

# RELIGION

## PASTOR'S COLUMN

### The kingdom of God



TRACY BAUGH  
CALVARY CHAPEL,  
NEW LIFE

The phrases “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven” often appear in the Gospels. John the Baptist announced it. Jesus proclaimed and gave many parables about it. The disciples were sent to preach it. It was central to His message and mission. But what exactly is the kingdom of God?

Jesus wasn’t teaching about a crucified, risen and ascended Savior — because that hadn’t occurred yet. So what was He teaching, and what does He expect His followers, even those who come after His ascension, to teach now?

At its core, the kingdom of God is the rule and reign of God — both in the present and in the future. It is not merely a place, but a reality, wherever God’s authority is embraced and His will is done.

In Jewish thought, the kingdom was expected to be a future, national and political theocracy when the Messiah would overthrow Israel’s enemies and establish God’s rule from Jerusalem (see Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 2:44; Zechariah 14). So when Jesus declared, “The Kingdom of God is at hand” (Mark 1:15), it would have sparked intense hope and expectation.

Yet Jesus reframed that idea. The kingdom was already breaking in, though not yet in its final

form. It came not through the power of politics or force, but through the power of faith and repentance.

Jesus did not yet preach a crucified and risen Messiah — His disciples themselves didn’t understand that until after the resurrection (Luke 18:34). But He did teach the values and nature of God’s kingdom:

It had already arrived in His ministry: “If I cast out demons by the finger of God, surely the Kingdom of God has come upon you” (Luke 11:20).

It starts small but grows: The parables of the mustard seed and the leaven (Matt. 13) show its quiet, transformative power.

It flips worldly values: The Beatitudes (Matt. 5) place blessing on the poor, meek, and merciful — those typically overlooked.

It demands repentance and allegiance: “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17).

It is both now and not yet: Jesus said the kingdom is “among you” (Luke 17:21), but also spoke of a coming fullness (Luke 22:18).

When Jesus sent out the 12 and then the seventy, He told them to:

“Preach the Kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:2)

“Heal the sick there, and say to them, ‘The Kingdom of God has come near to you.’” (Luke 10:9)

They weren’t just preaching personal salvation, but proclaiming that God’s reign was breaking into the world. The kingdom of God resembles

creation before the fall — no sickness, no curse, no death and God dwelling with His people. Jesus’ kingdom message wasn’t theory; it came with power — manifested in healing, deliverance, and authority over sin and darkness.

After the resurrection, Jesus continued teaching about the kingdom (Acts 1:3), but now everything had changed. The King had conquered Satan, and more fundamentally, the true enslaving power of this world: sin, which rules even over Satan. The reign of God was no longer just near — it had begun through Christ’s finished work.

With the King enthroned, the apostles now preached, “Jesus is Lord” (Acts 2:36), and called people to turn from darkness to light, from self-rule to God-rule (Colossians 1:13). The kingdom was still the message — but now fully revealed.

Sadly, much of modern Christianity has shifted the emphasis away from the kingdom of God. Instead of calling people to surrender to God’s rule, many churches focus on gaining members, promoting programs, or simply inviting people to attend a service.

But Jesus didn’t come to start a religious organization — He came to announce the reign of God and invite people into it.

We are still called to proclaim the kingdom — not merely “join the church,” but enter the reign of God through faith in Jesus the King.

We proclaim the King: Jesus, crucified and risen.

We call for repentance: A turning from sin and self to Jesus’ lordship.

We demonstrate the kingdom: Through lives transformed by the Spirit.

We invite others in: Not by works, but by grace through faith.

We anticipate the return: When Jesus will fully establish His visible reign (Revelation 11:15).

In Jesus, the kingdom has begun to break in — it is not just a future hope; it is a present reality for those who follow the King. Even now, we’re called to live in and extend His kingdom as His ambassadors.

Jesus makes available healing, deliverance, and spiritual authority to those who walk in obedience and dependence on the King. We’re not just to wait for the kingdom — we’re to live in it and represent it with the same power and authority Jesus gave His followers.

The kingdom is the heart of Jesus’ message — not a distant dream, but a reality we are called to live in now. It’s not merely about personal salvation, but total surrender to Christ’s reign. Yes, the kingdom demands everything, but promises more than we can imagine. By proclaiming it, we cultivate a hunger for it and are moved to crucify ourselves daily in order to live under His rule.

“But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” — Matthew 6:33.

## AREA CHURCH LISTINGS

### ASSEMBLY OF GOD

**Foundation Church, Spencer**  
Rev. Nicholas Hanges, Senior Pastor  
1410 W. 18th St.  
712-262-6292  
foundationspencer.com  
• Sunday School K-12, 9 a.m.  
• Sunday Prayer/Fellowship, 9 a.m.  
• Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.  
• Kids Church Sunday, 10 a.m.  
• Wednesday All Ages, 6:30 p.m.

### BAPTIST

**Baptist Church, Sioux Rapids**  
Rev. James Marshall  
• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.  
• Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.

**First Baptist Church, Spencer**  
Rev. Tim Smith  
1200 Grand Ave.  
712-262-1325  
firstbaptistspencer.com  
• Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.  
• Sunday Upward Look — KICD 1240 AM, 10 a.m.  
• Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.  
• Sunday AWANA, 4 p.m.  
• Sunday FBC Youth Group, 6 p.m.

### CALVARY CHAPEL

**New Life Worship Center, Spencer**  
Rev. Tracy Baugh  
1217 Fourth Ave. W.  
712-262-3125  
• Sunday Bible Church, 10 a.m.  
• Wednesday Prayer, 6:30 p.m.

### CATHOLIC

**St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, Hartley**  
Rev. Kevin Richter  
260 N. Fourth Ave. W.  
712-928-2626  
• Primghar St. Athony, Sunday, 8 a.m.  
• Hartley St. Joseph, Sunday, 9:30 a.m.

**St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, Milford**  
Rev. Brian Hughes  
1305 Okoboji Ave.  
712-338-2274

**Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Ruthven**  
Rev. Paul Kelly  
1801 Rolling St.  
712-852-3187

**Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Spencer**  
Rev. Kevin Richter  
1111 Fourth Ave. W.  
712-262-3047

• Saturday Service, 4:30 p.m.  
• Sunday Service, 11 a.m.  
Livestreamed at:  
spencersacredheart.com/  
onlinemass

### CHURCH OF CHRIST

**Trinity United Church of Christ, Hartley**  
140 N. Fifth Ave.  
712-728-2889

### CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

**Spencer Family Church, Spencer**  
Rev. Larry Neiderhiser  
905 Fifth St. SW  
712-262-7298  
spencerfamilychurch.org  
• Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Kid’s Church, 10:30 a.m.  
• Wednesday Life Group, 7 p.m.

### CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

**Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Spencer**  
1701 W. 11th St.  
712-262-6172  
• Sunday Sacrament Meeting, 10 a.m.  
• Sunday School; Primary and Youth Meetings, 11:10 a.m.  
• Sunday Men’s Priesthood Meeting and Women’s Relief Society, 12:10 p.m.

### CONGREGATIONAL

**Grace Congregational Church, Greenville**  
Rev. Tonna Parsons  
• Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.

### EPISCOPAL

**The Way Station, Spencer**  
Rev. Beth Preston  
120 W. Fourth St.  
712-580-5463  
revbethpreston@gmail.com  
• Sunday Service, 3 p.m.

**St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, Spirit Lake**  
Rev. Carolyn Tuttle  
23rd and Zenith  
712-336-1117  
• Sunday Mass/Eucharist, 10 a.m.

**All Saints Episcopal Church, Storm Lake**  
Rev. Stacey Gerhart  
121 W. Marina Road  
712-202-6624  
• Sunday Eucharist, 10 a.m.

### EVANGELICAL FREE

**Riverside Evangelical Free Church, Linn Grove**  
• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.

• Ignite: 6:30 p.m.  
• Salt Youth: 7:15 p.m.

**CrossWinds Church, Spencer**  
Campus Rev. Jordan Gowing  
Rev. Dr. Kurt Trucksess  
1900 Grand Ave, Suite A  
712-584-3151  
spencer@crosswinds.tv  
• Sunday Worship, 8:30 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.

### FIRST CHRISTIAN

**First Christian Church, Spencer**  
(Disciples of Christ)  
Pastor Interim  
915 Fourth Ave. SW  
712-262-2945  
• Sunday Service, 9:30 a.m.  
In-House and Facebook Live  
• Wednesday Kids Sunday School: 4:30 p.m.

### FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

**First Congregational Church, Peterson**  
712-295-7150  
• Sunday Worship, 8:45 a.m.  
• Sunday School, 10 a.m.

**First Congregational Church, Spencer**  
Rev. Shazzy Britz  
1212 First Ave. W.  
712-262-4392  
• Worship, 10:30 a.m.  
Livestream on YouTube

### LUTHERAN

**Hope Lutheran Church, Everly**  
Rev. Dan Taylor  
206 N. Washington St.  
712-834-2767  
• Sunday Worship 10 a.m.  
• Sunday School and Adult Education, 9 a.m.  
Services livestreamed on YouTube at “Hope Lutheran Church — Everly, IA”

**Lost Island Lutheran Church, Graettinger**  
Rev. Peter Morlock  
• Sunday Service, 8:45 a.m.  
• Fellowship, 9:45 a.m.  
• Sunday School, 10 a.m.

**St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran, Hartley**  
Rev. Christopher Nitzel  
60 N. Central Ave.  
712-728-2711  
• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.  
• Sunday School 10 a.m.  
• Fellowship, 10:30 a.m.  
• Confirmation, 11 a.m.  
• Choir Practice, 11 a.m.

**Harbor of Joy Lutheran Church, Milford**  
Rev. Tim Voth  
1204 L Ave.  
712-338-2355  
• Sunday Fellowship,

9:30 a.m.  
• Sunday School, 8:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.

**First Lutheran Church, Milford**  
1525 Three Cross Road  
Rev. Perry Aalgard, Senior Pastor  
Rev. Brian Jack, Associate Pastor  
712-338-4514  
3cross.org  
• Sunday Worship, 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.  
• Sunday Fellowship, 9:30 a.m.  
• Education/Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Royal**  
Rev. Dr. Mark F. Wilms  
207 Church St.  
712-933-2229  
• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.

**Zion Lutheran Church, Ruthven**  
Rev. Eric Patten  
• Sunday Service, 9:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Fellowship, 10:30 a.m.

**First Lutheran Church, Sioux Rapids**  
Rev. Tonna Parsons  
• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

**Bethany Lutheran Church-ELCA, Spencer**  
15 W. 14th St.  
712-262-2327  
bethluthspencer.com  
• Worship, 9 a.m.

**Christ the King Lutheran Church, Spencer**  
Rev. Michael McGinley  
500 Fourth Ave. SW  
712-262-2244  
• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.  
• Bible Study and Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.  
• Services on Facebook, 9 a.m.  
Podcast” released Sundays

**Faith Lutheran Church, Spencer**  
Rev. Ben Unseth  
2912 Highway Blvd.  
712-580-4316  
• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.  
• Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.  
Services are streamed on YouTube  
flcspencer.org

**First English Lutheran Church, Spencer**  
Rev. Paul Kaldahl  
1311 E. 18th St.  
712-262-5598  
spencer-church.com  
• Divine Worship, also broadcast on 1240 AM and 102.5 FM, 8 a.m.  
• Fellowship, 9 a.m.  
• Child care in the nursery, 9:15 a.m. to Noon

• Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.  
• Bible Class, 9:40 a.m.  
• Divine Worship, 10:45 a.m.  
• Communion on first and third Sundays.  
Services & Bible Class livestreamed via website

**Riverview Terrace Chapel, Spencer**  
1501 St. Luke Drive  
712-262-5932  
• Sunday Worship, 10:45 a.m.

**St. Luke Home and Services, Spencer**  
Rev. Perry DeGroot  
1301 St. Luke Drive  
712-262-5931  
• St. Luke Lutheran Home Worship, 10 a.m.  
• Riverview Terrace Worship, 10:45 a.m.

**Trinity Lutheran Church, Spencer**  
Rev. Renae Behrends  
900 11th Ave. W.  
712-262-1287  
• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.

### METHODIST

**River’s Edge Church, Spencer**  
Rev. Tim B. Frasher  
Pastor Joseph Leggett  
701 E. 18th St.  
712-580-3013  
• Sunday School, 9 a.m.  
• Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.

### NONDENOMINATIONAL

**Faith Community Church, Milford**  
805 Okoboji Ave.  
Rev. Jennifer Hesebeck  
faithcommunitymilford.com  
fcc@milfordcomm.net  
• Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.

**The New Light of the Lakes Friends Church, Okoboji**  
• Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Service, 10:30 a.m.  
• Group Bible Study, 5 p.m.

**Living Word Outreach Ministries, Spencer**  
Rev. Barb Dean, Lead Pastor  
Rev. Mark Feauto, Associate Pastor  
905 10th Ave SE  
712-262-9545  
livingwordspencer.org  
• Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.  
• Livestream id also available on the website, Facebook and YouTube.

**Spirit Life Fellowship, Spirit Lake**  
Rev. Eric Holdeman  
2504 Enterprise Ave.  
712-336-0114  
• Sunday School, 9 a.m.  
• Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.

**Maple Grove Church of God, Sutherland**  
Rev. Michael Hyde  
• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Fellowship, 10:30 a.m.  
• Sunday School, 11 a.m.

### PENTECOSTAL

**Faith Pentecostal Church, Spencer**  
1700 11th Ave. SW  
712-332-3368  
fpenspencer.com  
Rev. Brad Wallace  
Rev. Dale Hodges  
• Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.  
• Wednesday Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.

### REFORMED

**Good News Community Church, Okoboji**  
Rev. Brandon Morrow  
1010 Julia St.  
712-332-5698  
• Sunday Worship Services, 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.  
• Fellowship. 10:15 a.m.

**Hope Church, Spencer**  
Pastor James Runcorn  
919 Grand Ave.  
712-262-3016  
• Sunday Worship, 8:30 a.m., 10:45 a.m.  
• Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

### SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

**Seventh Day Adventist Church, Spencer**  
1910 10th Ave. E.  
712-262-5766  
• Saturday Sabbath School, 9:45 a.m.  
• Saturday Worship, 11 a.m.

### UNITED METHODIST

**Calvary United Methodist Church, Arnolds Park**  
Rev. Chris St. Clair  
209 N. Okoboji Grove Road  
712-332-2447  
• Saturday Worship, 6 p.m.  
• Sunday Lakeshore Worship, 7:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

**Dickens United Methodist Church, Dickens**  
Rev. Donna Gray  
• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

**United Methodist Church, Everly**  
Rev. Michael Eeten  
301 N. Ocheyedan  
712-834-2501  
• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

**Community United Methodist Church, Gillett Grove**  
Rev. Donna Gray  
• Sunday Worship, 10:15 a.m.

**United Methodist Church, Hartley**  
361 Eighth Ave.  
712-928-2649  
• Sunday Church School/Confirmation Classes, 9:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Worship Service, 10:30 a.m.

**United Methodist Church, Langdon**  
Rev. Chris St. Clair  
• Sunday in-house and Facebook Live Worship, 11 a.m.

**First United Church, Sioux Rapids**  
Rev. Dr. Mike Currier  
Rev. Karen Currier  
• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.  
Church of Christ, Spencer  
Contact Jeff Cookinham  
1304 St. Luke Drive  
712-262-2294  
• Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Bible Study, 11:15 a.m.

**First United Methodist Church, Peterson**  
Rev. Tyler Thomsen  
103 E. Third St.  
• Sunday Worship, 9:15 a.m.  
• Sunday Fellowship, 10:15 a.m.  
• Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.

**First United Methodist Church, Royal**  
Rev. John Battern  
408 Church St.  
712-933-2489  
• Sunday Worship, 9 a.m.

**United Methodist, Ruthven**  
Rev. Kris Hackbart  
• Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.

**First United Church, Sioux Rapids**  
• Sunday Worship, 10 a.m.

**Grace United Methodist Church, Spencer**  
Rev. Michael Slininger  
311 Second Ave. W.  
712-262-5970  
• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.

**Zion United Methodist Church, Spencer**  
Rev. Michael Eeten  
• Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.  
• Sunday Worship, 10:45 a.m.

**United Methodist Church, Terril**  
Rev. Terry Luiken  
302 S. State St.  
712-853-6549  
• Sunday Worship, 10:30 a.m.

**Trinity United Methodist Church, Webb**  
Rev. Kari A. Etherington  
• Sunday Worship, 9:30 a.m.  
• Fellowship, 10:30 a.m.

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