



## **ELCA Youth Gathering News**

Every three years the ELCA organizes a nationwide gathering of young people of high school age. On July 10, First Lutheran sent 23 youth and 4 adults to the 2015 ELCA National Youth Gathering in Detroit. The group traveled with 300 others from the Northeastern Minnesota Synod to—“Dig Deep – Rise Up” They spent four days in Lansing, Michigan serving and worshiping together, then all travelled on to the Gathering in Detroit where more than 30,000 youth and adult chaperones worshiped, studied, and served the city of Detroit all while wearing bright orange t-shirts. The group returned home on July 20. The 2018 Gathering will take place in Houston, Texas!



What difference did the group make in Detroit during the gathering?

- 650 people donated at least 8 inches of hair. That is 433 feet of hair – roughly the height of the Cadillac Building in Detroit.
- 607 pints (78.8 gallons!) of blood were donated
- 1 million diapers were donated as in-kind offering
- 1,847 mural boards painted
- 600 neighborhoods received assistance
- 319 vacant homes boarded up
- 3,200 vacant lots cleared of debris
- 1,425 backpacks distributed
- 36 urban gardens installed
- 99 picnic tables built
- 26 dumpsters filled

**God’s Work. Our Hands.**

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## Notes from Pastor Hank

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August is upon us which means that I have been with you for one year. August 11<sup>th</sup> last year was my first day on the job as interim pastor. It has been a good year for me and for Bobbi, and we both thank you for the warmth of your welcome a year ago; and I thank you for the many ways in which so many of you have worked with me to keep the ministry and mission of First Lutheran flourishing in this time of transition. Whenever anyone asks me about First Lutheran, my usual answer is: “It’s a good church full of good people doing a lot of good things.”

So, we’ve been here a year and now it looks like we will be with you a bit longer than expected. If you read a bit further into this newsletter you will see a report from the Call Committee relaying the news that their candidate of choice has told the Committee that, after a period of prayer and discernment, he believes that he should remain with his present congregation. It is of course, disappointing. The Call Committee has been doing careful and prayerful work. They considered five candidates, four of whom they interviewed, before

narrowing it down to one who they discerned would be a good match with First Lutheran’s pastoral leadership needs. His removing his name from consideration is disappointing, but it should not be discouraging. This is the way the call process works, with pastors and congregations each seeking to discern where God is leading them, and we need to respect the decisions that pastors and congregations make.

The Call Committee will continue faithfully to pursue the right candidate for a call to First Lutheran and, in God’s grace and in God’s timing, I have no doubt but that they will find the right one. Please keep them in your prayers. They are not quite back to page one. They have fine-tuned the interview process, they know the kind of pastor we need, and they trust that, through the call process, God will show them the right man or woman to serve at First Lutheran. In the meantime, let’s keep on doing what we do—meaningful ministry and mission in the name of Jesus for the sake of the world God loves.

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Summer is fast—too fast—slipping away. During summer, things slow down a bit at church, but not completely. We still do a lot in the summer. There are mission trips for the youth, continued worship, funerals and weddings and baptisms, ongoing Bible studies, nursing home and shut-in visits, hospital visits, Share-a-Meal, the Paint-a-Thon. The church, after all, is the church 24/7/365.

Another thing that happens in the summer is that folks, weary of a Minnesota winter, finally get to vacation in the sun! That’s good. Of course, with folks off to the lake, headed to the ocean or into the mountains, attendance at worship on Sundays goes down—especially in July and August. And when attendance goes down, offerings also go down. The only thing that doesn’t go down are the expenses for ministry and mission.

*If you have fallen behind in your giving over the summer, let me encourage you to catch up as soon as possible. And if it is possible for you to give an extra gift in August or September to help replenish our checkbook and get us ready for the fall program which starts up in just a few weeks, it will be deeply appreciated.*

Thank you. All of you together make what we do together possible.

God’s richest blessing on the rest of your summer.

*Pastor Hank*

## Call Committee Update

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July 27, 2015

Over the last several months, the Call Committee has prayerfully considered five pastoral candidates. We have interviewed and reviewed references of four pastoral candidates, and heard sermons preached by three pastoral candidates. We have prayed for God's guidance which led us to name one of these candidates as our preferred candidate for pastor at First Lutheran. Unfortunately, the discernment process on the part of this pastoral candidate led to their decision to withdraw from actively seeking a new call and to remain in their current congregation.

Clearly, the call committee had hoped for a different decision. However, we recognize God's plans are not always the same as our plans. We rely on God's direction and remember how God has guided and been present for people throughout the ages. And so, we will continue the work set before us, to seek God's will and seek a pastor who will serve First Lutheran Church.

Your prayers and support are appreciated and needed as we continue to discern who will receive the pastoral call to our church. Please pray that the Holy Spirit will touch each candidate with whom we meet.

Your questions and comments are welcome. Please understand that we can respond to questions about the call process but we cannot respond to questions about candidates. The members of our Call Committee are Doug Anderson, Matt Dahl, Willard Doucette, Darrell Larsen, Camilla Larson, Monica Makela, Cassie Neumann, Mary Pfohl, Will Riitters, and Liz Rydeen.

Submitted in Christ's Peace,

Mary Pfohl  
Call Committee Chairperson

## Thank you!

We would like to thank the community of faith at First Lutheran for your unending love and support during our journey of adoption. Thank you for your support through, monetary donation, open house for Raelynn, visits, donating towards our garage sale and much more. We truly feel God's love through each of you! We are very humbled by your kindness and love.

In Christ,  
Jay and Stephanie Kiel

Thank you to all of my First Lutheran family and friends who supported me while I recuperated from a fall in April. Your visits, cards, gifts and prayers were all very much appreciated. You certainly made my recovery time go quickly.

In appreciation and love,  
Betty Bengtson

**Thrivent Choice:** Thank you to all who have designated their Thrivent Choice dollars to First Lutheran Church and to "Children First" Christian Preschool. This year we have seen an increase in the number of Thrivent members who are eligible to donate these funds, and an increase in the amount. Thank you for putting your Thrivent Choice dollars to work in mission and ministry at First Lutheran! If you have questions about this program or would like assistance in designating your Thrivent Choice dollars, please contact the church office.

## Adult Opportunities



### **Green Fair Folk Festival at St. Francis Convent**

**Wednesday, August 5, 4:00-8:00 p.m.**

This outdoor event sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls is an evening of ecological awareness with music, food, exhibits, storytelling, other activities, and much more. Many local businesses and educational groups will be present. From 6-8 p.m., St. Francis Music Center will present musical acts. And other local musicians will celebrate music as a universal language that crosses all borders. Young people from First will make balloon (biodegradable!) animals—they're always a big hit! Come gather to enjoy, learn and see many local favorites and use these wonderful opportunities to enhance our care for the planet and make our world a better place for all.

### **Bible Studies:**

#### **Women's Bible Study**

Watch for more information on a new study for the fall. This group will meet on Wednesday evenings. Start date and sign up to be announced soon.

#### **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 7:00 a.m. The guys will resume meeting after Labor Day on Wednesday, September 16. Come when you can, leave when you must!

### **Luther Crest Bible Camp Quilts for Camp Extravaganza held at Carlos Creek Winery Saturday, October 17**

Luther Crest partners with Carlos Creek Winery's Fall Apple Fest event with over 5,000 participants. Apple Fest begins at 11:00 a.m. with fun events such as: pumpkin carving, pumpkin chucking with catapults and trebuchets, pie eating contest, live music, and more. Quilt viewing begins at noon in the barn. There will be silent auction, artisan crafts for sale, wine tasting, live quilt auction begins at 2:00 p.m. This event will be fun for the entire family all day long! Food and beverages will be available to purchase throughout the day. Carlos Creek Winery is located at 6693 County Rd 34 NW, Alexandria, near Luther Crest. Let's support the Bible Camp at this event!

### **Oasis Central Minnesota Fundraiser**



### **"Church Ladies Unite" Dinner Theater At Falls Ballroom**

**Wednesday-Thursday, August 12 and 13**

Bring a friend and come for this evening of food, song, and laughter and support the outreach of Oasis Central Minnesota, the host organization of the weekly Share A Meal held each Thursday at First Lutheran.

Social hour at 5:00 p.m., dinner and show begins at 6:00 p.m. The church ladies (some you will recognize!) and Little Falls' hilarious native son, Jason Schommer will entertain you!

Tickets are \$25.00 each and are available at the Oasis office in the historic courthouse building or by calling Oasis at 632-9140.

## Music Ministry Opportunities



### The Followers of Christ Children's Choir Rehearsals begin:

**Wednesday, September 16**

All kids in Kindergarten through Grade 6 are welcome to sing with the children's choir. The first rehearsal is Wednesday, September 16 from 3:30-4:15 p.m. Transportation from Lincoln and Lindbergh Elementary schools to First Lutheran Church will be provided by school bus. Parents are asked to register for this singing opportunity. Registration forms are available in the gathering space or on the church website at [www.flcittlefalls.org](http://www.flcittlefalls.org). For more information, contact Becky Nelson at 749-2336 or [rpnelson@brainerd.net](mailto:rpnelson@brainerd.net).

### Share Your Musical Gifts

Would you like to share your musical gifts with the congregation? There are many ways to participate in this important part of congregational life. If you or someone you know is interested in any of these opportunities, please contact Becky Nelson, Director of Music Ministry, at 749-2336, or the church office.

- ♪ Praise Team – the Praise Team leads worship weekly at 10:30 a.m. service. Vocalists, guitar, drums, flute are part of the team. The commitment is two Sundays a month.
- ♪ Cantor/Worship Assistant – leads various settings of the liturgical worship service. Commitment on an as needed basis.
- ♪ Solo or ensemble gift of music – share vocal or instrumental gifts of music during worship as available.
- ♪ Pianist for services at local care centers. Accompanist for worship services as you are available.

## Music and Worship Article

Written by Paula Monahan

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What I call my “sacred memory” contains many hymns and worship songs. In almost every situation of my life, a song I learned in Sunday School, something my parents or my Grandma Lindeman would have sung, songs from when I was a teenager in Luther League, as a college student, as a young married mother, right up to today, the words of a hymn or a song pop into my mind. It happens at joyous times as well as sad times.

Once again, just this morning, a hymn is on my mind and in my heart. Our daughter and her family – Allison, Peter, Max (12) and Norah (8) – leave tomorrow for Chennai, India to teach at the International American School in Chennai. I am struggling to figure out just how to let go. I will no longer be within reach to help or comfort or hug. The only answer is to turn their care over to God, who will travel with them and protect them.

“God Be With You” by Jeremiah E. Rankin

God be with you till we meet again  
By His counsels guide, uphold you  
With His sheep securely fold you  
God be with you till we meet again.  
God be with you till we meet again,  
'Neath His wings protecting hide you  
Daily manna still provide you  
God be with you till we meet again.

*“Grace, mercy and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.”*

2 John 3



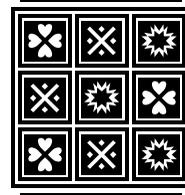
## Mission Life

### Oasis/Share A Meal Community Paint A Thon

Thank you to the First Lutheran Church team who volunteered their time on Saturday, August 1 to give a fresh coat of paint to the home of a local resident. This is a great time to assist our brothers and sisters in Christ right here in our own community. Mark your calendars for the first Saturday of August 2016 and plan to assist with this annual event. Thank to Jerome and Karen Haaland for coordinating the team.

### Home Delivered Meals August 10-14

First Lutheran participates in the Home Delivered Meals program locally. Together with other groups in the community we share the delivery of meals a week at a time. Our next dates to deliver meals are Monday-Friday, August 10-14. Volunteers meet at the Buckman building at 9:45 a.m., you will pick up the meals and deliver to the assigned route. You'll be done by 11:00 a.m. This is a valuable service that assists people to remain in their homes. If you or someone you know would consider being First Lutheran's coordinator for this servant opportunity, please call the church office at 632-6667. Thank you!



### Camp Knutson 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Quilt Auction Saturday, August 8

Camp Knutson, at Crosslake nurtures the well-being of persons with special needs in a setting which celebrates God's love for community and creation. In 2010, over 1,000 campers with heart disease, HIV or AIDS, Down syndrome, severe skin diseases, autism or other diseases were served. A quilt from the First Lutheran quilters along with many others will be auctioned. First Lutheran provides assistance on the day of the sale. Your support of the auction is greatly appreciated. If you would like to attend and share a ride, contact Marlene Williams, 632-4290.

### Luther Crest Scramble A Fun(d) Raising Golf Tournament Monday, August 10 Camp Changes Lives!

Why not gather a foursome for this fun(d) raising "Best Ball" tournament on the course at Lake Miltona Golf Course, Alexandria. Registration begins at 10:00 a.m.; "shotgun start" tee time is at noon. Supper will be served at Lake Miltona at 5:00 p.m. The fee is \$100.00 per person covers green fees, cart rental, and meal. You are encouraged to give a gift in support of Luther Crest at this event. Past tournaments have made a significant impact on the camp's ministry. To register, call the church office, 632-6667.

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## Welcome Three-Year-Olds!

Each year we help to prepare our three-year-olds for Sunday School by inviting them and their parents/guardians to participate in a welcome gathering. This year's gathering is scheduled for Wednesday, September 16, at 6:30 p.m. Children and their parents/guardians will visit their classroom, meet their teacher, share a treat, and get acquainted with one another. Any child who is three years old by September 1 is welcome. Three-year olds will receive the gift of a story Bible at worship on Sunday, September 20. Please enroll your child to ensure they receive a Bible. If you have questions, please call the church office, 632-6667.

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## Sunday School: Fall 2015 Sunday, September 20, 10:30 a.m.

We are getting ready to kick-off another year of Educational ministry at First Lutheran Church. Parents and children ages 3 through grade 12 will gather in Stoltz Hall for an opening and introduction to Sunday School on Sunday, September 20. We will review and introduce Sunday School leaders and Commission for Education members. There will be a special treat for all!

Education Commission members and volunteers are recruiting teachers, leaders and helpers for the upcoming Sunday Morning ministries. If you are interested in sharing your faith through cooking, storytelling, song, music, games, arts and crafts, etc., please contact Amber Sobiech in the church office, any Commission for Education member or the church office at 632-6667.

## Registration for Sunday Morning Ministry, age 3-grade 12 Confirmation, grades 2-11 Youth Groups, grades 3-12

Parents of children ages 3 years – 12<sup>th</sup> grade: Watch your mailbox for a mailing on Education & Youth Ministry for the coming year. Registration and health forms for kids, and list of opportunities for adults to work with youth, and a schedule for confirmation is included. Please note that registration is required each year for participation in Education and Youth Activities. Additional forms will be available in the church office or on the church web-site at [www.flcittlefalls.org](http://www.flcittlefalls.org). Forms should be returned to First Lutheran as soon as possible. See the mailing for more details!

## Confirmation Ministries

**Third Grade:** Parents and youth entering third grade are invited to attend a Bible overview meeting on Wednesday, August 19 at 6:30 p.m. We will discuss the course on Family Devotions on the Gospel of Mark which begins in September. Youth will receive the gift of a Bible during worship on Sunday, August 23.

**Fifth Grade:** Class on Stewardship begins on Wednesday, September 16. Watch for a letter with details about this class.

**Sixth Grade:** During the week of Vacation Bible School (August 3-7), youth entering seventh grade in the fall study the Lord's Prayer with Jay Kiel.

**Eighth Grade:** One session on the Apostles' Creed on Wednesday, September 9.

**Ninth Grade:** New Testament class begins Wednesday, September 16, at 7:00 p.m. Watch for a letter with information about this class.

**Tenth Grade:** don't forget your mentor activities. Confirmation day will be here before you know it!

## "Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings from the Preschool,

This fall we offer the following classes.

- ☺ *Noah's Animals*—for children 33 months to three years old, meeting Monday and Wednesday, or Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00-11:30 a.m.
- ☺ *Jesus' Gems*—for four and five year olds, meeting Monday and Wednesday, or Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00-11:30 a.m.
- ☺ *Friday Friends*—for 33 months to PreK, this additional class creates a three-day week.
- ☺ Interested families are encouraged to inquire and register early to allow time for the necessary paperwork and/or medical appointments to be completed. Registration forms are available on the church website, [www.flclittlefalls.org](http://www.flclittlefalls.org), or at church in the gathering space.

If you are able to financially assist a family with tuition expense scholarship, please let us know.

"Children First" Advisory Team and staff welcome back the teaching staff, Jessica Gustafson, Anna Walker, and Chrissi Gesme.



Upcoming dates for preschool families or those interested:

- ☞ Green Fair Folk Festival, Wednesday, August 5, 4:00-8:00 p.m. at St. Francis Campus, Little Falls. Visit the preschool booth at this free family-friendly event that promotes a healthy and sustainable lifestyle. Children can adopt a Stuffed 'Pet' or bring your own stuffed 'Pet' for needed repairs and TLC.
- ☞ Preschool Open House, Monday, August 31, 4:00-8:00 p.m. Open House is for anyone interested in visiting or registering.
- ☞ Parent Orientation, Wednesday, September 9, 7:00 p.m. at the church. Parents only please, there is much information to cover!
- ☞ Arts and Crafts Fair Booth, Saturday-Sunday, September 12-13 (Broadway and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street). Volunteers welcome!
- ☞ Classes begin for students, Monday-Tuesday, September 14-15, class sessions on these days are 1½ hours with a parent/guardian attending.

Thank you to all who support "Children First" in any way, preschool operations are supported only by tuition, donations, fundraisers, volunteerism, and your many prayers. First Lutheran graciously provides the facility needs. Thank you for your continued support of this ministry to children and families!

In Christ's Service,  
Gail Hittesdorf, Director, (320) 632-6667  
[childrenfirst@flclittlefalls.org](mailto:childrenfirst@flclittlefalls.org)

## VBS Mission Project

We are supporting “Operation Backpack” once again. We are collecting backpacks (new or gently used) and the school supplies needed to fill them. Backpacks will be distributed to nine local schools for area kids in need. Last year over 90 backpacks filled with supplies were donated to local schools! Supply lists are available on the gathering space bulletin board. Donations may be brought to the collection box in the gathering space.

### **F.O.C.U.S. (Fixed on Christ Until Sunday) Youth Bible Study Monday morning at 7:00 a.m. when school is in session**

Youth in grades 6 through 12 are invited to meet each Monday for breakfast and bible study each week when school is in session. We will meet beginning Monday, September 14 at 7:00 a.m. for breakfast at Subway. This is a great way to start your week. For more information, talk to Jay Kiel.

**Watch for it:  
“Unite”  
Acts 1:14**

**See You at the Pole  
Wednesday, September 23, 7:00 a.m.**

See you at the Pole™ is all about prayer. It’s about you coming together and laying aside all the labels and groups for one day, to simply connect with God in prayer and connect with fellow Christians in unity around the flag pole. Come and pray for your school, friends, families and the world.



### **Vacation Bible School “Everest!” Conquering Challenges with God’s Mighty Power! August 3-7**

Vacation Bible School is here!! Youth and adults will explore the Bible and learn that: God has the power to provide, to comfort, to heal, to forgive, and to love us forever! We will start the day at *Base Camp Sing and Play*, then kids will have fun with *Glacier Games*, enjoy a movie at *KidVid Cinema*, have a *Bible Expedition*, make a project at the *Imagination Station*, and have a snack at *Mountaintop Treats*. Everyone is welcome to come and wrap up the day at 11:30 a.m. at *the Summit Celebration!*

This year’s VBS will be a joint effort of First Lutheran and First United Churches. To register, your child must be 3 years old (by September 1, 2014) through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. You may pick up a registration form at church or you can find the form on the church web-site,

[www.flclittlefalls.org](http://www.flclittlefalls.org). Registration is free; you are encouraged to register your child even if they may not attend every day.

Thank you to all who participate and those who volunteer their time, energy, provide supplies, assist with setup/teardown, pray for this week, or help out with the week in any way.

For more information about Vacation Bible School contact one of the coordinators, they are: Gail Hittesdorf, Caitlin Skluzacek, Amber Sobiech (First Lutheran), and Diane Spillum (First United), or the church office.

## News of the Family

Cathy Engbloom and David Hoadley were united in marriage on July 11. May God bless their life together.

✝

Kevin Donald Cash was baptized on July 26. May God's blessing shine on this new member of the family of God.

✝

Alvera Streich died on July 14. Her memorial service was July 21 at First Lutheran.

Kenneth Tenney died on July 20. His funeral service was July 23 at Camp Ripley Chapel.

May God grant peace and comfort to the families and friends of these faithful ones.

✝

Items for the **September NEWSLETTER** are due on **August 20, 2015!**

## Worship Schedule

Sunday Worship at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m.

Worship at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. continues throughout the year. Stay after the 8:30 a.m. service, or come early for the 10:30 service, for coffee (leaded and unleaded!), treats and fellowship in the Gathering Space. Everyone is welcome!

## Can Care Collection

Recycling is one way to save the earth. Bring your empty cans to the church secured in a plastic bag—you can leave them next to the garage door. This on-going fundraiser provides money for youth activities. If you can assist with taking cans to be recycled, please contact the church office. Keep saving those aluminum cans! Thanks!