



*“Servants of All”*

July 2012, Newsletter

July 5, 2012



## Vacation Bible School SKY!!

**“Everything is Possible with God!”**  
**August 6-10, 2012**  
**9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon**

VBS is coming! Fly on over to meet Flash Skyrunner and his friends. Consider bringing your friend or perhaps inviting a family without a church home. VBS is for kids ages 4 through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. At “Sky! Everything is Possible with God!” children will explore Bible stories and learn that no matter who you are, no matter how you feel, no matter what people do, no matter what happens, and no matter where you are—Trust God!

Sky! has a rotational style where kids fly around to different locations with their “flight crew.” Kids and staff will share their VBS experience in worship on Sunday, August 12.

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, 2011) 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. Your advance registration helps us have adequate supplies for each child.

If you are interested in helping with VBS, there are many fun ways for you to get involved. You can participate for the full week or for part of the week. Thanks to all who have volunteered to date. See the sign up board in the gathering space or talk to one of the coordinators. Check out the ‘supply board’ in the gathering space to assist with providing supplies for the week, there are many ways to be involved and all are important—thank you! Coordinators are, Gail Hittesdorf (First Lutheran), and Diane Spillum (First United). Come and learn that everything is possible with God! Trust God!

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As some of you may know I am an avid bicyclist. One of my favorite things to do is to ride bike. I have been riding my bike for 45+ years. I have ridden in wind, snow, rain and even the 122 degree heat of the Arizona sun. I have cycled down the coast of California twice, over the Colorado and Canadian Rockies and ridden 150 miles in a single day. I even confirmed my call while riding my bike.

There is nothing quite like the feeling of accomplishment of cycling over that mountain that looks insurmountable. Pedaling is something you have to do by yourself one foot at a time, one revolution at a time. Cycling is one of my passions.

In 1976 I first heard of individuals riding across the country on a bicycle tour called *BikeCentennial*. Since then I have dreamed of setting out to do just that—one pedal at a time. In 2009 I began to think I could ride south to north along the Mississippi River. The youth were going to the ELCA National Youth Gathering in New Orleans, I would be there, I would be able to get my bike there. The timing didn't work for me then. Three weeks was too long to be gone. So when I first heard that the 2012 ELCA National Youth Gathering would once again be in New Orleans I wondered – would I? could I? should I? After prayerful discernment and thoughtful conversation with many I will be doing this first part of my quest

On Sunday, July 22, I will leave New Orleans as the youth are departing. The only difference is – I will be on my bicycle and they will be in the chartered coach bus. They will be home in twenty hours, I will be home in twenty days. I plan to arrive home in Little Falls on Friday, August 10 for the closing picnic lunch of our fabulous VBS week where “The Sky is the Limit.”

Thankfully, I won't be departing alone. Ron Makela has decided to join me on this adventure. However, I know it won't be only Ron who is riding with me but the Holy Spirit as well. Since the Holy Spirit throughout scripture is known as a wind – I am praying that the Holy Spirit is at our back on the journey north bound.

Please pray with me for both Ron and me on this adventure. I will be updating the FLC webpage on a regular basis and there will be announcements each Sunday as to our progress. Following the adventure that began with a dream – I will post pictures on the bulletin board for you to view.

Thank you for allowing me to take my three weeks of vacation! Thank you in advance for your prayers.

 Pastor David Sperstad

**Servant Opportunity: Ride for Rice**

As Pastor Dave pedals his bike along the Mississippi River back to Little Falls he hopes to raise awareness of, and money for, Food for Kidz. Food for Kidz is a national, non-profit organization which provided nutritious meals for over 10,000,000 undernourished children around the world last year. Pastor Dave's goal for the ride is to raise enough money to purchase and package one million meals!

Pastor Dave expects his ride over the 1,500 miles to take him about 21 days. As a part of his daily meals he will eat the same food packaged for Food for Kidz, a mixture of rice, soy protein, dried vegetables and seasonings.

Please prayerfully consider how you can help Pastor Dave reach his goal, you can donate to this cause by noting “Ride for Rice” in the memo line of your check.

## Pastor Tony's Article

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I have always felt that humility is a trait that can only be bestowed upon someone and never self-claimed. As I see it, claiming humility seems to be a boastful statement...thus disproving humility. Humility is a tricky trait to achieve and that is never truly mastered.

The book I have just started reading, *Humble Leadership: Being Radically Open To God's Guidance And Grace*, by Graham Standish, gives an interesting take on humility. Rather than the typical definition of, "a modest or low view of one's own importance", he says humility begins at the beginning, with Genesis, with God. Standish says:

*The concept of humility is grounded in the story of Genesis and is a thread woven throughout the fabric of the Bible. Humility is grounded in our creation...To become humble means, first to recognize our earthiness, our dirt-ness [this is a play on Adam being formed from clay], our creation from dust. Humility is a recognition that we are made of the same stuff as the rest of the universe. We are nothing but carbon molecules strung together in a human matrix. We are distinct and special not because of any qualities or abilities we ourselves possess. Our unique qualities are gifts from God that come from God's Spirit breathed into us.*

When we realize that the only thing that separates humans from the rest of the animal kingdom is that God breathed the spirit into us, and that every good thing we possess and every talent we have comes from God, we can be truly open to God's direction in our midst.

Standish continues: "Humility, in the end, is a state of being in which we willingly try to seek and serve God's will in everything. We do our best to discern God's will and follow it, and in the process, we willingly set aside, to the extent possible, everything that gets in the way." Being open to God is the root of humility; it is at the root of being humble.

The problem is we live in a world that is broken. Not only does the world tell us that we need more and more which only gets in the way of our relationship with God, but most people see humility as a weakness. In other words, if someone is humble they must be weak. Humility is weakness only in that humility requires a letting go, but that is not the opposite of strength.

In his book Standish cites a study by Jim Collins, a business researcher who wrote a book call *Good to Great*. In the study, Collins looks at what makes some companies good and others great. There were several factors that caused a company to be great, but the most surprising was "that the presidents and CEOs of the truly great companies were humble leaders." The point is that even though humility may be seen as a weakness by some, it is the one trait that other people respond to the most.

Humility is not something we are born with, like height or being charismatic, no, humility is something we practice, something we learn by doing, something we live. We can pray for humility, but God is not going to whirl a wand and "bam" we're humble. Rather God will give us opportunities to practice humility, to live it. And as we live humility, we are brought closer to God, and closer to others.

Pastor Tony



## First Moving Forward Worship Space Enhancement Update: Still “First...Servants of All”



Fifty years ago a small contingent of individuals in leadership at First Lutheran church began to think about the future. They understood that more space was needed for what they believed the Holy Spirit had in store for First Lutheran. The decision was made to relocate to our current site. The facility has served us quite well for almost 50 years.

It is likely that at the time, there were folks who said “We are fine, we don’t need a new building,” or, “We don’t need more land,” and they were right ‘in a way.’ People still worship in the building that was First Lutheran in 1960, worship is held week in and week out, they still do wonderful ministry through their doors. But thanks be to God that our forebearers stepped out and moved forward. They moved forward in faith so that we could worship in this tremendous facility. Many, many ministry opportunities happen every day that likely could not take place in a much smaller space.

Last year, in preparation for our 120th anniversary celebration, the Commission for Facilities and Property and the church council agreed that a fresh coat of paint was needed in the sanctuary. That began the thinking process: What more could be done in the worship space that has served us so well for the last 50 years? Thus the Worship Space Enhancement team was formed. A small group of volunteers began to meet on a regular basis. After prayerful consideration, they desired to ask an expert to guide us as a church body. The group felt

that expert help was important in addressing the question of how the worship space could serve us and those to follow for the next fifty years? They asked the church council for a special line in the 2012 Mission Plan to hire a consultant/architect to help us plan for the future. At the Annual meeting in January the 2012 Mission Plan was approved. The plan included the funds to hire a consultant and any extra costs associated with exploring enhancement possibilities.

This process is near completion. A plan will be presented to the congregation in September; after some time to prayerfully consider the plan, the congregation will be asked for approval at a subsequent meeting. It is possible that the actual enhancement work could begin following a celebration on Sunday, May 5, 2013. That day marks 50 years to the day of the first service of worship in the current space. During the enhancement work in the sanctuary, worship would take place in Stoltz Hall.

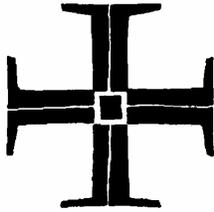
I am sure many of you would you like to hear more. Please feel free to talk with any of the Worship Space Enhancement team members or with Pastor David. We are all very excited about it and would be happy to share with you some of the team’s thoughts as well as hear your thoughts. Please continue to keep the Worship Space Enhancement team and the congregation in your prayers as we continue to move forward as *First... Servants of All*.

Worship Space Enhancement team members are: Stephanie Adams, Dave Buker, LaVerne Hempeck, Sonya and Bob Just, Darrell Larsen, Bruce Moller, Paula Monahan, Becky Nelson, Mary Pfohl, Nancy Ratzloff, Tammy Zwilling and Pastor David Sperstad.

Serving together, Pastor David

## Council Highlights

- Heard that \$4,834 has been received to date for the Pentecost Sunday Celebration Offering for mortgage principal reduction. Thank you for your faithful giving!
- Heard that Pastor David Sperstad applied for and received a \$1,000 mini-sabbatical grant from the NE MN Synod.
- Pastor David updated the council on plans for the 'Ride for Rice' that he will undertake following the ELCA National Youth Gathering in July. *See article on page two.*
- Heard that the Nominating Committee for 2013 leadership positions will convene soon. Please give prayerful consideration to your availability to serve.



## Financial Update

Thank you to all who faithfully contribute to our shared ministry at First Lutheran Church!

Summer finds many of us traveling and vacationing. Mission and ministry continue here at First Lutheran. We appreciate your mail-in offerings when you are unable to be in worship.

Watch your mailbox for your giving statement for the first six months of 2012. Please review your statement for accuracy and contact Sue or Gloria in the church office should you have questions.

You are welcome to participate in an electronic funds transfer giving plan, Simply Giving. Simply Giving ® allows you to automate your giving. This benefits First Lutheran by ensuring regular giving throughout the year and benefits the giver with ease of use. First Lutheran covers the nominal fee per transaction. Please see Sue or Gloria in the church office to enroll.

## Welcoming others...

The first time you walked in the door at First Lutheran Church, did someone welcome you?

Did you receive a handshake and a "Good morning"? Did you enjoy a cup of coffee or a treat? Did someone give you information about worship, or help you find a seat? Did your children find a safe and welcoming place to play? Did you hear God's Good News spoken in a living way? Did you receive the Lord's Supper along with the rest of the community?

If the answer to any of these questions is "Yes," you are encouraged to pass that welcome on – to join the effort to welcome others to worship. And if the answer to any of these questions is "No," then it is *even more important* that you help to welcome others in Jesus' name.

What can you do? Through the signup system, *every worshiper at First* has the chance to greet, usher, read Scripture, set up coffee/refreshments, set up or serve Communion, or provide volunteer child care. By serving in an area where you are gifted, you can help every worshiper to feel welcome. And scheduling is easy – because you sign up for one Sunday at a time, you can be sure that you are available for the specific dates you will serve.

Signup sheets for the coming month are always posted on a table in the Gathering Space, and you are invited to sign up at any time. If you're not able to come to church to sign up, you may call the church office (632-6667) or Mary Larson 632-8203 (July coordinator) to sign up. If you need more information or training, please mention it when you sign up and you will be contacted.

Thank you for the welcome you provide to others in the name of Christ.

## Cornerstones Potluck (Seniors age 55 and better and friends!) Tuesday, July 17

Come and enjoy a good meal and fellowship, bring a friend and a food item to share and come for potluck lunch on Tuesday, July 17, at 11:30 a.m. We gather in Stoltz Hall, for the meal, it's not fancy, just fun!

**Is your passion or your hobby quilting or golf?  
Here are some ways to enjoy your pastime and benefit others at the same time:**

**Luther Crest Bible Camp  
23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Quilt Auction  
Saturday, July 7**

Held in the *Air-conditioned Gymnasium*

- ☞ 10:00-12:30 p.m. – Quilt Review
- ☞ 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. – Lunch served
- ☞ 12:30 p.m. – Auction Begins

Proceeds from this year's auction will be used for camper scholarships for people of all ages. Over 100 quilts of all sizes will be sold at the auction, including two made by First Lutheran quilters. There will be something for everyone. Many hands have worked hard to sew the quilts. Let's support our Bible Camp at this event!

**Camp Knutson  
26th Annual Quilt Auction  
Saturday, August 11**

Quilt lovers—Unique quilts from throughout Minnesota including a quilt from the First's quilters will be auctioned to benefit children with heart disease, Down syndrome, severe skin diseases, autism, and HIV or AIDS. Quilt viewing begins at 10:00 a.m. the auction begins at 12 noon. The auction is sponsored by Lutheran Social Service and the LSS Paul Bunyan Regional Auxiliary.

**The Tenth Annual Golf Scramble  
To benefit the ministry at  
Luther Crest Bible Camp  
Monday, August 15**

Why not get a foursome together and spend a fun day playing this "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 of \$75.00 per person covers green fees, cart rental, and meal. Supper is available for spouses or other guests at \$10.00. 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.

**Camp Onomia Golf Scramble  
Saturday, July 28**

This scramble to support Camp Onomia Bible Camp on Lake Shakopee near Onamia is Saturday, July 28. Registration at Stone's Throw Golf Course is at 12:00 noon, shotgun start at 1:00 p.m. Your cost of \$60 covers 18 holes of golf, cart and prizes. For more information or to register, call the camp at 320-532-3767.

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**Zeb Pike Triathlon  
Saturday, August 25**

Start training now or continue your training for the Zeb Pike Tri! We'll start at Lindbergh Park at 8:00 a.m. and pedal a 20 mile bike loop around Zebulon Pike Lake, a 2 mile paddle on the Mississippi River and a 3 mile run on Lindbergh Drive. Race it alone or gather up a team; your \$15.00 entry fee also provides you with a Zeb Pike t-shirt! Call organizers Scott or Amber Sobiech at 616-9626 for more information.



## Mission News

### **Morrison County Relay for Life 2012**

Relay for Life is Friday, July 13, to Saturday, July 14 at Flyer Field. This annual event supports the American Cancer Society. Proceeds benefit cancer patients in the area. You can purchase and decorate a luminary bag in honor or in memory of a loved one. Several First Lutheran members are walking in the relay. Luminary bags are available from Laura Hansen at Bookin' It, downtown Little Falls.



### **Green Fair and Peace Concert at St. Francis Convent**

**Wednesday, August 1, 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, earth friendly products, activities for kids, and much more. Many local and state businesses and educational groups will be present. From 6-8 p.m. First Lutheran will again have a space at the fair—A few people (young and old) will make balloon animals—they're always a big hit! Bike or walk to the fair if you can and 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. For more information, check the web at [www.fslf.org/pages/GreenFair](http://www.fslf.org/pages/GreenFair).



### **Oasis/Share A Meal Community Paint A Thon Saturday, August 4**

Can you spend a Saturday morning helping to paint a home for a local resident? This annual event is a great time to assist our brothers and sisters in Christ right here in our own community. Confirmation students—perhaps you and your mentor will want to use this for your service project. This is a BYOB (Bring Your Own Brush!) event. For more information, call coordinators Jerome and Karen Haaland at 632-8828, or the church office, 632-6667.

### **Ruby's Pantry Food Distribution**

Oasis Central Minnesota hosted a successful first distribution of food from Ruby's Pantry in June with over 600 food boxes filled. Monday, July 23 will be the next distribution date. Surplus food is provided to anyone interested, there is no income qualification. Recipients are asked to bring their own box and a cash donation of \$15.00. Distribution takes place at Bethel Lutheran, 901 Broadway Avenue West from 4:30-6:00 p.m.

For more information, call Oasis Central Minnesota, at 632-9140.

### **Morrison County Food Shelf**

Your contributions and food donations to the Morrison County Food Shelf are encouraged and needed year round. You can bring your non-perishable food items to church and place them in the wood cabinet in the Gathering Space.

Don't forget the Food Shelf when you have excess produce from your garden. Please make arrangements directly with the Food Shelf for these items. The Food Shelf is located near Bethel Lutheran Church at 912 First Avenue SW, Little Falls. Food Shelf hours are Tuesday and Wednesday, 10:00 a.m. to noon, Thursday 6:00-8:00 p.m. For more information call 632-8304.

## **“Children First” Christian Preschool**

Ahhh...summer! First Lutheran Church is offering fun, learning experiences for ages 3 and 4-PreKindergarten with a Summer Day Camp July 16-20 and 23-27. Camp will be lead by Peggy Rekstad and Jessica Gustafson. First Lutheran also offers Vacation Bible School. Registration forms for both experiences are located on the table in the Gathering Space or online at [www.flclittlefalls.org](http://www.flclittlefalls.org).

“Children First” will host the Coborn’s Brat stand on Friday-Saturday, July 27-28. Come out and enjoy a hot dog or brat cooked by our volunteers! If you can volunteer, sign up on the sheet in the Gathering Space at church, email Gail at [childrenfirst@flclittlefalls.org](mailto:childrenfirst@flclittlefalls.org) or call Gail at 632-6667. Thank you for your support!

Preschool enrollment continues for the 2012/2013 school year. There are limited openings available in the 4-PreKindergarten classes so register early. Registration forms are available in the gathering space at First Lutheran. A \$50.00 non-refundable registration/activity fee is required at the time of registration. For more information please call the church office at 632-6667, or Gail at 632-2218.

Watch for “Children First” at the Green Fair Folk Festival, at St. Francis Campus grounds on August 1, 4:00-8:00 p.m. We will host a Teddy Bear Clinic and Adoption Center. You can bring any stuffed animal friend that may need to be repaired or require a new bow or accessory. Or you can adopt a stuffed animal friend to take home with you or give to someone in need.

Enjoy the summer and God’s Blessings,  
Gail Hittesdorf, Director



### **Coming this Fall!**

#### **“Brewing Faith at Home”**

*because what happens at church—  
shouldn’t stay at church*

We will learn to teach and live the faith outside the walls of the building called ‘church,’ we will think of our homes as ‘church,’ home—the good soil that grows the faith in each one of us.

On Sunday, October 7, we welcome Andrea Fieldhouse, of “Everyday-Everywhere” as guest preacher at worship. Andrea will lead us in an afternoon presentation of teaching, worship, food, and fellowship.

***Mark Your Calendars for this Event!***

### **Thank you!**

We want to thank everyone for all the prayers, visits and acts of kindness shown to us over the last several months. It has been a tough road but all of you have made it a little easier with all the support you have given. The benefit was so helpful financially and emotionally, thank you to all who helped with that as well. May God bless each of you as you have blessed us!

Scott and Lisa Luing

Dear First Lutheran Church members,  
Thank you so very much for allowing us the use of your kitchen in order to prepare food for the Little Falls prom. Your church has been, and was, a most welcoming place; and we feel so fortunate to be a recipient of your graciousness. Thank you for the role you play in creating community in Little Falls.  
Jenelle Peters and Renae Oothoudt

Thanks to all who supported the Youth Booth at the Little Falls Dam Festival. Thanks to Steve at Schwan’s for providing the freezer and the frozen treats. Thanks to all who donated bottled water or stopped at the booth to purchase a treat. Thanks to

all who gave their time to work at the booth. You make youth ministry happen! Thanks again!

## Youth Ministry

### 2012 ELCA National Youth Gathering “citizens with the saints” Ephesians 2:14-20

Final details are being arranged for the July 13 departure for the trip to the Gulf Coast and New Orleans. Please keep the youth and adults traveling to the gathering in your prayers, they are, youth: Tremayne Collins, Rachel Groves, Kirsten Henagin, Jordyn Himley, Nikolas Himley, Haylee Hittesdorf, Jason Jopp, Hannah Krupke, Emily Marlette, Justin Moe, Austin Motschke, Kali Neu, Haley Olson, Michael Orr, Kassidy Overn, Sam Rydeen, Kinbrae Sperstad, Alicia Storkamp, and Timothy Wilbur; and adults: Tonie Dickmann, Jay Kiel, Danielle Motschke, and Pastor David Sperstad. If you would like to serve as a prayer partner for one of the youth or adults during the trip, please contact Youth Minister, Jay Kiel.

### Confirmation Ministries

**Third Grade:** Watch for a letter about the third grade class meeting on Wednesday, August 22. Youth entering third grade will receive a Bible in worship on August 26. Students and parents will learn about and share family devotions in September.

**Sixth Grade:** During the week of Vacation Bible School (August 6-10), youth entering seventh grade in the fall will be studying the Lord’s Prayer with Jay Kiel. Watch for a letter containing more information about this class.

### 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 mail this month 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, will be 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.flclittlefalls.org](http://www.flclittlefalls.org).

### Preschool Summer Camp

First Lutheran Church is offering two sessions of preschool summer camp for 3, 4, and 5-year-olds who have not yet experienced Kindergarten.

Session 1: Monday-Friday, July 16-20  
3-year-olds

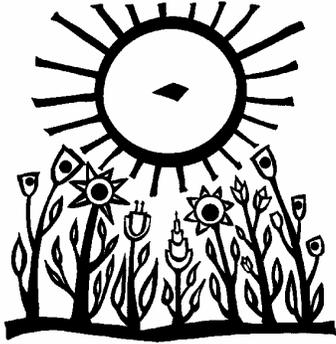
Session 2: Monday-Friday, July 23-27  
4-5-year-olds

Sessions will meet from 9:00-11:30 a.m. at First Lutheran. Children will read, sing, dance, play music and games, do arts and crafts and have outdoor fun. Children will experience the love of Jesus through Bible stories and songs. Your child will enhance their social, emotional, physical and educational skills in preparation for preschool and kindergarten. Cost is \$25.00 per week. Registration forms are available at church or on the church website at [www.flclittlefalls.org](http://www.flclittlefalls.org). For more information, contact Gail Hittesdorf, 632-2218 or the church office.

### **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.

Keep saving those aluminum cans! Thanks!



### **Summer Worship Schedule June through August**

Sunday Worship at 8:00 and 10:00 a.m.

Summer Worship at 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. continues through July and August. Stay after the 8:00 a.m. service, or come early for the 10:00 service, for coffee (leaded and unleaded!), beverages, treats and fellowship in the Gathering Space. Everyone is welcome! Enjoy your vacation but don't take a vacation from church! Aren't you glad God doesn't take the summer off?

Items for the **August NEWSLETTER** are due on **July 20, 2012!**