for supper and Bible Study at 6 p.m. on the second and fourth Fridays of the month. Starting March 27th, we plan to look at the book of Leviticus and how its regulations and sacrifices prepared God's people for the coming Christ. We hope you can join us.

In-person Worship Attendance

December – An average of 42 for Sunday worship and 29 for communion
(Christmas Eve Morning – 39; Evening; Christmas Day - 30)
January - An average of 51 for Sunday worship and 40 for communion
February – An average of 36 for Sunday worship and 21 for communion

Daily Prayers

I continue sending out daily devotions, links to other devotional sites (included in Monday's messages), Bible classes, Communion registration reminders, and announcements.

If you or someone you know is not receiving the daily prayers and would like them, please let me know their email address, and I will add them to our email list.

Note: Please let me know before unsubscribing if you do not wish to receive the Daily Prayer. The 'Unsubscribe' feature at the bottom of the daily email would remove your name from all congregational emails, including urgent ones.

Evangelism Notes

By: Jordan Alves

The evangelism committee is currently planning events for the year. Easter for kids was on March 21. The next meeting will be on April 26.

Trustee Notes

By: Doug Morton

Will be updated by Voter's meeting.

Youth Education Report

By: Jason Pfothenauer

Sunday school continues to meet Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. in the church basement and the Word Center. Attendance remains steady at 4 children/young adults.

Rebecca Hill is planning an Easter for Kids event on Saturday, March 21.

Laura Sullivan is preparing an Easter program that will be shared with the congregation at the 10:30 a.m. service.

A big thank you to all the teachers who make the youth education program possible.

Elders' Notes

By: Jeremy Doherty

We have received the templates for an updated Constitution and Bylaws from our District President. The Board will be looking at updating ours over the next quarter, this will be presented to Voters when ready. Any revised Bylaws ultimately need to be reviewed and approved by the District (NAD) Constitution Committee.

The Board has been reviewing a more formalized Elder program; programs from Abiding Word, St. Paul's, and WELS have been looked at and we will pull in from each of these to make a program that makes sense for Divine Word (tracking, frequency of follow ups, thresholds for decision-making).

We are looking at an admin support position for Pastor (this was discussed in the budget presentation in 2025). A couple of people have expressed interest already.

Call letter has been issued to Pastor Lindke to allow him to register with the province to obtain his authority to solemnize marriages. This call is for one day (June 6, 2026) to perform the wedding of Mac Parker and Emma Doherty.

May 24th will be a lay led service.

New business update/architect/grant submission

Three grant programs were identified as possible funding sources to assist with our accessibility project. We were not eligible for the federal grant (we previously received money from this program for the ramp outside the church), it is now focused on Indigenous services/employers.

Two provincial grant programs were considered and one we were eligible for. The application has been submitted to recover the costs for the architect and the cost of the elevator, additional construction costs were not able to be included as we do not have estimates for that work yet. Total eligible money we could receive through this grant would be ~\$130,000. The entire project is estimated currently at ~\$220,000-250,000.

The architect is proceeding with drawings but there is currently nothing to share for our review.

Updates from the Board of Stewardship and Treasurer / Financial Secretary.

By: Jim Neubauer

I. E-Transfer Process

We continue to use the e-transfer process in 2026. More than 14 people use the etransfer process and send offerings weekly or monthly. Let me know if you would like to use this process. The etransfer email is divinewordetransfer@gmail.com

II. Regular Offerings and Budgets

Regular Offerings: Please find below the financial summary as of March 15, 2026 of all regular offerings collected to date being applied toward our Current Church Offering Income budget requirement of \$140,000 for 2026 decreased from \$142,500 for 2025.

As of March 15, 2026

Offerings Received – \$24,150

Offerings Budgeted - \$30,096

After 11 weeks we are approximately \$6,000 behind of the weekly budget projection. This number is slightly understated by approximately \$2,500 since we have not received several members annual donations yet. However, at this point in the year it is too early for any panic alarms. All members just need to continue to make there regular offerings.

So overall, I am giving us a B rating for the first 11 weeks. We are a little behind right now, but a better understanding will be known in June.

Investments:

Sunlife - Value \$344,648 K (1 yr growth 7.34%) – **Funds 100% available**

Scotiabank - \$30 K – High Interest Savings – approx. 2% - **Funds 100% available**

Scotiabank - \$60 K – 2 year GIC @ 3.85% (Funds available Nov 25, 2026)

Scotiabank - -\$27 k – 13 month GIC @ 3% (Funds available April 24, 2026)

Scotiabank - \$110 k – 2 year GIC @ 3.05% (Funds available March 24, 2027)

Scotiabank - \$62 K – 4 year GIC – (Funds available November 2029)

Overall Scotiabank – Approx. \$290 K

As always if you have any questions – don't hesitate to contact me.

Jim

Thank you

I want to thank all the volunteers quietly working in the background at church by doing things like helping with the social media, setting up the altar, watching over our finances and member offerings, keeping on top of administrative paperwork, teaching our children, providing dinners and snacks, making necessary facility repairs, maintaining the property in order, beautifying the sanctuary, helping me organize for services, giving fellow members an encouraging note or call, inviting people to worship, and upholding DW's ministry in prayer. Know that your work is not in vain. I thank God for all of you and all that you do.

Are You Struggling?

Are you or someone you know struggling spiritually? If so, do not hesitate to contact me (Pastor). *Our conversation will be kept confidential.*

Pastor Sullivan's Contact Information

Home address: 81 Upminster Way, Ottawa, ON, K2J5G2

Email: pastor@divinewordottawa.ca

Primary (Mobile) Phone Number: (613) 255-2317

Home "Internet" Phone: (512) 887-8982

Feel free to use my mobile phone number as the primary way of contacting me. If you see "Texas Caller" or a number with a "512" area code on your Caller ID, it is probably me calling from my home Internet number. Do not be afraid to answer the phone.

May the LORD continue to bless you.

In Christian love,

Pastor Michael Sullivan