



Holy Week and Easter Worship and Activities

April 13—Palm Sunday

Hosanna!

8:00 a.m. Holy Communion

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

10:45 a.m. Holy Communion

April 17—Maundy Thursday

The service of Christ: footwashing and meal

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

April 18—Good Friday

The passion and death of Christ according to John

1:00 p.m. – Good Friday Worship

7:00 p.m. – Tenebrae Service

April 19—Saturday

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

*special event for youth age 3 thru second grade
see page 3 for more information*

April 20—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

**Pastor David's
Article**

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**“Children First”
Christian Preschool**

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Education News!

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Pastor David's Article

"See, I am making all things new."

Revelation 21:5 NRSV

The season of Lent takes us to Easter, to the celebration and experience of the new life that Jesus won for us on the cross—but what does that mean to you, where you are today? During the season of Lent we acknowledge our brokenness, our sin, our mistakes—AND own up to the consequences! We can't blame God or others, just humbly ask God and others for forgiveness. That's HARD isn't it? When we acknowledge that we need forgiveness, we toss aside the image we try to project that we have it all together and that we just might actually have SOME responsibility for the messes our lives can get into. THAT'S the beginning of change, and of new life.

So, this is where you and your daily life enters into Lent. What brokenness has touched your life? If you're like the rest of us, you won't have to look very far or too hard to find something, be it health, family, job, relationships, or even in your personal life. I'm not saying to tell yourself that you are a loser, but, I am saying admit to God (or others) that you can't do this yourself and that you need assistance. Ask God to strip away the excuses, arrogance, fear and pride, then ask God to give forgiveness and healing – and then ask him to help, guide and protect you from picking those excuses back up again. I promise your outlook on the future will almost instantly change. Yes, it may even become more difficult for a time as you are now facing or bringing out those issues that need attention and assistance. It will feel different because you will no longer be ignoring those issues or blaming others,

including God, for them. You will be facing them! But, you will not be alone!

"More difficult" is NOT all bad; it means that we are dealing with hard things. If we DON'T deal with the hard things, they will deal with us, and that will NOT be pleasant. One sharpens a knife by rubbing it on a harder surface. If the soft metal of the knife had feelings I am sure it would cry out in pain. When we sharpen a knife and when we sharpen ourselves we rub off the burrs and this hurts at times. But without the burrs we are made sharp.

Help, support and the necessary rubbing off of the hard parts of our daily walk is available – You need not go it alone. God is there that's the promise!

Blessings as we continue in Lent,

See you in church!

Pastor Dave
dsperstad@fclittlefalls.org



2014 NE MN Synod Assembly
“Continue in Christ”
May 2-4
Breezy Point Resort

First Lutheran Church voting members Stephanie Adams, Jay Kiel, Mary Pfohl and Pastor David Sperstad will attend the Northeast Minnesota Synod Assembly Friday-Sunday, May 2-4. This year’s theme “Continue in Christ” will focus on how we are joined to Christ in baptism to be sent into God’s mission.

Keynote speakers are Dr. Winston Persaud, Professor of Systematic Theology at Wartburg Theological Seminary. ELCA Vice President Carlos Pena will be present to represent the churchwide body of Christ.

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.



Message excerpts from the NE MN Synod

Each of us benefits from encouragement that comes from others in the church. The apostle Paul was both a challenger and an encourager. He was a bridge builder of congregations in the early church and taught clearly about our shared work with and for each other and the world God loves so much. Encouragement is one of the “marks of discipleship” for followers of Jesus. You are one of those followers. Generosity abounded in the NE MN Synod this past year! Congregational Mission Support was \$1,166,868 in 2013. We were able to fund our ministry partners at 100%. They are: Luther Seminary, Lutheran Campus Ministry, Minnesota Council of Churches, Twin Ports Ministry to Seafarers, LCPPM, and ELCA Region 3. Together we supported ELCA ministries World Hunger, Disaster Relief, Malaria Campaign, and companion synods in Honduras and Ingria Russia with a total of \$295,231. We are made to honor and nurture each other and the world God has gifted us with. Thank you for your faith, active in generous giving. Carry on joyfully, generous Christian! Bishop Thomas M. Aitken

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!

News of the Family

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Amelia Lucille Meier, daughter of Aaron and Elizabeth Meier, was baptized on March 16. Welcome to the kingdom of God!

+

Henry Rahn died on March 8. His funeral service was March 14 at First Lutheran. May God grant peace and comfort to his family and friends.

+

Melissa Monnier and Kazuki Okumura were united in marriage on March 28. God's blessings on their life together!



Council Highlights

- Heard that a gift was received from the estate of Howard Wegner, long-time member of First Lutheran. This gift is designated for gathering space furnishings.
- Approved the staff ministry description for the Christian Education Director position.



Eco-Palms for Palm Sunday Worship

One small way that First Lutheran practices stewardship is through the purchase of Eco-Palms. Traditional harvesting of palms in Mexico and Guatemala has contributed to destruction of the forest and harm to the indigenous communities. Eco-Palms are harvested in a way that preserves the trees and also gives the workers a fair wage. May God bless the hands that do this work.

Easter Flowers

Share in the Spirit of Easter by sharing your Easter flowers (for example: lilies, tulips, etc.) with your First Lutheran family. The flowers may be given in remembrance of a loved one or in celebration of a special event or person. Flowers may be dropped off in the Library on Holy Saturday. Please label your flowers. If you would like a remembrance noted in the bulletin regarding your flowers, please call the church office by Monday, April 14.



Easter Breakfast

Come and enjoy the fellowship of Easter Breakfast on Sunday, April 20, from 8:00-9:30 a.m. A free-will offering will be received. We are serving a hot breakfast of pancakes, sausage, eggs, fruit, muffins, juice, milk and coffee. Thanks for your support! Thank you to the Commission for Youth for coordinating this year's breakfast. For more information or to offer your assistance, contact Jay Kiel, in the church office.

World Malaria Sunday

April 27, 2014

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, Lutheran churches are working in twelve African countries 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 observed around the world on April 25. The ELCA will observe the day for one week—April 25-May 1 with the goal of raising \$250,000—which is enough to kick-start malaria programming in Namibia.

The ELCA goal is to raise \$15 million to combat this disease by 2015; gifts total over \$10 million to date. 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 27. 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!

**Servant Opportunity:
Home Delivered Meals**

First Lutheran participates in delivering meals in the community. Our next dates to deliver meals are Monday-Friday, April 14-18. Meet at the Buckman building at 10:00 a.m., you’ll be done between 11:00-11:30 a.m. Contact the church office to volunteer. 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.

44th 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. Let’s help get to 2 Billion! **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!* More than a billion pounds of food are thrown away every year. 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.
- *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 from many miles away.

Go to 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.*

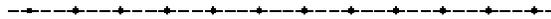
Adult Opportunities

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: Whistling Past the Graveyard, by Susan Crandall. Readers, please secure your own copy of the books. The group meets in the church library on Tuesday, April 29, at 7:00 p.m. to share and discuss the month's book. For more info contact Tifanii Dahl, 632-8207.



Lenten Challenge

Walk to Jerusalem - A Lenten Journey

We partner with brothers and sisters at Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church of Manassas, Virginia on the road for a healthy Lenten journey to Jerusalem with both congregations arriving for an Easter Celebration! We will journey 6,200 miles from First Lutheran to Jerusalem.

This is a "virtual walk" where participants log in "miles" each week. There are many ways to gain "miles": physically by walking, running, cycling, exercising, *shoveling*, gardening, and spiritually by daily devotions, scripture reading, prayer, worship, servant opportunities and more. Do these activities with a family member, friend or fellow steward and gain double the miles! You'll get a bonus 5 miles just for signing up ☺

Log your "miles" each week and we'll keep track of our progress to Jerusalem together. You can pick up a log sheet at church, download it from the church web-site www.flclittlefalls.org or contact the church office for a mail or email version.

April Martha Circle

"In Good Company –

Stories of Biblical Women":

Session 8: Rizpah, a Vigilant Mourner

The Martha Circle will meet Monday, April 21, at 10:00 p.m. Hostess is Betty Bengtson.

Palm Sunday Lefse Sale April 13

Connect with the Scandinavian heritage of First Lutheran by supporting this fundraiser for our youth programs. Make sure to pick up some lefse as you leave worship on Palm Sunday. If you would like to help make lefse on Friday evening, April 11 or Saturday, April 12, call the church office 632-6667. Uff da!

Lutheran Social Service Rummage Sale Wednesday-Friday, May 7-9

Mark your calendars for the spring Lutheran Social Service (LSS) rummage sale co-sponsored by Bethel and First Lutheran Church women will be held at Bethel Lutheran, at 901 West Broadway, on:

Wednesday, May 7, 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 8, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Friday, May 9, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Proceeds from the sale are used to benefit residents at the Lutheran Social Services group homes in this area. Set up days are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday morning, clean up begins at noon on Friday. Volunteers are much appreciated, there is lots of 'stuff' to organize – come when you can! The sale is a wonderful recycling opportunity for good, usable, clean clothing, books, linens, small appliances, toys, etc. Clean grocery bags, paper or plastic, are also needed. Please, no televisions, computers or computer parts. Sale items can be brought to Bethel in the morning, beginning Monday, April 28, or on the set-up days. For more information, contact Karen Haaland, at 632-8828.

"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. April themes explore signs of spring, flowers, Holy Week and Easter, Earth Day, and bugs.

2014/15 enrollment is underway for current families and First Lutheran families. Community enrollment begins April 1.

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.

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, Preschool Director

Sunday School News

- ☺ Two TREK rotations for grades K-5 remain this year. We begin "Go and Tell" on April 6, and "Jonah" on May 4. Thank you to all who have volunteered to lead a station or who assist in any way!
- ☺ 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 18, before we break for the summer. If you can help, please contact Tracy Moe, 632-2189 or Amber Sobiech, 632-6667.



Thank You

Dear Friends at First Lutheran,
Thank you for giving me the opportunity to coordinate, organize and lead you and your children in ministry over the past seven years as your Education Coordinator. The educational ministry that God has planned for us here is greater than we can imagine. Move forward with God's plan joyfully! Thank you for all you have done to make this ministry a powerful part of my faith journey.

In Christ's Service, Gail Hittesdorf

Staff Ministry Team Christian Education Director

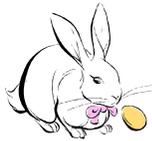
First Lutheran is accepting applications for the position of Christian Education Director. If you or someone you know is interested in this position as coordinator of Christian education ministries at First Lutheran, please submit an application and resumé to Amber Sobiech in the church office. Ministry descriptions are available in the church office. For more information, contact Pastor David Sperstad or Amber Sobiech.



**Vacation Bible School
August 4-8, 9:00-12:00 noon
"Weird Animals"**

Where Jesus Love is One-of-a-Kind

Now is the time to begin thinking about sharing your gifts with the more than 150 children who will attend VBS this summer. Do you love cooking? Making fun snacks? Games and physical activity? Working on creative crafts? Staying behind the scenes? Or perhaps you just like to spend time with children! For five fun-filled mornings we will help each other learn that Jesus love is One-of-a-Kind! Please prayerfully consider how God is calling you into this ministry. If you wish to be part of the planning, or want to assist with a particular area, or have any questions contact Amber Sobiech in the church office.



**Easter Eggstravaganza Scramble!
Saturday, April 19, 9:30-11:30 a.m.**

Kids! age 3 through second grade, please come with an adult for this **free** event here at First Lutheran. Experience the Easter story through sight, sound, taste, touch and smell as families work together to complete the Easter Story Challenge. We'll have games, crafts, lunch, an Easter egg hunt, and hear the Easter story from a special guest. Don't miss this *eggciting* time!



Graduating Seniors

Mark Sunday, May 18 in your planners. We'd like to honor you and your parents at a special service of worship (10:45 a.m.) and brunch (11:45 a.m.)
Watch your mail for more information and an invitation.

Confirmation Ministries

Second Grade: sessions on Holy Communion are Sundays, March 30 and April 6. Students and parents make clay chalices and paten/plate keepsakes and learn about the sacrament of Holy Communion. Second graders will have their feet washed and receive Holy Communion together on Maundy Thursday worship, April 17 at 7:00 p.m..

Seventh Grade: class on the Apostles' Creed at Luther Crest Bible Camp during the week of July 7-12. If you have not returned your registration, please do so or call the church office with your intentions. Thank you!

Tenth Grade: Students and mentors please continue to work on your mentor activities. Perhaps you could attend worship together?

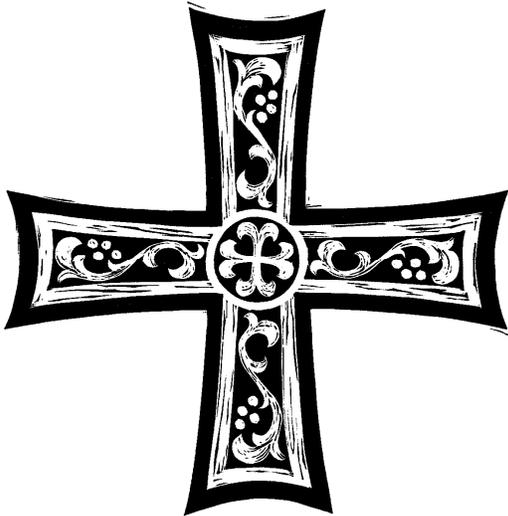
Can Care Collection

Keep saving those aluminum cans!
Save a can – Save the earth –
Save our youth budget! Keep those cans coming!

**Sunday Worship Schedule
Fall – Winter – Spring**

- 8:00 a.m. Traditional Worship using a variety of liturgical settings – Holy Communion is received on the first and third Sunday of each month and celebration Sundays
- 9:30 a.m. Praise Worship led by a Praise Band – Holy Communion is received on the first and third Sunday of each month and celebration Sundays
- 10:45 a.m. Traditional Worship using a variety of liturgical settings – Holy Communion is received at this service every week

Come and See!



Items for the May NEWSLETTER are due on
April 18, 2014!