



“Servants of All”

April 2015, Newsletter

March 27, 2015



Holy Week and Easter Worship and Activities

March 29—Palm Sunday

Hosanna!

8:30 a.m. Holy Communion

9:35 a.m. Sunday School

10:30 a.m. Holy Communion

April 2—Maundy Thursday

The service of Christ: footwashing and meal

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

April 3—Good Friday

The passion and death of Christ

1:00 p.m. – Good Friday Tenebrae Worship

7:00 p.m. – Good Friday Tenebrae Worship

April 4—Saturday

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

special event for youth age 3 thru second grade

see page 9 for more information

April 5—The Resurrection of our Lord

The resurrection of Jesus is announced

7:30 a.m. – Sunrise Holy Communion

8:30-10:00 a.m. – Easter Breakfast

10:30 a.m. – Festival Holy Communion

Pastor Hank's Article
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**“Children First”
Christian Preschool**
see page 8

Education News!
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What a marvelous time of the year—as the world greens again, as flowers poke their heads out of the dirt, as the air grows warm and the spring rains return and the songs of returning birds can be heard through newly opened windows. A reminder of resurrection as the world seemingly comes to life again.

But of course, life lives on even in the dark and cold of a Minnesota winter. The earth has just been waiting to array itself in finery again—amazing us once again with the tenacity and resiliency of life, and astonishing us once again with the fecund creativity of the God who loves life.

Jesus lived on, even in the dark and cold of death, and the newly opened tomb, the rising of Jesus, is perhaps the most powerful affirmation of God’s love of life. ***Come and worship on Easter Sunday*** as we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus; come and celebrate our faith that as it was with Jesus so it will be with us—in the grace of the God who loves life, death will not speak the last word over any of us; death, you see, is only the next to last word. The last word to be spoken over us will be life.

He is risen! He is risen indeed! And so it will be with us!

“First Lutheran Church is a good place to be—a good place to worship; a good place to grow in faith; a good place to serve God by serving others. First is a vibrant community of faith, hope and love where all are welcome.”

That’s what I tell folks who ask me about First Lutheran. After worshipping and serving with you for the last eight months, I say it with confidence because I have experienced it to be true. And I bet you have too. And in the grace of the God who has called us into this community of faith, it will continue to be true for years and years to come.

One of the many ways the grace of God comes to us is through the faithfulness of God’s people. The way the members and friends of First have participated in our many ministries and have financially supported those ministries over the years is the central reason we have been able to do ministry that really matters in the lives of real people. Thank you for what you have done and continue to do.

For the past couple of years, we have not had a formal Stewardship Drive to increase the financial resources we need to support the many things we do together. It is time to do just that. The costs of maintaining our facilities, supporting our great

staff, and doing the ministries that make First a good place to be keep going up, and our only source of income is the gifts of our members and friends.

Shortly after Easter, you will receive a letter from me about our 2015 Stewardship Drive. Our theme is ***Changing Lives Together***, because that is exactly what we do with your support. I hope you will read the letter carefully and prayerfully. On the back you will find a list of some of the many things we do with the gifts you give. Look it over. It’s an impressive list—thanks to all of you.

Along with the letter, you will receive a Commitment Card where you can indicate how much you expect to be able to give in support of our ministries in the coming year. Please return the card by April 26th. And thank you—*together we are this community of faith.*

One final note. The Call Committee will begin interviewing candidates for a call to be First Lutheran’s pastor in April. Pray for the Committee and pray for the candidates that God’s Spirit would give them the wisdom needed for a good decision.

***And a blessed Easter to you all!
He is risen! He is risen indeed!
And so it will be with us!***

2015 NE MN Synod Assembly
“The Power of Forgiveness” May 1-3, Breezy Point Resort

First Lutheran Church voting members Doug Anderson, Les Hittesdorf, Mary Pfohl and Jay Kiel will attend the Northeast Minnesota Synod Assembly Friday-Sunday, May 1-3. This year’s theme is “The Power of Forgiveness.” Who among us is done receiving forgiveness, or granting forgiveness? We will focus on how forgiveness heals the past, present and future.

Keynote speaker is Dr. Anna Madsen, Dr. Madsen is an ordained Lutheran pastor with a Ph.D. in systematic theology from the University of Regensburg, Germany. Directly before her return to the States, an accident killed her husband and inflicted a traumatic brain injury on her small son. This event reshaped not only her family, her vocation, and the trajectory of her life, but also her theology. ELCA Secretary Chris Boerger will be present to represent the churchwide body of Christ and will bring the message on Saturday morning.

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 \$1,140,369 in 2014. 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 \$239,247. Thank you for your faith, active in generous giving. Continue to give and serve joyfully! 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



Brogan Grace Williams, daughter of Aaron and Stacy Williams, was baptized on March 1.

Kaydence LeRoy Henry Olson, son of Randy and Kelsie Olson, was baptized on March 15.

Emmett Leon Zellert, son of James and Jodie Zellert, was baptized on March 15.

Welcome to the kingdom of God!



Dennis Flesner died on March 13. His memorial service was March 19 at First Lutheran. May God grant peace and comfort to his family and friends.



Paige Saulter and Ben Nelson were united in marriage on March 21. God's blessings on their life together!



Received the following new members on March 22: Thomas and Diane Banwart, Shawn and Julie Kapsch, Karl and Lauren Martinson, Steve Pfeffer,

Jim and Karen Rudack, David and Theresa Scherping, Connor, Brenden, Chase and Riley, Scott and Lori Williams, and Paul Younie.

Welcome to all!



Council Highlights

- Council officers for 2015 are: President: Mark Hanson, Vice-President: Merlin Bruns, Treasurer: Craig Ahlin, Secretary: Stephanie Adams
- Began Strategic Planning process with a book study: Twelve Keys to an Effective Church. Sub-committees will work together on several areas of
- Approved recommendation from "Children First" Preschool Advisory Team to increase monthly tuition for fall 2015 to \$85.00 per month, \$35 additional for three-day week.
- Approved revised ministry description for Pastor.



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, March 30.



Easter Breakfast

Come and enjoy the fellowship of Easter Breakfast on Sunday, April 5, from 8:30-10:00 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 26, 2015

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 26. 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). 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. We collected items 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 60 (or more!) Personal Care Kits. 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. 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.

45th Anniversary of Earth Day:

“It’s Our Turn to Lead”

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.

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.

Go to www.earthday.org for more information.

Music and Worship Article:

Have you ever wondered...

What is the story behind the favorite hymn...

“His Eye Is On The Sparrow?”

Most people have a hobby of some sort to provide a healthy diversion from the rigors of work. Long ago, there was a woodworker in Nazareth who counted bird-watching among his diversions. We can make that assumption because Jesus later referred frequently to bird-life in his sermons, saying things like:

“Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will.” *Matthew 10:29* “Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” *Matthew 6:26* “Do not fear....you are of more value than many sparrows.” *Luke 12:7*

It was this theme that caused the author, Dr. Civilla Durfee Martin, to write this great hymn on God’s care.

Why should I feel discouraged?
Why should the shadows come?
Why should my heart be lonely,
and long for heaven and home?
When Jesus is my portion?
My constant friend is He.
His eye is on the sparrow,
and I know He watches me.
His eye is on the sparrow,
and I know He watches me.

I sing because I’m happy!
I sing because I’m free!
For His eye is on the sparrow.
And I know He watches me.

The day after writing the song, she mailed it to the famous Gospel composer, Charles Gabriel, who penned the music.

Adapted from “Then Sings My Soul” by Robert J. Morgan

Congregational Life Article:

Each of us has been placed into a family. Each of us experiences family differently. For many, our family at home prepares and shares meals; we are engaged with one another through joys and sorrows as we journey through life; we celebrate holidays; we recognize and are present for significant events such as births, weddings, funerals; we play games; we tell stories; we invite others to our home and share in our abundance.

In many ways our church family is no different from our family at home. The apostle Paul writes “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” *Ephesians 2: 19-22* God in his infinite wisdom knew we cannot walk apart from each other. We need the strength of his family to be faithful alone but need each other to stay faithful and true to him, to grow in our faith, to serve one another. We gather for worship but need one another beyond our weekly gathering.

The Congregational Life Commission has been formed to strengthen and support the social development of our church family. We have explored several areas of growth: discipleship practices, small group dinners, a gathering (similar to a family reunion) of the whole church on May 31 for a morning of fellowship and worship. Do you have ideas or suggestions in how we can meet the needs and strengthen the capacity of our church? Do you have an idea or a plan for an event that you would like to try? Let us know! We would love to hear your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions. We can collaborate with you to make an event happen. No age, or family-type restrictions on this. Our Commission of four, Heidi Sassen, Cassie Neumann, Lucy Dale, and Mary Pfohl, is ready to work with you.

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 Hank leads this study. For more information, speak to him.

Book Discussion Club

All adult readers are welcome to read with this group. The group meets in the church library on Tuesday, March 31 at 7:00 p.m. to discuss the book, Wonder by R.J. Palacio. The April selection is The Man who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and other Clinical Tales by Oliver Sacks. The April meeting is Tuesday, April 28, at 7:00 p.m. Readers, please secure your own copy of the books. For more information contact Tifanii Dahl, 632-8207.

Lutheran Social Service Rummage Sale Wednesday-Friday, May 13-15

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

Wednesday, May 13, 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 14, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Friday, May 15, 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, May 4, or on the set-up days. For more information, contact Karen Haaland, at 632-8828.

Parish Nurse News

Tracy Moe, RN

This past week I attended a Parish Nurse Ministry program held at Luther Seminary developed by Concordia College. The classes focused on the care of the spirit as a whole. I have spent the last few days reflecting on this Ministry of health. Jesus' ministry was always wholistic; Jesus treated the "whole" person – physically, emotionally, and spiritually. His was a healing ministry, and He led his disciples by example. As healthcare becomes more complex, people experience difficulty understanding the types of healthcare services that are available. Using a community-based health promotion focus, the Parish Nurse, or Faith Community Nurse, works to intentionally address spiritual care within a framework of wholistic health. A Faith Community Nurse recognizes that the ministry of the church community is to proclaim God's desire that we strive toward an abundant, healthful life. Jesus says in John 10:10, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

All attendees were given this modern Japanese translation/version of Psalm 23 written by Tokio Megashie. It speaks to me spiritually as a whole.

The Lord is my pace setter, I shall not rush.

He makes me stop and rest for quiet intervals.

He provides me with images of stillness which restore my serenity.

He leads me in ways of efficiency through calmness of mind, and his guidance is peace.

Even though I have a great many things to accomplish each day, I will not fret, for his presence is here. His timelessness, His all-importance will keep me in balance.

He prepares refreshment and renewal in the midst of my activity, by anointing my mind with his oils of tranquility.

My cup of joyous energy overflows; surely harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruits of my hours.

For I shall walk in the pace of my Lord, and dwell in His house forever.

"Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings from the "Children First" Christian Preschool!

March was full of learning fun: space and planets, opposites, weather, Holy Week and Easter. April themes explore signs of spring, farm animals, flowers, recycling, Earth Day, and bugs.

We are selling Dutch Mill Flower Bulbs as a fundraiser. To order, you may see the catalog in the church office. We will order on April 17 and expect to receive the bulbs before Mother's Day.

2015/16 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.

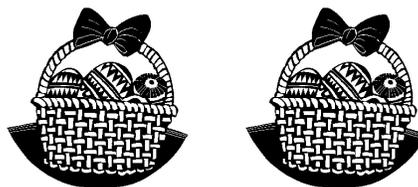
- ☺ Friday Friends (33 mos-5 year olds) meets Friday, 9:00-11:30 a.m. for those families wanting a three-day experience for their preschooler.
- ☺ Registration fee is \$60.00 and is non-refundable. Monthly tuition is \$85.00 per month. Friday Friends class is an additional \$35.00 per month. Brochures and registration forms are available in the First Lutheran Church office, gathering space, at www.flittlefalls.org or by contacting Gail.
- ☺ "Come and See" Day, Wednesday, April 8, 5:30-7:30 p.m. An open house time to visit the classroom, meet the staff, ask questions and enjoy a snack.

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
email: childrenfirst@flittlefalls.org
web: www.flittlefalls.org/preschool

Sunday School News

- ☺ The Commission for Education is thankful to all who have faithfully participated in Sunday School this year. We are able to offer quality Sunday School education through the generous offering of time and talent by many of you. Together we build the community of faith. Thank you!
- ☺ We begin our last TREK rotation for grades K-5 on Sunday, April 12. "The Lord's Supper" will help us better understand the sacrament of Holy Communion. Thank you to all who have volunteered to lead a station!
- ☺ The last day of Sunday School until fall is Sunday, May 10.



Palm Sunday Lefse Sale March 29

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, March 27 or Saturday, March 28, call the church office 632-6667. Uff da!



**Vacation Bible School
August 3-7, 9:00-12:00 noon
"Everest"
Conquering Challenges with
God's Mighty Power**

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 God is with us in every challenge! 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.



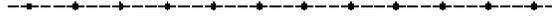
**Easter Eggstravaganza!
Saturday, April 4, 9:30-11:30 a.m.**

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. Don't miss this *egg*citing time!



**Graduating
Seniors**

Mark Sunday, May 17 on your calendar. We'd like to honor you and your parents at a special service of worship (10:30 a.m.) and brunch (11:45 a.m.). Watch your mail for more information and an invitation.



Confirmation Ministries

Second Grade: students learned about the sacrament of Holy Communion on Sunday, March 15. Second graders will have their feet washed and receive Holy Communion together at Maundy Thursday worship, April 2 at 7:00 p.m.

Seventh Grade: class on the Apostles' Creed at Luther Crest Bible Camp during the week of July 6-10. 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! Place your cans next to the garage in a securely tied bag.

Save a can – Save the earth –
Save our youth budget! Keep those cans coming! Thank you!

Sunday Worship Schedule

- 8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship using a variety of liturgical settings
- 9:35 a.m. Sunday School Hour
- 10:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship led by a Praise Band

Holy Communion is served at all services.

See newsletter cover for Holy Week and Easter schedule.

Come and See!



Save the date!

Who: First Lutheran Church family – all of us!

What: Faith—Fun—Family Fellowship

When: Sunday, May 31, 2015

8:30 a.m. Breakfast for all

9:30 a.m. Fellowship – laughter required

10:30 a.m. Worship

Where: First Lutheran Church

Items for the May NEWSLETTER are due on
April 20, 2015!