

LAMB OF GOD  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
HAINES CITY, FL

August 2025. Volume 31, #8



# LOG Bellwether

The bellwether is one that takes  
the lead or sets an example.

. *Pastor Greg*



## Council Memo

The next meeting is on **August 18 at 6pm.**



If you have missed a service or just want to review one of Pastor Greg's fantastic messages, remember our services are streamed and stored so you can (re) view them all at <https://www.youtube.com/@lambogodhainescity>.

Please subscribe to our "channel" as it helps our Synod to see our impact.

### *July at Lamb of God Lutheran!*

MSCB opened at the end of June and has continued making waves of support and impacting folks. Remember to visit us Sundays between services. Additional volunteers and donations are very much needed at this time. Contact Marisol Velazquez, Lissette Solano, or Martiza Conception for more information.

In case you missed it, here is Ellen Quackenboss's obituary.

<https://share.google/YK9CnsWGbmHuA3hp5>

July 12, Breakfast with Jesus, and In the Garden with God was a huge success for LOG/MSCB Ladies Ministry. Several activities using both Spanish and English with 25 attendees. Another Breakfast with Jesus will come soon.



Pastor is planning to bring in new members soon. Help grow LOG before our new pastor is on board by inviting a friend to join you on Sunday, September 7 as we all start a new school year. Additional LOG attendees will help with income which is greatly needed at this point and the need will only grow. Thanks.



This past Spring, LOG member Rita Grafft completed a class through Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, IA. This course, Lutheran Confessions, had assignments, three of which have been included during the June, July, and August issues of the Bellwether. The course was based on the writings of the reformers, such as Luther, Melancthon, and others, and their response to the Catholic church of their time. We ask you to please, take a few minutes to read, consider, and pray over this material and recognize God's leading for you and our congregation.

*Wartburg Seminary - Spring 2025 Lutheran Confessions*

How justification by faith alone (not works) has impacted my life

Grace alone, Faith alone, Scripture alone. And then the question, how does one of these basic tenants of being a Lutheran, someone justified by faith, impact my life. First of all, I don't believe you can really have one without the other two. It is kind of like how we try to explain the Triune God. We try to explain the separation yet also the oneness. But our human minds can never quite get it. And only through trust can we begin to have any human understanding. And likewise my understanding and trust of justification by faith alone, cannot really be separated from who I am and how I believe myself to be a child of God. It has not just impacted my life, but it is my life.

I don't remember word for word what I heard in confirmation classes, but when I hear the "what is this" from the third article of the explanation of the Creed, "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him" something in my brain, or heart or ...some electrode or synapse or something is triggered and I say "It is most certainly true." My belief is no longer just words, but part of me.

I believe that faith is not something we can achieve on our own. I receive it through my baptism through the Holy Spirit. I would like to say others can see the results, but faith itself only comes from God himself. I can use reason to explain my faith (Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so). And the gifts of the spirit such as songs and preaching and reading the bible and the love from and to others certainly help nurture that faith. But faith itself - I cannot do that on my own. God comes to me in all my sinfulness and wonder of wonders, doesn't even stop there. He sent his Holy Spirit to instill in me faith.

I have a personal story that happened almost four years ago, and I have thought about it a lot since then. How it has honed my belief that we are justified by faith, not through anything we can DO. Four years ago my youngest son who was 32 at the time died from an accident while serving in the military. At his funeral a friend I had known for a long time, who also knew my son, came up to me and asked if Alex knew Jesus (BTW, just some advice, don't ask that question of anyone at the funeral. It is as bad as saying God needed him more. And unless I had a sudden belief in indulgences and buying his way out of purgatory, there was nothing I could do at that point). I knew quite a bit about this person's beliefs. He shared them quite willingly. He was born again, and believed in a dramatic, spiritual conversion. I was momentarily speechless, but replied that "yes, I believed that Alex knew Jesus" and then without a lot of thought, I said "but more importantly Jesus knew Alex" I believe that if we have to rely on our own ability to 'know' Jesus, we are lost. If I had to fine tune my response now, I would say that yes, Alex knew Jesus BECAUSE Jesus knew him.

Again, as Luther states in the small catechism "I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith...(ELW, p. 1162)

This is most certainly true! *Yours in Jesus Christ, Rita Grafft*



## Lamb of God Languages Program

The summer break for the Lamb of God Languages Program ends soon. **Our English and Spanish classes will resume on Saturday, August 16.**

For those who want to learn basic conversational Spanish, we offer class from 9:00-10:45 am. The English classes, for all levels, are from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. Classes are free of charge.

We are always seeking volunteers to help with both our English and Spanish language classes. While teaching experience is helpful, it is not required. Lesson plans are provided. Advance sign-up is not necessary for students or volunteers, but please come a few minutes early for your first class.

All are welcome! Please contact Philippa White for more information.

### August 2025 – LOG Calendar

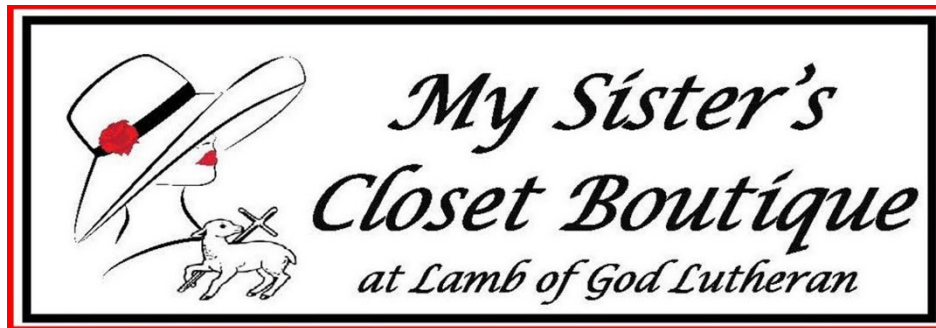
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Each Sunday: 8:45 am <b>Adult Sunday School</b> ; 10am <b>English Service</b> ; 11:15am <b>Coffee Hour</b> ; 11:15 am <b>LOG Ringers</b> ; 12:30pm <b>Spanish Service</b>						
					8/1–9 am <b>House Blest</b> Food Distribution	8/2
8/3	8/4	8/5 – 10am <b>Finance Mtg</b>	8/6 – 9am <b>Sew 'n Sews</b>	8/7	8/8	8/9
8/10	8/11	8/12	8/13	8/14	8/15–9 am <b>House Blest</b> Food Distribution	8/16 <b>LOGLP</b> 9am English 11am Spanish
8/17	8/18 – 6pm <b>Council Mtg</b>	8/19 – 10 am <b>Finance Mtg</b>	8/20 – Midnight <b>Bellwether Deadline</b>	8/21 - 9am <b>Sew 'n Sews</b> Noon – <b>Book Club</b>	8/22	8/23 <b>LOGLP</b> 9am English 11am Spanish
8/24	8/25	8/26	8/27	8/28	8/29–9 am <b>House Blest</b> Food Distribution	8/30 <b>LOGLP</b> 9am English 11am Spanish
8/31						

### Just two quick reminders

- 1) Summer Office hours are in effect. The church office is open Mon, Tues, and Thurs from 9am-1pm only. Please call if needed.
- 2) Pastor Nicole urged LOG attendees to ***sit closer to the front*** because it helps make our church look fuller when viewing the online service. Our pastoral candidates see a very sparsely attended service and may be disheartened. Consider viewing it yourself, as someone who doesn't know LOG, via the streaming service on YouTube.



*It's OPEN! My Sister's Closet Boutique celebrated on 6/29.  
Stop by and check out the 2 for \$5 Summer Clearance Specials.  
Open between services.*



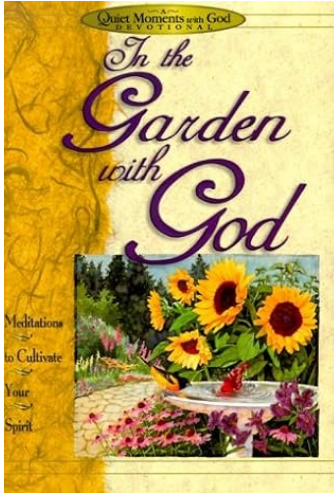
Aren't they beautiful? Yes, the *flowers* (Sarah's Vase). Yes, our *ladies*! And **Yes!** The *t-shirts from Thrivent*.

LOG/MSCB received funding through a Thrivent action card to underwrite parts of this month's **Breakfast with Jesus** event. An advisor from Thrivent was also on hand to explain everything. Thank you greatly!

Thank you for directing Thrivent Choice Dollars to Lamb of God Lutheran Church. Thrivent doesn't provide use with exact amounts by individual; however, in total LOG received **\$1,085 from July 2024 to June 2025**. Also, Thrivent Members with either life insurance or annuities can assist LOG by requesting Two Action Teams annually, which provide seed money for a service project, ministry team or fundraising campaign. Please contact the church office to be paired with an initiative and we will walk you through the process.

*Those who are generous are blessed, for they share their bread with the poor. - Proverbs 22:9*

**Breakfast with Jesus and *In the Garden with God***  
**Marisol Velazquez, director of *My Sister's Closet Boutique***



On June 12th we celebrated our first Bilingual devotional and brunch for the Lamb of God ladies. It was a special time of reflection and sharing for both expressions. Wanda Bango-Sanchez and Georgene Endy read Tested by Fire. Wanda led the reflection, and many participated in the discussion. We would like to thank Wanda for a beautiful reflection and for helping us become vulnerable and speak from the heart.

We also did an activity called Sarah's Vase that was done with live flowers and after finishing became the altar flowers for Sunday service on July 13th. See our "Sarah's Vase" pictured below and the devotional story on the next pages.

Also, there were 3 activity stations **SERVE, SEED, & SOW**. The **Serve** station, led by Gloria Fraser, created care packages. The care kits consisted of health & hygiene products combined with Kathleen Peters' handmade lap blankets. These will be donated to Club Success members & caregivers. We have a special connection to Club Success as one of our members, Winston Khan, lives there. So, this station was very dear to his sister, Gloria Fraser.

The **Seed** station was led by Georgene Endy which is so very appropriate as she is our in-house green thumb. Seedlings of various plants were available to plant in ecofriendly biodegradable containers to take home

The **Sow** station, as a "fun" part, and who else but Pam Thomas to help us create mini canvases adorned with flowers, butterflies, and crosses all out of buttons to take home. A few pictures are below too!

There were 25 participants both languages, members and non-members. Hopefully additional ladies will join our next Breakfast with Jesus gathering.







Sarah's parents were new to town, and she was just getting to know her classmates at church. As a second grader, she was full of energy and beaming with naughtiness. As Sarah's Sunday school teacher, my wife provided me with a limitless supply of funny stories – Monday night dinner was usually served with Sarah's latest antics. Everyone at church seemed to like her. She was simply an easy kid to fall in love with.

One Sunday my wife had prepared a lesson on being useful. She taught the children that everyone can be useful – that usefulness is serving God, and that doing so is worthy of honor. The kids quietly soaked up my wife's words, and as the lesson ended, there was a short moment of silence. Then Sarah spoke up. "Teacher, what can I do?" I don't know how to do too many useful things."

Not anticipating that kind of response, my wife quickly looked around and spotted an empty flower vase on the windowsill. "Sarah, you can bring in a flower and put it in the vase. That would be a useful thing." Sarah frowned. "But that's not important." "It is," replied my wife, "if you are helping someone." Sure enough, the next Sunday Sarah brought in a dandelion and placed it in the vase. In fact, she continued to do so each week. Without reminders or help, she made sure the vase was filled with a bright yellow flower, Sunday after Sunday. When my wife told our pastor about Sarah's faithfulness, he placed the vase upstairs in the main sanctuary next to the pulpit. That Sunday he gave a sermon on the honor of serving others, using Sarah's vase as an example. The congregation was touched by the message, and the week started on a good note.

### **The Tragic News**

As a pediatric physician, I have developed an uncomfortable feeling about telephone calls. During that same week I got a call from Sarah's mother. She worried that Sarah seemed to have less energy than usual and that she didn't have an appetite. Offering her some reassurances, I made room in my schedule to see Sarah the following day. After a battery of tests and days of examinations, I sat numbly in my office, Sarah's paperwork on my lap. The results were tragic.

On the way home I stopped to see Sarah's parents so that I could personally give them the sad news. Sarah's genetics and the leukemia that was attacking her small body were a horrible mix. Sitting at their kitchen table, I did my best to explain to Sarah's parents that nothing could be done to save her life. I don't think I have ever had a more difficult conversation than the one that night. Sarah's mom looked me in the eye and with tears asked, "How can this happen? Why would God allow this?"

As doctors, we try everything to save a life. Sometimes we find ourselves wishing to trade our life for that of one of our patients, especially when they are as dear as Sarah. But sometimes, nothing can be done, and a tragic ending is only a matter of time. Sarah was to have such an ending. Such a beautiful life, ended by such pain and anguish. It became difficult not to question the goodness of God in Sarah's life.

(continued on the next page)

## A Final Flower

Time pressed on. Sarah became confined to bed and to the visits that many people gave her. She lost her smile. She lost most of her weight. And then it came: another telephone call. Sarah's mother asked me to come see her. I dropped everything and ran to the house. There she was a small bundle that barely moved. After a short examination, I knew that Sarah would soon be leaving this world. I urged her parents to spend as much time as possible with her.

That was a Friday afternoon. On Sunday morning church started as usual. The singing, the sermon – it all seemed meaningless when I thought of Sarah. I felt enveloped in sadness. At the end of the sermon, the pastor suddenly stopped speaking. His eyes wide, he stared at the back of the church with utter amazement. Everyone turned to see what he was looking at. It was Sarah! Her parents had brought her for one last visit. She was bundled in a blanket, a dandelion in one little hand.

She didn't sit in the back row. Instead, she slowly walked to the front of the church where her vase still perched by the pulpit. She put her flower in the vase and a piece of paper beside it. Then she returned to her parents. Seeing Sarah place her flower in the vase for the last time moved everyone. At the end of the service, people gathered around Sarah and her parents, trying to offer as much love and support as possible. I could hardly bear to watch.

## Sarah's Note

Four days later, Sarah died. I cancelled my morning appointments and sat at my desk, thinking about her and her parents, hurting. I remember the funny stories that my wife told about Sarah. I remembered the sweet sound of her laughter. I remembered that telephone call that brought sadness.

Tears filled my eyes as once again I struggled not to question the goodness of God in allowing Sarah's life to end in such a horrible way.

I wasn't expecting it, but our pastor asked to see me after the funeral. We stood at the cemetery near our cars as people walked past us. In a low voice he said, "Dave, I've got something you ought to see." He pulled out of his pocket the piece of paper that Sarah had left by the vase. Holding it out to me, he said, "You'd better keep this; it may help you in your line of work." I opened the folded paper to read, in pink crayon, what Sarah had written:

*Dear God,*

*This vase has been the biggest honor of my life.*

*Sarah*

Sarah's note and her vase have helped me to understand. I now realize in a new way that life is an opportunity to serve God by serving people. And, as Sarah put it, THAT is the biggest honor of all. ~ By Dr. David Cerqueira [The Story of Sarah's Vase - Just Between Us](#)



What are you reading? Reach out and let me know for the next issue of the Bellwether by Aug 20. If it comes from the LOG Library, let me know that too!

I'm reading "All Rivers to the Sea"  
by Brock and Brodie Thoene.





**Aspire Women's Events**

22K likes · 27K followers

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**Aspire Haines City**

**Saturday, Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>**

**6:00pm**

**We have a sign-up sheet for this event to see if we get enough interest.** More info is at:

<https://aspirewomensevents.com/hainescity-fl-fall-2025/#appearing>

General Admission is \$30, VIP Admission is \$40, PLUS processing fees. Bring a group of 10 or more for discounted pricing. Group Pricing General Admission, \$25, VIP Admission: \$35. We have a benefactor who will underwrite another \$5 off each ticket, so your cost is just \$20 general and \$30 VIP with no processing fees.

**5:00 pm Doors Open for General Admission & VIP.** Come in early to shop and visit speaker and artist tables.

**5:30 pm** Join us for a 15-minute panel called “Deeply Rooted”. A panel time with all 3 ladies based on Colossians 2:6-7

**6:00 pm Event Starts** Join us for 3 hours full of laughter, learning, stories, and music.

### **Speakers/Artists**

*Amberly Neese* is a speaker, comedian, and author with a passion for “GRINspiring” others.

*Kay Dodd* has spent the better part of the last 25 years making people laugh as a professional comedian.

Sitting down to talk with worship artist *Jaime Jamgochian* you quickly realize she is a woman of faith who God is using in many different ways through her music and message.



Last week, you received an email blast telling you of the weekly activities. About an hour later you should have also seen one inviting you to come to the church for some items which were donated to LOG from the House Blest operation. On Tuesdays, House Blest will often receive donations of baked goods and produce, but this time it was more than they could handle in their limited refrigerated space, so...

Yep, we serve House Blest every other Friday and once again, they have served us too!

*Thank you to everyone involved with House Blest!*

Dear Pastor Villalon and the Lamb of God congregation,

Our parents, Rev. Harold & Liz Heidegger, were active members at Lamb of God Lutheran Church from the late 1990's until they recently moved to North Carolina. They will be celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary on August 21. We know they cherished their time in Central Florida and would love to hear from friends in the congregation.

Sending letters or cards would mean a lot, and they can be sent to:

*Rather than include their address here due to everywhere the Bellwether is distributed, please contact Lissette for the mailing address or check the display in the Narthex.*

We would really appreciate it if a notice with this information could be included in an upcoming newsletter and/or bulletin. Thank you, and please let us know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely their children,

Nathan & Stacie Heidegger, Brownsburg, IN

Sarah & Peter Case, Charlotte, NC

This email was received in the office on July 19.

**LOG Quilters' work may be comforting those in the Texas flood disaster, read more below.**

### The Sew 'n Sews – August Quilting Dates & Invitation

The Lamb of God Sew 'n Sews will meet Wednesday 8/6/2025 and the 3rd Thursday 8/21/2025 for the HOT month of August. While it's hot outside — it's cool in the AC of the Fellowship Hall! Come join us from 9 AM - 12 noon.

Don't know how to sew? That's okay - come and Tie a Knot!

Know how to sew but perhaps you would rather use your own sewing machine in the comfort of your own home, while in your PJ'S? We have pre-cut squares that have been put together in a flattering color combination that you can create a quilt top for us. Then we will put it together and send it to Lutheran World Relief with the others that we have been working on since February. In a recent report from LWR quilts and kits were being sent to the Kerrville, TX area via Lutheran Disaster Relief and The Southwestern Texas Synod. Thank you to our wonderful quilters, congregation, families, and friends who continue to donate their time, talents and materials. God's Work - Our Hands

Blessings, *Diane Hockett*



# August, Celebrating with you!

## Happy Anniversary, Y'all

8/03	Ray & Jane	Messmer
8/04	Mark & Jan	Walton
8/05	Ruth & Connie	Horst
8/14	Nila & Jeffrey	Eklund
8/29	Bonnie & Gary	Chastain



On 8/21 we also remember Pr. Harold and Liz Heidegger's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## Happy Birthday to YOU!



8/1	Jorge	Negron
8/2	Martiza	Concepcion
8/4	Kit	Marsella
8/6	Eleanor	Pavlik
8/11	Delia	Garcia
8/11	Teresa	Liberta
8/11	Carl	Sjoberg
8/16	Paul	Bockelman
8/16	Ken	Lindberg
8/17	Carmen	Ramirez
8/19	Richard	Kavelak
8/25	Pr. Paul	Bockelman
8/31	Brenda	Kavelak



## By the numbers for July

Average Attendance	83
Weekly Offerings	\$11,012
Vanco (Online) Offerings	N/A
<b>Total Offerings (3 Sun)</b>	<b>\$11,012</b>
<b><i>Needed each month</i></b>	<b><i>\$23,612</i></b>

**Why Facebook?** Here's one reason. A neighbor of LOG noticed our new roof and sent a Facebook message about our building and community outreach.

## Missed a Sunday Message? View the services here

7/6	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/zwnEqza_Glc?si=C4n8ebIxgeb2yNxH">https://www.youtube.com/live/zwnEqza_Glc?si=C4n8ebIxgeb2yNxH</a>
7/13	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/nKC7LwSFnE0?si=xqKtRFwK9k3laQW">https://www.youtube.com/live/nKC7LwSFnE0?si=xqKtRFwK9k3laQW</a>
7/20	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/live/ORhad2rynug?si=Ij0U03Yokd7IjhQH">https://www.youtube.com/live/ORhad2rynug?si=Ij0U03Yokd7IjhQH</a>
7/27	Sorry, due to deadline, you'll need to click <a href="#">HERE</a> and locate the date



# LOG Folks' Outreach & Volunteer Efforts

Questions? Call the office for more info!



We regularly meet from 9-noon each month on the 1st Wed. & the 3rd Thurs. *We always need knot tiers.* Any questions? Call Diane Hockett at 863-521-0821.

Our food pantry (LOGCFP) receives donations of food and household items from you, our congregation, Lake Region Village, and several other places. The items support community folks asking for assistance, as well as All Veterans Services, and Youth and Family Alternatives. See it in the Fellowship Hall.

## LOG Community Food Pantry

**A House Blest is just one of the offerings through Unity in the Community of Northeast Polk County.** LOG volunteers regularly help with food distribution, "they" also helped with the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Miracle Christmas on Saturday Dec. 21. If you have an hour or two to help, please talk with Kathy Dierker or LaMar Grafft. More info at <https://www.uicpolk.org/>

## Unity in the Community

**LOG needs you to step up and volunteer to be a Greeter, Usher, or host the Hospitality Desk. The Altar Guild is also in need of help. Thank you!!!**

A House Blest is just one ministry where volunteers from LOG are involved. We help distribute food for a few hours. Come help distribute food or even just share a smiling, loving face to those in need. Ask LaMar or Kathy. **Do you need additional food? Come the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or 5<sup>th</sup> Friday each month, and bring proof of residence in Polk County and receive food.** More info can be found at <http://www.nhcpolk.org/a-house-blest>



*My Sister's  
Closet Boutique*  
at Lamb of God Lutheran

## Shut-in ministry

Take communion/visit with those unable to come to LOG to worship with us. Please see LaMar Grafft or Pastor Greg to help out.

Kathleen Peters has agreed to lead our **Prayer Covering Ministry**. She needs volunteers to create these beautiful gifts made with love and prayers. Not just shawls anymore.

**Regularly meets at noon on the 3rd Thursday.**



Bring your sack lunch and join us in the Library to discuss a book you have enjoyed reading. Contact Bill Quinlan for information.

## LOG Memorial Garden Committee

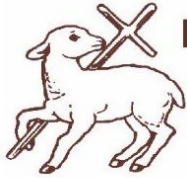


**Spring clean-up is finished, but now ongoing so please consider helping with the Memorial Garden.**

**Contact Ken Linberg, Bill Quinlan, or Carol Vaughn**

## A House Blest Food Mission





## Lamb of God (Cordero de Dios) Lutheran Church

English Service 10am  
Servicio Español 12:30pm

**(863) 421-2811**

901 Scenic Hwy. | Haines City, FL 33844-8597

**[lambofgodhainescity.com](http://lambofgodhainescity.com)**

## FELLOWSHIP COFFEE HOUR

SUNDAYS 11:15 AM - 12:15 AM



Catch up with with your friends while sharing a cup of coffee,  
make new friends, or just because.

An online giving option is available  
[www.lambofgodhainescity.com](http://www.lambofgodhainescity.com)  
click **ONLINE GIVING**, download the  
**VANCO** app, or scan the QR code



### Our Mission Statement

The mission of Lamb of God Lutheran Church is to lead and inspire God's people into a growing relationship with Jesus.

Deadline for submissions:

August 20, 2025, for September edition

Editor: David Reedy, PhD

[Davidreedy146@outlook.com](mailto:Davidreedy146@outlook.com)

### Our Vision Statement

Centered in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, the vision of Lamb of God Lutheran Church is to transform and enhance the lives of members, neighbors, and friends, through relevant worship and study of God's word, and through providing Christian service & fellowship opportunities.

*Stay connected*



@lambofgodhainescity



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[Lambofgodhainescity.com](http://Lambofgodhainescity.com)

### Sunday Schedule

8:45 am Adult Sunday School      10:00 am Service of Holy Communion

11:15 am LOG Ringers Practice & Coffee/Fellowship Hour

11:00 am Escuela Bíblica      12:30 pm Servicio con Comunión

Online Worship is live at 10:00 a.m. <https://lambofgodhainescity.com/live-stream>

### Staff

**Rev. Dr. Greg Villalón**, Lead Pastor/Interim: [pastor@lambofgodhainescity.com](mailto:pastor@lambofgodhainescity.com)

**Rev. Izzy Bango-Sanchez**, Associate Pastor/Spanish Development

**Lissette Solano**, Office Manager: [officemanager@lambofgodhainescity.com](mailto:officemanager@lambofgodhainescity.com)

(863) 320-0917 (if no answer at LOG)

**Julian Green**, AV/Technology, Interim Music Director: [prof.julian.green@gmail.com](mailto:prof.julian.green@gmail.com)