

**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

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*“Servants of All”*

April 2013, Newsletter

March 26, 2013

# *“Building on Blessings”*

As a part of the Worship Space Enhancement project approved by the congregation and now underway, stewards/members and friends of First Lutheran are invited to participate in “Building on Blessings” during the coming weeks.

We will hold group and individual gatherings and communicate in various ways—newsletters, special mailings, electronic means—to inform and inspire everyone about this exciting ministry!

First, however, we will pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to lead us and guide us. We have a rich heritage at First Lutheran; we believe God calls us to build on these blessings. One of our congregational leaders said it best, “A project such as this is a faith venture—we trust God to lead us, guide us, and carry us into the future.”

“Building on Blessings” begins on Sunday, March 24. The Rev. Nancy Amacher, a stewardship consultant with ELCA Stewardship Key Leaders will share the message at all services. We invite you to be present on this special day of worship!

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## Pastor Dave's Article

*"See, I am making all things new."*

Revelation 21:5 NRSV

Greetings friends and family of First Lutheran,

As you may or may not know Pastor Dave is going on a Sabbatical this summer.

"Sabbatical leave at First Lutheran Church is an opportunity to take a significant amount of time away from ministry responsibilities to be used for both professional growth and personal renewal. It is intended to sharpen the pastors' skills and renew his/her enthusiasm so that both the pastor and congregation are enriched in the experience. It is not to be confused with "continuing education" which consists of one or more study opportunities experienced annually and normally involving no more than two weeks of time; nor is it to be confused with vacation time." *First Lutheran Church Sabbatical Leave Resolution*, 2002.

Here are some of the details of Pastor Dave's Sabbatical...

On May 15, 2013 I will depart for Norfolk, Virginia. I will spend a couple of days in prayer and on Sunday, May 19, I will dip the rear wheel of my bicycle into the Atlantic Ocean and begin the trek west... some 50 days and 3,900 miles later I will dip the front tire in the Pacific Ocean. I will travel along the Transamerica Bicycle trail through Virginia, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and then into California.

Along the route I will be in prayer (for more than just a tail wind!). I will be in silence away from the day to day responsibilities and have responsibility for nothing more than pedaling. I will also listen to the Holy Spirit and how the Word of God is speaking to me, and hear how He is speaking to others I meet along the road.

While on sabbatical I will read a book that I invite you to read along with me. You and I and others can share conversation about our reading, via the First Lutheran website and an email connection. The title of the book is "40-Day Journey with

Parker Palmer." Each day's reading is "short," so you could spend as little as 5 or 6 minutes a day reading it. As one reviewer noted: "The readings are so profound that you could spend an hour thinking, praying and journaling with it." I look forward to sharing this "journey" together with you and others.

The soft cover book is available to purchase in the church office (\$12.00) or at any bookstore, a digital copy for Kindle can be purchased from Amazon.

The purpose of a sabbatical is two fold—for professional growth and personal spiritual renewal. Thank you for this opportunity. I ask for your prayers as I journey through this sabbatical; I will be in prayer for you as well.

Watch for updates periodically on the church website, [www.flclittlefalls.org](http://www.flclittlefalls.org). You can check out my route and itinerary and follow my progress on a U.S. map posted at church.

Blessings, peace, and rest be with you,

Pastor Dave  
[dsperstad@flclittlefalls.org](mailto:dsperstad@flclittlefalls.org)

p.s. If you know someone along the route with whom I might stay the night, please let me know, it would be appreciated!



## Worship Space Enhancement Update

In November the congregation voted to move forward with the proposed worship space enhancement project and here we are—still moving forward!

We voted to use the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA as our lender. We have received word from the MIF that the loan is approved at an attractive and competitive rate. We will close on the loan soon.

The third part of our vote was to use Stewardship Key Leaders of the ELCA to assist with a capital campaign. This campaign begins Sunday, March 24. *See the article on page one.*

Honestly, I am not sure that I can adequately share the excitement I feel about how the project has progressed to this point! We have new paint on the walls and the carpet is removed in Stoltz Hall and the Education wing! The first phase of the project is likely to be completed during the first week of April. After Easter work begins in the kitchen.

As we proceed we are working together to alleviate disruption to schedules and continue with the normal ministry activities and opportunities and those for which we provide space.

Please bear with us as we progress on the ministry enhancement God has called us to do. Please continue to pray for the project and the leaders of the project. When you have opportunity, please thank the members of the Worship Space Enhancement team who have worked diligently on the plans. They are: Stephanie Adams, LaVerne Hempeck, Bob and Sonya Just, Darrell Larsen, Bruce Moller, Paula Monahan, Nancy Ratzloff, and Tammy Zwilling, and the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit ... who guide us!

Building together,

Pastor Dave

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### 2013 NE MN Synod Assembly “Always Being Made New” May 3-5 Zion Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids

First Lutheran Church voting members Craig Ahlin, Les Hittesdorf, Ruth Jeremiason-Jensen and Pastor David Sperstad will attend the Northeast Minnesota Synod Assembly Friday-Sunday, May 3-5. This year’s focus will be on “Always Being Made New.” The focus will be on Colossians 2:6-7.

Keynote speakers are Dr. Winston Persaud, Professor of Systematic Theology at Wartburg Theological Seminary. Ms. Mikka McCracken will represent the ELCA. Former ELCA Presiding Bishop, Rev. Herbert Chilstrom is guest speaker Saturday evening.

First Lutheran’s quilters are donating a quilt to the silent auction, you can place a bid on this quilt,

before it is sent to the assembly, watch for the display in the gathering space. Available again this year is The Marketplace, a Silent Auction of new items and services, if you have an item or service to donate, please contact the church office. All proceeds from both auctions will benefit ELCA World Hunger Appeal.



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

## News of the Family



Christopher Anthony Kozumplik, son of Peter and Sara Kozumplik, was baptized on March 3.  
Welcome to the kingdom of God!



Elaine Boody died on March 1. Her funeral service was March 6 at First Lutheran.

Kim Liebel died on March 8. His funeral service was March 19 at First Lutheran.

May God grant peace and comfort to the family and friends of these stewards.



Welcomed new steward/members into the congregation, they are: Jesse and Jessica Cochran and Derrick, Mike and Carla Fenske, Spencer and Austin, Jeffrey Nyreen and Robyn Nordlund, Barb Otremba, Kerry and Becky Smieja, Ellie, Avery, and Charlie, Char Stumpf, and Wendy Valentine.

### Council Highlights

- Heard that the “Building on Blessings” stewardship capital campaign begins on Sunday, March 24.
- Heard that notification was received from Mission Investment Fund that loan application was approved at favorable rates.
- Heard an update on the worship space enhancement project.
- Received an update from Pastor Sperstad on his Sabbatical plan.



## Holy Week and Easter Worship and Activities

### March 24 Palm Sunday

*Hosanna!*

8:00 a.m. Holy Communion

9:30 a.m. Praise Worship and Holy Communion

10:45 a.m. Holy Communion

### March 28—Maundy Thursday

*The service of Christ: footwashing and meal*

7:00 p.m. – Holy Communion with footwashing and second grade students receive communion

### March 29—Good Friday

*The passion and death of Christ*

1:00 p.m. – Good Friday Worship

7:00 p.m. – Tenebrae Service

### March 30—Saturday

9:30-11:30 a.m. – Easter Eggstravaganza!

*special event for youth age 3 thru second grade*

### March 31—The Resurrection of our Lord

*The resurrection of Jesus is announced*

7:00 a.m. – Sunrise Holy Communion

8:00-9:30 a.m. – Easter Breakfast

10:00 a.m. – Festival Holy Communion



## World Malaria Day

April 21, 2013

Malaria is a leading cause of death in Africa, claiming the life of a child every 45-60 seconds. In Liberia, malaria accounts for 30 percent of all deaths seen in hospitals. Since the launch of the ELCA Malaria Campaign last year, Lutheran churches are working in Angola, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe to control this preventable disease. They are distributing mosquito nets and medicine, and educating communities on prevention. In Zimbabwe, cases of malaria have been reduced by half since 2009, but are still well over 300,000 per year.

World Malaria Day is April 25. The ELCA will observe the day for one week—April 25-May 1 with the goal of raising \$200,000—enough to expand the anti-malaria work to Liberia.

The ELCA goal for 2012 was to raise \$4 million and together we did it! Thank you for your generosity and your commitment to the work of reducing malaria disease and death.

First Lutheran will join with congregations across the church to receive an offering for the ELCA Malaria Campaign on Sunday, April 21. Together we can make this dream a reality.

Please keep those who work in the campaign and those who are directly affected by this disease in your prayers and plan to give a gift to the malaria campaign. Checks may be made out to First Lutheran with “World Malaria Day” written in the memo line. Thank you!

## Fair Trade

Thank you for your ongoing support of the fair trade products in use at First (coffee) and purchased for your own home use (coffee, tea, chocolate, cocoa, nuts, cranberries). Products available for purchase in the church office provide needed income to those who labor to produce them. Thank you!



## Baskets of Promise for Lutheran World Relief

During Lent we participated in Lutheran World Relief's Baskets of Promise appeal. Each week, we collected a different item that we will use to assemble Personal Care Kits that give people around the world tools to stay healthy in life's most challenging situations. Our goal is to assemble 150 (or more!) Personal Care Kits during Lent. Here are the items for collection:

- ☞ Bars of soap, 4-5 ounce, any brand in original wrapping
- ☞ Bath towels, lightweight, 52"X27" max, dark color is best
- ☞ Toothbrushes, adult size, in original packaging
- ☞ Combs
- ☞ Nail clippers, metal, attached file optional

You can still contribute items for the kits, especially needed are the towels. Watch for a date to assemble the kits. Lutheran World Relief will distribute the assembled kits to people around the world who lack even the most basic needs. Thank you for providing a means to preserve dignity and give hope.

## 43rd Anniversary of Earth Day:

### “The Face of Climate Change”

**Earth Day**, officially April 22, is celebrated globally by thousands of communities as a collective expression of our hopes and dreams for a better world. Climate change can seem like a remote problem for our leaders, but the fact is that it’s already impacting real people, animals, and beloved places. These Faces of Climate Change are multiplying every day. Fortunately, other Faces of Climate Change are multiplying too: those stepping up to do something about it.

In all the stories of Jesus feeding a hungry crowd of 5000, God’s abundance is demonstrated when just a small quantity of food becomes a feast shared by many. Again and again, our faith teaches us that God’s abundance is given for all to share, yet in our stewardship of creation we often fail to consider how our use of resources will affect other people in our world and the generations who will come after us.

Earth Day is a day to reflect on how we all can be effective stewards of God’s creation and what role we as individuals and as a spiritual group can play in addressing this worldwide problem.

A Billion Acts of Green ® promotion continues, you can pledge one way that you will act to steward creation. **Here are a few ways you can make a difference:**

- *Don’t drink bottled water!* Fill a re-usable container with tap water. Americans use a half-billion plastic bottles each week.
- *Plant a tree!* Trees increase levels of oxygen in the air and filter out some of the pollutants.
- *Bring your own bag!* Use a cloth bag or reuse a bag when shopping. Local stores have re-usable bags available for about \$1.00.
- *Read to a child!* Help educate future care givers of the earth. Read an environmentally focused book such as [The Lorax](#).



- *Speak to your elected leaders!* Call, visit, write, or e-mail your leaders and let them know you’re concerned about stewardship of creation.
- *Start a compost pile!* Composting organic wastes reduces the amount of garbage produced by your household by as much as a third.
- *Don’t drive!* Walk, bike, run, skate, or carpool. First Lutheran will host “Ride a Bike to Church” day in June.
- *Get a recycling bin!* Reduce, reuse and recycle materials used both at home, at work and at church.
- *Replace a light bulb!* Exchange an incandescent bulb with a compact fluorescent bulb. They last ten times longer and use only one-fourth of the energy.
- *Use your own mug!* When you buy coffee, bring your own mug. Each year Americans throw away 23 billion Styrofoam cups. 500 years from now, the foam cup you used this morning will be sitting in a landfill!
- *Visit the Farmer’s Market!* Buy locally produced foods instead of goods that are trucked in.

Go to [www.earthday.org](http://www.earthday.org) for more information. Take the Ecological Footprint Quiz and find out how many planets would be needed to sustain life if everyone on earth lived as you do!

#### **Consider this...**

**Abundant Living:** As you welcome Christ into your life, is your shout of “Hosanna!” a message that carries Jesus’ hope for a cleansed and forgiven Earth? Americans consume 32 times more than people in the developing world. That means more greenhouse gases, more waste and greater economic inequalities.

Over the last 30 years, U.S. material consumption increased 57 percent. In 1992-2000, raw material usage increased by more than one third. In 2002, the United States used a total of 22.7 metric tons of stuff per person, 50 percent more than Europe.

Identify stuff in your life that is unnecessary or can be reused or borrowed from within your community. *Reprinted from Living Earth, ELCA web devotions, 2008.*

## Adult Opportunities

### April Women's Circle

"Gathered by God":

Session 8: Storytelling – Acts 14:27-28

### Martha Circle

The Martha Circle will meet Monday, April 15, at 10:00 p.m. Hostess is Betty Bengtson.



Sunday, April 7

2:00-3:30 p.m.

### First Lutheran Church, Brainerd

Practice Discipleship is an initiative happening across the ELCA to develop leaders for the sake of faith formation for young people and the entire church. The world is changing rapidly. One out of every five adults in the US claims to have no religious affiliation. Our task of faith formation just got more difficult. This is the start of a conversation about faith formation in a missional age. We will explore and strategize how we pass on faith in the current culture. What are the challenges we face? What is the opportunity? What are your fears and anxieties? What are your joys? All are welcome at this event, you will choose from several workshops including: "When Necessary, Use Words," "Dog Eating Chicken: Translating Faith," "Going Public," and more. First's Youth and Family Minister, Jay Kiel, is participating in the leadership of this initiative. Please contact Jay if you are interested in attending.

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### Adult Studies and Events

#### Cornerstones Potluck (Seniors age 55 and better)

Are you interested in participating in senior fellowship? Bring a friend and a food item to share and come for potluck lunch on Wednesday, April 17, at 11:30 a.m. We'll gather in Stoltz Hall to share food and conversation.

#### Men's Bible Study Breakfast

All are welcome to come for breakfast and Bible study! We meet the first and third Wednesday of each month at 6:15 a.m. Come when you can, leave when you must! Pastor Dave leads this study. For more information, speak to him.

#### Book Discussion Club

All adult readers are welcome to read with this group. The selection for April: Little Bee, by Chris Cleave. Readers, please secure your own copy of the books. The group will meet in the church library on Tuesday, April 23, at 7:00 p.m. to share and discuss the month's book. For more info contact Tifanii Dahl, 632-8207.

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### Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

Saturday, May 11

#### Chanhassen Dinner Theater

Don't miss this opportunity to take in this amazing musical dinner theater show! Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Morrison County Chapter, is sponsoring this event. Your ticket cost of \$60. per person includes comfortable coach bus transportation and dinner theater ticket.

The bus will load at Zion Lutheran Church at 9:00 a.m. and return at about 5:00 p.m. To register, call Carlyle Olsen at 632-1655. First come, first served. Payment must be received within 7 days of your phone reservation. Mail your payment to: Thrivent MC Chapter, 105 1<sup>st</sup> St NE, Little Falls 56345.

## "Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings from the "Children First" Christian Preschool!

March was full of learning fun: pets and zoo animals, St. Patrick's Day, dental and body health, and Holy Week and Easter! April themes explore signs of spring, flowers, Earth Day, and bugs.

The annual flower bulb sale is in progress now. Place your order in the church office or with a preschool family by Monday, April 15. Bulbs should arrive in time for Mother's Day.

2013/14 enrollment is underway for current families and First Lutheran families. Community enrollment begins April 2.

Class offerings are:

- ☺ Noah's Animals (33 mos-3 year olds) Monday and Wednesday, 9:00-11:30 a.m.
- ☺ Noah's Animals (33 mos-3 year olds) Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00-11:30 a.m.
- ☺ Jesus' Gems (4-5 year olds) meets Monday and Wednesday, 9:00-11:30 a.m.
- ☺ Jesus' Gems (4-5 year olds) meets Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00-11:30 a.m.

- ☺ Friday Friends (33 mos-5 year olds) meets Friday, 9:00-11:30 a.m. for those families wanting a three-day experience for their preschooler.
- ☺ Registration fee is \$60.00 and is non-refundable. Monthly tuition is \$80.00 per month. Friday Friends class is an additional \$35.00 per month. Brochures and registration forms are available in the First Lutheran Church office or by contacting Gail.
- ☺ Interested families with preschoolers are invited to a "Come and See" Day, Tuesday, April 16, 5:00-7:00 p.m. This is an opportunity to visit and play in the classroom, meet the staff, ask questions and enjoy a snack. Come and go as you are able.

Thank you to all for your patience during the church building renovation. Thank you to all who keep us in prayer and support us in so many ways. Your on-going encouragement is so much appreciated! God's blessings to you all.

Yours in Christ's Service,  
Gail Hittesdorf, Director

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### Sunday School News

- ☺ Two TREK rotations for grades K-5 remain this year. We begin "Jesus and the Children" on April 14, and "Pentecost" on May 5. Prayerfully consider how you can share your time and talents with the children of the congregation. You can sign up on the board in the gathering space. Hurry before they are filled. Thank you!
- ☺ Preschool/PreKindergarten: There are several opportunities to serve alongside Jessica Gustafson in the classroom. Parents, grandparents and friends are welcome to sign up on the Helper Sheet outside the classroom door. Thank you to all who have assisted in the classroom during March. You are greatly appreciated!

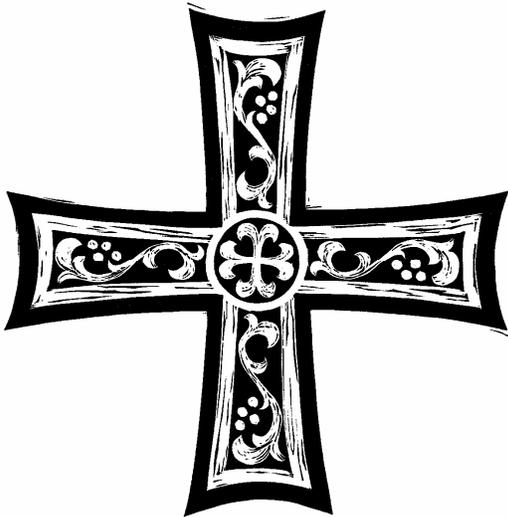
- ☺ Do you enjoy Party Planning and/or Crafting? The Commission for Education would like your assistance in preparing a fun celebration for the last regular Sunday School session on Sunday, May 19, before we break for the summer. If you can help, please contact Tracy Moe, Amber Sobiech or Gail Hittesdorf.





**Thank you to all who faithfully support Christ's mission at First Lutheran Church with their mail-in offerings!** Giving statements will be mailed to each giving unit/household following the end of the second quarter, sometime in July. Should you wish to receive a statement sooner than that, we can provide that for you. Please contact Sue or Gloria in the church office for this information.

You are encouraged to consider providing your giving to First Lutheran through the Simply Giving® program. Simply Giving is an automated giving plan that allows the giver to choose their gift amount and frequency of that gift. Automated giving ensures that your worshipping community receives your gift on a regular basis. For more information, contact the church office. **Thank you for your faithful giving!**



Items for the May NEWSLETTER are due on **April 19, 2013!**