

The Lantern – March 2026

First English Lutheran Church, ELCA



“Sharing the Light of Christ”



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God’s work. Our hands.

STAFF AND CHURCH COUNCIL

Pastor: Reverend Mary E. Zupansic

pastor@firstenglishlutheranwausau.org

Parish Administrator: Debra Kluetz

parishadmin@firstenglishlutheranwausau.org

Minister of Music: Daniel Larson

Pianist: Hal Osborn

Custodians: Shawn & Jenny Blaschka

Sunday School Superintendent: VerJean Detert

Church Council:

Officers:

President: Mike Vaningan

President-Elect: Sharon Hunter

Past President: Cindy Hermel

Treasurer: Marla Zumann

Recording Secretary: Sheri Fochs

Council Members:

Jenny Blaschka

Paula Lorbiecki

Angela Greenfield

Liz Oestreich

Neil Juedes

Kalynn Pempek

Michael Klapperich

Dina Santangelo

Jim Kraft

Nicholas Schumacher

Your comments, questions and concerns are important to us. Feel free to talk to any member of our staff or Church Council.

FROM THE PASTOR

Lent is a season marked by reflection, repentance, and spiritual renewal. Traditionally spanning forty days, Lent invites us to journey with Christ, preparing ourselves for the celebration of Easter through prayer, fasting, and acts of charity. This period is not only a time for personal introspection but also for reconnecting with the core commitments of our faith, especially the promises made during baptism.

The five baptismal promises serve as the foundation of our Christian life, guiding us to reject sin and embrace the love of God. During Lent, these promises offer a framework for deeper spiritual growth:

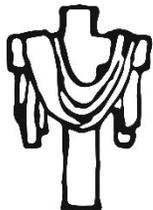
- 1. To live among God’s faithful people:**
God gives us the gift of community. As we take time to know one another, we are drawn into the “beloved community”. Together we share our hopes and joys, as well as our needs and sorrows.
- 2. To hear the word of God and share in the Lord’s Supper:** We are strengthened in our Christian walk as we gather to hear God’s word proclaimed and preached. We are nourished at the Lord’s table. What are other ways that you can ‘hear the word of God?’ Could sharing a meal with friends be a ‘sort of’ Lord’s supper?
- 3. To proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed:** This can sometimes be a challenge for us! Most of us are not very comfortable sharing the Good News of God in Christ. What keeps you from sharing the Good News in word and deed? How might you try this Lenten season to share the Good News?

4. **Serve all people, following the example of Jesus:** Lent invites us to be especially aware of the poor, the vulnerable, and those with no voice. Make a list of ways that you could ‘serve all people, following the example of Jesus’. Once you’ve made your list act on it!
5. **To strive for justice and peace in all the earth:** We live in a time of much turmoil and division. Can you think of ways that you could work for justice and peace?

As we journey through Lent, each baptismal promise becomes a call to action. This season reminds us to live our faith authentically, striving to grow closer to God and to one another. By embracing these promises, we transform Lent into a time of hope, change, and deeper commitment, preparing our hearts for the joy of Easter.

Blessings on Your Lenten Journey,

Pastor Mary



Lenten
Worship
Schedule

Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. Joel 2:13

- March 1: 2nd Sunday in Lent**
Worship at 9:00 a.m.
- March 8: 3rd Sunday in Lent**
Worship at 9:00 a.m.
- March 15: 4th Sunday in Lent**
Worship at 9:00 a.m.

March 22: 5th Sunday in Lent
Worship at 9:00 a.m.

March 29: Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday
Worship at 9:15 a.m.

Thursday Night Worship:
March 5, 12, 19, 26
in the sanctuary – 6:00 p.m.

The Season of Lent 2026



LENTEN MID-WEEK PRAYER

“Baptismal Promises”

February 25 & March 4, 11, 18, 25
12:15 p.m.

You have made public profession of your faith. Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

*to live among God’s faithful people,
to hear the word of God and share in the
Lord’s supper,
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ
through word and deed,
to serve all people, following the example of
Jesus,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the
earth?*

Each week we will consider one of the baptismal promises and how we live them out in our everyday lives.

LENTEN LUNCH

Following the 12:15 worship service, enjoy a simple and delicious lunch prepared and served by First English volunteers. All are welcome!

LENTEN SOUP LUNCHES...

There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex with a few spots open for those who would be willing to provide a simple lunch of your choice. All are welcome to come down to lunch.

LENTEN DAILY DEVOTION BOOKS

are available in the narthex and church office.

Love Outpoured focuses on portions of the apostle Paul's letter to the Romans. In words



that continue to speak to us today, Paul lays out foundational beliefs for a life of faith in Christian community.

With diverse voices and pastoral wisdom, the daily devotions encompass Ash Wednesday through the Resurrection of Our Lord / Vigil of Easter.

EASTER FLOWERS

Order forms are in the narthex and in the church office. Please indicate the number of plants you are ordering and return the form along with your payment by Wednesday, March 18.

First English Mission Statement

*Our mission is to grow in faith,
serve our neighbors, and
support one another.*



Tuesday, March 3, 6:30 p.m. We'll gather in Fellowship Hall.

ELCA WOMEN

Charity Circle... will not meet in March.

Shalom Circle...

will meet on Thursday, **March 19, 6:45 p.m.** in the Fireside Room.



8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

(closed for lunch: Noon – 1:00 p.m.)

Deadlines:

Bulletin: Wednesday afternoon

Next deadline for the April Lantern: March 16.

LENTEN SELF DENIAL ENVELOPES

are in your envelope packets and also in the packet for those who use the packets with only the 'special' envelopes.

The offerings in these envelopes are designated to ELCA World Hunger. May this be a faithful response to God in thanksgiving for Christ's great gift to us. Thank you for your gifts.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS...

Sunday, March 8.

Remember to set your clocks **AHEAD** one hour on Saturday, March 7. If you don't, you'll be an hour late for worship and Sunday School!



OUR THANKS

to these members for designating their Thrivent Choice dollars for February to First English:

- Amy Abitz
- Jane Schalow
- Wayne Schalow
- Pat Seivert

GREAT JOB - REALM SIGN UP

We're excited to share that 41% of our members who use email have created accounts with our Realm online church ministry and communications tool. This is great progress! Thank you!

The first step to get set up with Realm is to receive an email from Sharon Hunter inviting you to click on a link and set up your account using your email address and a 15-digit password.

We're happy to help. Feel free to contact any member of the Technology Task Force to get started:

- Sharon Hunter: shunteratdpi@msn.com or 715-212-1672
- Cindy Hermel : clhermel@hotmail.com or 715-573-0720
- Michael Klapperich
mjklapperich@yahoo.com or 715-551-1873
- Kalynn Pempek:
kmpempek@gmail.com or 715-571-0325
- Pastor Mary Zupansic
pastor@firstenglishlutheranwausau.org – 920-671-4338

2025 ANNUAL REPORT ADDENDUM

There were 3 of our Sunday School students who were inadvertently omitted for the Annual Report Parish Records.

Kaedance Koehler, Henry Lodaahl, and Anna Marquard received their First Communion on November 16, 2025.

Our apologies to Kaedance, Henry, and Anna.

THE 2026 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

of the East Central Synod of Wisconsin will be held June 4- 6, at the Oshkosh Marriot Waterfront Hotel. Our congregation may send two delegates.

If you are interested contact Pastor Mary soon. Your registration and hotel expenses will be covered by First English.

AFTER WORSHIP COFFEE HOURS

Check out the new sign-up sheet in the narthex if you would like to provide after-worship treats on Sundays.



We extend our worship experience by staying after worship to share some fellowship with each other, especially with a treat! You don't have to provide fancy treats are just fine, and there is always someone around to help with making coffee! Thanks!



THE 2026 FLOWER CHART

is on the bulletin board in the narthex. If you want to provide flowers for our Sunday worship in memory of a loved one or a special occasion, you may sign up on your desired date.

CHURCH IN SOCIETY

Community Suppers

We are again committed to 5 Sunday afternoon suppers for 2026.

FEBRUARY COMMUNITY SUPPER

96 appreciative guests enjoyed barbeque pork sandwiches, coleslaw, chips and pudding.

Thanks to helpers who cooked and/or served: Deb Kluetz, Karen Briggs, Deb and Laura Thumstedter, Lynne and Dina Santangelo.

The April and June suppers are spoken for. We are still in need of cooks for the third Sunday in October and December! If you are interested but have questions, talk to any of the folks on the sign-up sheet in the narthex.

COMMUNION CARDS

First English members:
For our recording keeping purposes, please fill out a communion card **once per calendar year**. Thank you!



TREASURE SALE NEWS...

Treasure Sale 2026 will be held June 11, 12, & 13.

Once again -- **PLEASE do not bring microwaves, appliances, broken furniture or housewares.**



If we receive a microwave, we won't sell it and it is then our expense to take it to recycling. We will not sell damaged items, and we end up throwing them away.

We accept clean clothes for all ages, housewares, collectibles, books, linens, DVDs, CDs, and more...all in good condition. If you donate linens, please mark them with what size they are. This is very helpful.

We also accept small appliances in working condition, and furniture.

Your donations can be brought downstairs in the hallway by the Sunday School rooms. There is a sign on the door.

Thank you so much for your donations!

THE 2026 CHRISTMAS TREASURE SALE

will be held **November 6 and 7** in Fellowship Hall. You can start bringing your donations for this sale as well.

LET US REMEMBER...

those in our congregation who are confined to their homes or are in nursing home or assisted living facilities due to illness, rehab/therapy, or are just unable to attend worship or fellowship activities. They would love and appreciate hearing from their church family with a card, visit, note or phone call.

Cady Home

1805 N. 6th Ave., Wausau WI 54401
- Michelle Detert Room 4

Mountain Terrace Senior Living

3402 Terrace Ct. Wausau WI 54401
- Diane Zuelke Room 133

Primrose Retirement Community

2100 Townline Rd. Wausau WI 54403
- Kathie Peterson Room 228

Rennes Health and Rehab

4602 Barbican Ave. Weston, WI 54476
- Sue McKee #235
- Dennis & Laurayne Nicoliasen #121

Rennes Health and Rehab

4810 Barbican Ave., Weston, WI 54476
- Ila Bartelt #206

Sylvan Crossings on Evergreen

1605 Evergreen Rd., Wausau WI 54403
- Dolores Hintz Room 13

Wood Aven Living Community

1821 N.4th Ave. Wausau 54401
- Gary Klingbeil Room 110

AT HOME...

- **Audrey Fellbaum** 1204 Spruce St.
Wausau, WI 54401 715-845-9552

- **John & Karen Otto** 6401 Teagan Lane
Weston 54476 715-241-6369

- **Delphine Saeger** 151700 Fern Ln.
Wausau 54401 715-298-3210

- **Eleanor Thorpe** 2901 N. 7th St. Apt. W102
Wausau 54403 715-298-1865



**Worship Assistants - Ushers
Communion Set-up / Assistants
Communionware Washers / Acolytes
Greeters / Lectors**

TO THOSE WHO ASSIST IN WORSHIP

FYI...this note is just to let you know Sharon Hunter is scheduling the weekly Thursday and Sunday worship service volunteers. If you cannot serve when you are scheduled, please find someone to take your place and let Sharon know so the correct name is reflected in the bulletin. We truly appreciate everyone who helps to make our worship service meaningful. Reach Sharon at shunteratdpi@msn.com or 715 212 1672.

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS:

March 1: Connie Vaningan
March 8: Lynne Santangelo
March 15: Pat Seivert
March 22: Kalynn Pempek
March 29: Connie Vaningan

April 2 (Maundy Thursday): Lynne Santangelo
April 5 (Easter): (8:00 a.m.) Pat Seivert
(10:00 a.m.) Kalynn Pempek
April 12: Connie Vaningan
April 19: Lynne Santangelo
April 26: Pat Seivert

ACOLYTES:

March 1: Kaedyn Hadley
March 8: Brooklyn Detert
March 15: Annabella Oestreich
March 22: Kynsley Koshler-Dahlquist
March 29: Kaedyn Hadley

ACOLYTES

April 2 (Maundy Thursday) -
April 5 (Easter): (8:00 a.m.) Brooklyn Detert
(10:00 a.m.) -
April 12: Annabelle Oestreich
April 19: Kynsley Koehler-Dahlquist
April 26: Kaedyn Hadley

LECTORS:

March 1: Lynne Santangelo
March 8: Pat Seivert
March 15: Connie Vaningan
March 22: Lette Becker
March 29: Karen Briggs

April 2 (Maundy Thursday): Dawn Kramer
April 3 (Good Friday): (1:15) Sue Juedes
(6:00) Connie Vaningan
April 5 (Easter): (8:00 a.m.) Karen Briggs
(10:00 a.m.) Sheri Fochs
April 12: Sue Juedes
April 19: Dawn Kramer
April 26: Kalynn Pempek

LECTORS: (Thursday Evening Worship)

March 5: Cheri Breneman
March 12: Maralee Moellendorf
March 19: Bobbie Levine
March 26: Barry Levine

April 2 (Maundy Thursday): Dawn Kramer
April 9: Marla Zumann
April 16: Cheri Breneman
April 23: Maralee Moellendorf
April 30: Bobbie Levine

ALTAR GUILD:

March: VerJean Detert
April: Sue Juedes

GREETERS:

March 1: Dawn Schumitsch / Sharon Hunter
March 8: Amy Abitz and Eli Akey
March 15: VerJean Detert/Angela Greenfield
March 22: Cindy Hermel / Linda Kittel
March 29: Dilynn Koehler / Deb Kufahl

April 5 (Easter): (8:00 a.m.) C Hermel/L Kittel
(10:00 a.m.) L & L Lewis
April 12: Gene & Lynn Schulz
April 19: Lois Stasko / Sharon Hunter
April 26: Mike & Connie Vaningan

COMMUNION SET-UP:

March 1: Deb Kluetz
March 8: Dawn Kramer
March 15: VerJean Detert
March 22: Deb Kluetz
March 29: Dawn Kramer

April 2 (Maundy Thursday): Deb Kluetz
April 5 (Easter): (8:00 a.m.) Dawn Kramer
(10:00 a.m.) VerJean Detert
April 12: Deb Kluetz
April 19: Dawn Kramer
April 26: VerJean Detert

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS:

March 1: Sharon Hunter
March 8: Dawn Kramer
March 15: Deb Kufahl
March 22: Lynn Schulz
March 29: Emma Schumitsch

April 2 (Maundy Thursday): Cheri Breneman
April 5 (Easter): (8:00 a.m.) Deb Kufahl
(10:00 a.m.) Sharon Hunter
April 12: Sue Wolf
April 19: Lette Becker
April 26: Jenny Blaschka

COMMUNIONWARE WASHERS:

March 1: Lynne Santangelo
March 8: Neil & Sue Juedes
March 15: Lonnie & LeAnn Lewis
March 22: Deb Kluetz / Dawn Kramer
March 29: Bob & Pat Seivert

April 2 (Maundy Thursday): Lynne Santangelo
April 5 (Easter): (8:00 a.m.) D Kluetz/D Kramer
(10:00 a.m.) Lynne Santangelo
April 12: Neil & Sue Juedes
April 19: Lonnie & LeAnn Lewis
April 26: Deb Kluetz / Dawn Kramer

USHERS:

March 1: Scott & Deb Kufahl / Steve Wendorf
March 8: D Chapman / B Lampe / E Zabel
March 15: N & S Juedes / Jenny Blaschka
March 22: Gene & Lynn Schulz / Deb Kluetz
March 29: Matt & Lori Heyne

April 2 (Maundy Thursday): M & C Vaningan.
Sharon Hunter
April 3 (Good Friday): S & D Kufahl / S Wendorf
April 5 (Easter): (8:00 a.m.) E Zabel/B Lampe
D Chapman
(10:00 a.m.) -
April 12: Sue & Neil Juedes / Jenny Blaschka
April 19: Gene & Lynn Schulz / Deb Kluetz
April 26: Lori & Matt Heyne / Matt Schumitsch

Subs: Shawn & Jenny Blaschka, Lowanne Brokaw, Matt & Lori Heyne, Sharon Hunter, Sue & Neil Juedes, Deb Kluetz, Deb Kufahl, Mike Vaningan, Earl Zabel

The cross is the place where our suffering and God's suffering meet, and where we discover that we are not alone in our pain.
- Henri Nouwen



**FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2026, 6:00 P.M.**

Members Present: Sheri Fochs, Cindy Hermel, Kalynn Pempek, Dina Santangelo, Mike Vaningan, Marla Zumann, Pastor Mary Zupansic, Scott Kufahl (guest) Mike Klapperich, Nicholas Schumacher, Jim Kraft, Liz Oestreich, Paula Lorbeicki, Sharon Hunter

Members Absent: Angela Greenfield, Neil Juedes, Jenny Blaschka
Nicholas Schumacher led opening devotions.

Reports

January Meeting Minutes: The January Council minutes were reviewed. Cindy Hermel moved and Jim Kraft seconded a motion to approve the January minutes. Motion passed.

Financial Reports: Secretary financial report presented for information

Pastor's Report:

Worship: Presided and preached 6 Sundays, 5 Thursdays: Led Children's Messages at weekly Sunday services. Sermon prep – Text Podcasts and Commentaries. Sermon Writing (and re-writing 😊)

Pastoral Care Activities: Funeral Prep – Petzke, Funeral @ FE – Petzke, Funeral Prep – Hopperdietzel, Funeral @ Helke's – Hopperdietzel, 4 Hospital visits, 1 Pastoral visits, Day to day conversations with members

Committee Meetings and other Activities:

Finished planning for the Cross-Generation Event and led the Cross-Generation Event
Attended the Rostered Ministers Zoom meeting with Bishop Anne Edison-Albright
Took part in a burning of the palms with several local ELCA pastors!
Meet every Tuesday with a clergy group for support and sharing of ministry ideas
Met with the Technology Team to review plan for the roll out of REALM
Met with the Ad Hoc Team for follow-up discussion regarding RSO. The Team does not feel that FE would be a good fit for welcoming RSO's at this time. We are looking into alternatives to in-person worship.

Attended Committee Night (briefly) touched base with Worship & Music, Church in Society
Taught Confirmation Class
We are due for a mandatory constitution update

Community Assistance Fund Proposal -Pastor Mary provided information on this proposal. It's Statement of Purpose: "To be shared resource among participating ELCA Wausau area churches, for the benefit of our neighbors with emergency needs". Financial need has continued to rise in our local community, our churches have seen an increase in requests for assistance for food, rent, utilities, and other emergency needs, either referred to our church offices by the police department or via cold calls and our local ELCA churches have different means of being able to meet this needs and have not always communicated about needs in the past. Each participating Wausau area ELCA congregation is able, but not required, to contribute to this shared fund, when it is established and in the future as funds are used. Eventually, a shared fundraising effort may be established that will raise funds year to year. This proposal would bring together a shared fund currently among 5 local ELCA churches to help the community. Proposal is for First English to give \$1000 this year and then earmark \$4,000 for the next 4 years. Tabled discussion until Pastor Mary has had another meeting to answer some questions and have more clarification on what this will look like.

Parish Ed – Youth are going to do a Chili Super. The National Youth Gathering theme is Imagine More. Sunday School Mission Sunday pushed to the third Sunday in March. Lock-in will be March 21st. No 8th graders so no confirmation this year. Talked about ordering prayer dice the children could have to use at home to help them develop a prayer life. Did cross generation day.
Technology-Presented contract for the digital signage media player and Samsung screen. One time charge of \$1,060.53 and then monthly fee of \$41. This was already approved. This is just an update.

Worship & Music – Decision to do mid-week 12:15 services instead of evening services Wednesdays for Lent due to attendance and some of our population not wanting to be out driving at night.. One evening service for Maundy Thursday. 1:00 service and evening service for Good Friday. Still holding regular Thursday night evening services throughout Lent.

Stewardship – Wrote Thank You Notes

Church & Society – Lynne Santangelo did some research in regard to what ICE is doing. Training of 50 people to identify ICE though there is no action of ICE in the area at this time. Community supper was held on February 15th and served 96 people.

Property – Met on Feb 3. Members Present Scott Kufahl, Mike Vaningan, Earl Zabel, Mike Alters & Kalynn Pempek. Topics Discussed: We will be meeting with a cleaning company-Spotless Cleaners. Friday, February 20 with the goal to start March 1. \$800 a month in the budget. We will get an estimate from them for the cost of striping and waxing the fellowship hall floor and the hallway. We will need to test the AEDs/defibrillators and schedule a refresher for members. Projects for this year include window well covers, heater at parking lot entry way, painting in sanctuary & LED lights for chandeliers. Decisions Made: We will investigate our current loan and consider funding for painting the sanctuary and LED lights for chandeliers. We will contact WI Public Service to see if there's a charge to churches for an energy audit.

Youth – Look at combining Parish Ed/Youth into one committee. Further discussion to happen.

Wage & Policy – Nothing to report.

Fair Stand – Nothing to report

Treasure Sale – Nothing to report.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Approval of Minutes via Digital-Discussion of approving the minutes digitally through Realm so the minutes can be presented to the members faster. Motion to approve Kalynn Pempek. Second Sharon Hunter. Motion passed.

Installation of New Council-Will take place at the service February 22.

Synod Civil Rights Tour-Bishop is organizing a tour covering the highlights of the Civil Rights Area. Reach out to Pastor Mary to get a flyer if interested.

Realm-56 out of 95 people who were sent emails have signed up

Synod Assembly- Have one volunteer so far- Karen Briggs. Looking for one more person. Takes place in June in Oshkosh. The church pays for overnight. See Pastor Mary if interested.

Next Meeting Date: Monday, March 16th
6:00PM

A motion to adjourn was made by Jim Kraft and seconded by Kalynn Pempek. Meeting adjourned.

Closing devotions were provided by Nicholas Schumacher

Sheri Fochs, Recording Secretary
Approved 2/19/20

HELP FOR THE HOMELESS HYGIENE DRIVE February 22 – March 15.

Help ease financial strain on 3 local homeless and crisis programs in the Wausau area and those they serve!

Most needed items:

bathroom tissue, cleaning supplies, dental care, deodorant, diapers and baby care, face/bath soap, feminine care, laundry soap, paper towels, razors, hair care, trash bags.

Donations remain in the community where they are collected.

There is a box in our narthex coat room for you to put your donations!

This drive is sponsored by *the family*, 88.5 FM Marathon County.



FROM PASTOR TRYPHINE

Many people ask where my name comes from. Here is the long explanation. Tryphaena (Gk “dainty”) Romans 16:12

One of two Christian women greeted by Paul at the close of his letter to the congregations in Rome as “workers in the Lord.” The similarity of their names, (both from a common root in the Greek word for ‘luxurious living’) gives rise to the supposition that Tryphaena and Tryphosa were sisters, if not twins. Both names are found in Latin inscriptions of the period for members of the imperial household. Tryphaena was sometimes used of Jewish women, and was the name of the queen from Pontus, in Asia Minor, who befriended the early Christian virgin Thecla, in the apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla. In The Acts of Paul and Thecla, Tryphaena is spelled Trifina.

A friend of my mother-in-law did the research but did not indicate where she got the information. I pulled up the Acts of Paul and Thecla and found the different spelling.

The short explanation was that her High School English teacher’s name, and she liked it.

THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LORD

What is the meaning of the Annunciation of Our Lord?



Annunciation, in Christianity, is the announcement by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary that she would conceive a son by the power of the Holy Spirit to be called Jesus.

Nine months before Christmas the church acknowledges the Annunciation.

In Luke the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will give birth to the Son of God, and she responds, “Here I am, the servant of the Lord.” So, 9 months from March 25 is Christmas Day!

LIVING SACRIFICES

***To search our souls, to meditate,
will not suffice for Lent.***

***to share the cross, to sacrifice;
these are the things God meant.***

-- Jane McKay Lanning

A LENTEN REFLECTION

Give up complaining; focus on gratitude.

Give up harsh judgements; think kindly thoughts.

Give up worry; trust divine Providence.

Give up discouragement; be full of hope.

Give up bitterness; turn to forgiveness.

Give up hatred; return good for evil.

Give up negativism; be positive.

Give up pettiness; become mature.

Give up jealousy; pray for trust.



