

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

Jake Dyrhaug, Pastor



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July 2017, Newsletter

June 29, 2017



**Vacation Bible  
School  
Maker Fun Factory**  
“Created by God—Built for a  
Purpose”  
August 7-11, 2017  
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Get ready to be creative because Vacation Bible School is coming!!

Youth and adults will explore the Bible and learn along with Ian Victor, a guy who’s successful at everything *except* inventing, that God made you, God is for you, God is always with you, God will always love you, and God made you for a reason...*Wow, God!* We will start the day at *Sound Wave Sing and Play*, then kids will have fun with *Game Makers*, enjoy a movie at *KidVid Cinema*, have a *Bible Discovery*, make a project at the *Imagination Station*, and have a snack at the *Snack Factory*. Everyone is welcome to come and wrap up the day at *Funshop Finale!*

This year’s VBS is a joint effort of First Lutheran and First United Churches. To register, your child must be 3 years old (by September 1, 2016) 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 a leader. 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!

For more information about Vacation Bible School, call the church office, 320-632-6667, or contact Gail Hittesdorf at 320-291-4698.

**Pastor Jake’s  
Article  
see page 2**

**Adult  
Opportunities  
see page 3**

**Mission News  
see pages 5-6**

**Parish Nurse  
News  
see page 7**

**Youth Stuff  
see page 9**

One of our youth recently wrote, “I can’t wait to be a part of everything at our church this year!” That speaks volumes for the quality of youth and family ministry here at First Lutheran which this congregation is known for in the community. The most important part of this phenomenon is always involvement of kids and parents. This also takes leaders, including staff, to coordinate and encourage. At a recent Church Council meeting, we discussed the goal of hiring a new youth and family minister.

**Option: Youth Associate Shared Position with First Lutheran Church, Little Falls and Luther Crest Bible Camp**—One possibility for staffing with youth and family ministry at First Lutheran would be a shared position with Luther Crest Bible Camp near Alexandria, on Lake Carlos. Several years ago at First Lutheran this possibility was discussed. In my last call in Battle Lake, the church shared a staff person in this way with Luther Crest. It was a great partnership.

First Lutheran, Little Falls, has been committed to excellent youth and children’s ministries throughout the years, and we are in a crucial time of transition. First with the departure of Jay and Steph Kiel as they moved to Michigan to attend seminary, and now with Daniel Ditmanson taking a different position as Program Director at Camp Onomia, we are seeking a way to keep someone on staff in this key area. In between, youth team, parents and other volunteers can help our existing staff to plan out the year for Youth and Children’s Ministries, but the long-range priority and goal is a staff person to focus solely on this ministry.

**Can we afford it?** The question is, how can we afford it after having a budget deficit for several years? We had a strong result from the recent “New Consecration Sunday” stewardship event, with a projected 14% projected increase now in giving for the next twelve months. The Church Council is committed to arriving at a balanced budget, and even if we are on-track for the year, we’ll still need to adjust.

If First Lutheran partnered with Luther Crest for a shared Youth Associate, this would help with the budget, and we would keep someone on staff for youth and family ministry. We could hire this person on full-time later if we’d like to.

Luther Crest Executive Director, Dave Holtz, met with representatives from our Youth and Children’s Ministry teams on Tuesday, May 2, to look at a proposal for this possibility. He was very interested in working with us to bring someone on-board in the coming months. He says he currently has a couple of excellent candidates in mind. He has known leaders from First Lutheran for many years and knows this is a strong congregation with a heart for youth and children’s ministry. He thinks that the duties, tasks and callings could be carried out well with this partnership with commitment from families, parents, youth, other staff and volunteers.

**Proposal:** If the congregation keeps **\$11-13,000** in the budget and **50 people pledge \$200** for one year for this purpose, over-and-above current giving commitments from Consecration Sunday, that would equal enough to hire a Youth Associate in partnership with Luther Crest.

At a recent meeting, the Church Council voted to “form a committee to campaign for 50 pledges of \$200, for one year, to be completed by August 31, 2017, to supplement funding of a shared youth and family minister with Luther Crest Bible Camp.” The committee members appointed are Robert Johnson, Tom Riitters, and Doug Dahlberg.

**50 Pledges of \$200 Needed: We are already up to 16 pledges.** Steph and I have pledged in order to help get it started. This is an investment in our kids’ future like anything else. Anyone who’d like to make a one-time pledge of \$200 toward hiring a shared Youth Associate with Luther Crest, talk to one of the team members or President Dave Buker.

“I can’t wait to be a part of everything at church this year”... Let’s pray that our youth and families keep saying that for a long time to come!

Your Servant in Christ,

Pastor Jake Dyrhaug

## Council Highlights

- The council formed a team to seek pledges for Youth Associate position. Team members are: Doug Dahlberg, Robert Johnson, and Tom Riitters.
- Reminds the congregation that child care is available at both services on Sunday mornings. Child Care Attendant is Aisha Thompson. Thanks, Aisha!



## Volunteer Appreciation

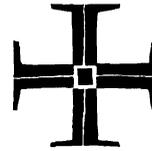
From the Congregational Life Team

Sunday, July 16

We appreciate you! In recognition and celebration of the gifts you bring to our congregation, please come for “between the services” treats on Sunday, July 16.

### Book Club

All adult readers are welcome to read with this group. The selection for July is Bel Canto by Ann Patchett. Readers, please secure your own copy of the book. The group will meet in the church library on Tuesday, July 25, at 7:00 p.m. to share and discuss the month’s book. The August selection is The Song Poet: A Memoir of My Father by Lao Kolea Yang. For more information, contact Tifanii Dahl, 632-8207.



## 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 2017. Please review your statement for accuracy and contact Sue or Nan 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. Thank you to the new enrollees! Please see Sue in the church office to enroll.

### *Special Celebration Offering* For Mortgage Principal Reduction

For the past 17 years we have celebrated Pentecost Sunday by receiving a special offering dedicated to mortgage principal reduction. These gifts have been integral to our ability to maintain and upgrade our church home. As of May 31, the principal amount owed is \$480,625. As we reduce our mortgage debt, we free up dollars for mission. It’s simply a matter of good stewardship. We received this special offering on Pentecost Sunday, June 4. To date we have received and paid down \$5,005.45 for this purpose. Your gifts are still welcome. You will find a special envelope to use for this offering on the greeters table, or please write “Celebration Offering” in the memo line of your check. These gifts will reduce our principal immediately. *Thank you* for your faithful stewardship!



## 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 – by welcoming 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 encouraged 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) to volunteer. 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.

## Threads of Love

*written by Tracy Moe*

Healing, peace and comfort comes in many forms. One way is through the First Lutheran Church quilters. They have a vital role in our congregation. Through my role as a Parish Nurse I have seen the comfort provided to those in need through the gift of a quilt.

*Mission statement:* First Lutheran Church quilters bring the warmth of Jesus’ love to people in need, through their Hands of Love and the tangible gift of a quilt.

*Facts:*

Made 348 quilts, crib quilts, and lap robes in 2016  
Quilters began in 1977 – 40 years of quilting!

First Lutheran high school seniors receive the gift of a quilt at graduation.

Quilters meet every Thursday during the school year here in Stoltz hall.

There are about twelve quilters who attend as they are able and do a variety of tasks. New quilters are welcome!

Supplies are received through donations and grant money. They are not part of the church budget.

Marlene Williams can answer your questions about the quilters.

In addition to the quilters, the Prayer Shawl group donates a supply of hand-knit or crocheted prayer shawls to the congregation’s caring ministry. It is a joy to share these beautiful, unique pieces of work with those in need, whatever the circumstances may be.

If you know someone who could use the comforting hug of a quilt or prayer shawl, please let us know!

Thank you to all who support these ministries of the congregation in any way and all who share their time and talent to care for others in Jesus’ name.

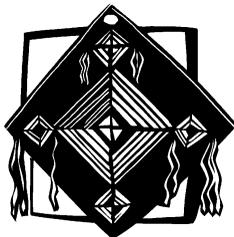
**Is your passion or your hobby quilting, running or golf?  
Here are some ways to enjoy your pastime and benefit others at the same time:**

**Luther Crest Bible Camp  
Marketplace Extravaganza  
held at Carlos Creek Winery  
Saturday, October 21**

Once again Luther Crest is partnering 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 catapults, pie eating contest, live music, apple bakery, and more. Quilt viewing begins at noon in the barn. There will be silent auction, artisan crafts for sale, wine tasting; activities continue until 6:00 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!

**Camp Knutson  
31st Annual Quilt Auction  
11148 Manhattan Pt. Blvd, Crosslake  
Saturday, August 12**

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 and silent auction begins at 9:30 a.m. the live auction begins at 12 noon. The auction is sponsored by Lutheran Social Service and the LSS Paul Bunyan Regional Auxiliary.



**Luther Crest Bible Camp  
Night Owl Glow Trail Run  
Thursday, July 20 at Luther Crest**

Bring your family and friends and come to camp for the second year of this fundraiser event! You can come at 7:30 for the weekly musical and stay for the run. Registration begins at 9:00 p.m. for the 5K or just for fun run. Registration is \$25.00 per person (discounts for 3 or more runners) and will support camper scholarships. There will be prizes and awards and the run will end with a bonfire, s'mores and music. Register online at [www.luthercrest.org](http://www.luthercrest.org). For more information, call Jody Johnson at camp at 320-846-2431 or email Jody at [jodyj@luthercrest.org](mailto:jodyj@luthercrest.org).



**The Sixteenth Annual Golf Scramble  
To benefit the ministry at  
Luther Crest Bible Camp  
Monday, August 7**

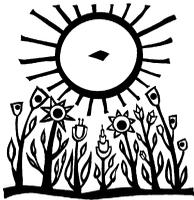
Why not get a foursome together and spend a fun day playing this "Best Ball" tournament on the course at Lake Miltona Golf Course, Alexandria. Registration begins at 10:00 a.m.; "shotgun start" tee time is at noon. Supper will be served at Lake Miltona at 5:00 p.m. The fee of \$100.00 per person covers 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, or register online at [www.luthercrest.org](http://www.luthercrest.org).

## Mission News

### Morrison County Relay for Life 2017

Relay for Life is Friday, July 21, at Morrison County Fairgrounds. This annual event supports the American Cancer Society. Proceeds benefit cancer patients in the area. The event begins at 5:30 p.m. at the fairgrounds. Teams will walk until 3:00 a.m. You can support this event with your donations or purchase and decorate a luminary bag in honor or in memory of a loved one.



### 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 or to the Food Shelf, please do not contribute items that are past the 'use by' date.

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.

### Thank You!

Thank you for your donation to Oasis Central Minnesota. Thank you for all you do to support our programs. Your recent \$500 donation from Lenten Soup Suppers is greatly appreciated.

Rose Surma  
Executive Director



### Oasis/Share A Meal Community Paint A Thon Saturday, August 5

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 Service Project Day Monday, July 24

High school youth and adults are invited to assist with this service project day. Ruby's Pantry is hosted by Little Falls Alliance Church and distributes a variety of 18-22 items of food and household products (valued at \$120) to anyone who desires it for \$20. Meet at church at 2:00 p.m. we will go to the Ruby's Pantry site at the old Crestliner building, 609 13<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, door 6. We will help to unload the food truck and then assist with distributing food for the community. We expect to be finished at about 6:30 p.m. If you can help with this project, please let Pastor Jake or the church office know.

### Share A Meal Thursday, August 10

First Lutheran provides the host site for this weekly community meal each Thursday throughout the year. The meal is provided and served by a different community group each week. First will serve the meal on Thursday, August 10. If you would like to help with the meal please contact the church office. Watch for more details in the coming weeks.

## Being Mindful

I recently attended a workshop on Mindfulness and wanted to share about this simple way to create inner peace.

### *What is Mindfulness?*

Mindfulness is a practice with roots reaching back to the ancient traditions of Buddhist meditation. However, mindfulness has assumed a much more secular role in our society today. Mindfulness has been scientifically proven to reveal important health benefits, and it is practiced in many different forms, including traditional meditation.

Mindfulness is essentially awareness. It is the practice of sustaining awareness of our thoughts, feelings, physical sensations, and external environment in the present moment.

Contrary to popular belief, mindfulness isn't about trying to attain some sort of nirvana or enlightened state. It's exactly the opposite: accepting and existing in the present, whatever that present looks like.

As the pace of life seems to be constantly accelerating, it's all too easy to fall prey to the ravages of stress on our physical and emotional wellbeing. But did you know that something as easy as practicing mindfulness can have tangible health benefits, including: reduced stress, improved attention, better working memory, more positive emotions, and reduced blood pressure.

To practice mindfulness find a time during your day when you have fewer demands on your attention.

### *Mindful Breathing*

- Step 1: Choose a “down” time: in the shower, making breakfast, gardening, or anytime throughout your day.
- Step 2: Shift your focus to your breathing and pick a single aspect to focus on: the rising and falling of your chest or the sensation in your nose.
- Step 3: Spend at least five minutes in this state of awareness; when your mind wanders, gently direct it back to your breath.

Why it works to reduce stress: Focusing on a single sensation can help still a racing mind. Focusing on the breath can also lead us to breathe more slowly and deeply, leading to a slower heart rate and a more relaxed state.

As the saying goes, “stop and smell the roses,” I encourage you all this summer just to pause daily to observe what is around you, practice awareness, embrace every moment, be intentional, accept the imperfect, and love in action. These are just a few ways you can be more mindful day to day.

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” *Proverbs 4:23*

*Adapted from:* [Healthcentral.com](http://Healthcentral.com), [Mindful.com](http://Mindful.com), [Apa.org](http://Apa.org), [Medicalnewstoday.com](http://Medicalnewstoday.com)

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## Thrivent Choice Program

Eligible Thrivent members can direct Thrivent Choice® dollars throughout the year at [www.thrivent.com](http://www.thrivent.com) or call 800-847-4836. First Lutheran and “Children First” Christian Preschool are both registered to receive Choice dollars. Let's take advantage of this great opportunity! For more information, contact your Thrivent representative.

## Thrivent Action Teams

Thrivent Financial encourages its members to participate in generous living in their community and around the world. Thrivent members are eligible to apply for Action Team funds in the form of a \$250 gift card once or twice per calendar year. These funds can be used for a many projects and needs. Thank you to the Thrivent members who have used the program to support ministries here at First Lutheran! For more info, contact your Thrivent representative or Sue in the church office.

## **Vacation Bible School Mission Project**

Each year as a part of VBS week, the youth, adults and congregations are invited to participate in an outreach mission project. This year we will once again collect items for 'Operation Backpack.' Donations of backpacks (new or gently used), school supplies, or money for supplies are welcome and encouraged. In prior years we have given 100+ filled backpacks to nine area schools for distribution to children in need. The summer months are a good time to purchase school supplies at reasonable prices. Your contributions to this project are appreciated. You can bring donations to the church office at any time. Thank you!

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

Preschool enrollment continues for the 2017-2018 school year. There are limited openings available in all classes Please consider registering your child early. Registration forms are available in the gathering space at church or on the church website. A \$60.00 registration/activity fee is required at the time of registration. For more information, you may call Gail or the church office at 632-6667.

Watch for “Children First” at the Green Fair Folk Festival, at St. Francis Campus grounds on Wednesday, August 2, 4:00-8:00 p.m. “Children First” will host a Stuffed Animal Clinic and Adoption Center. You can bring a stuffed animal friend that may need repair or require a new bow or accessory. Or you can adopt a stuffed animal friend to take home or give to someone special in need. If you have a new or gently used stuffed animal that you would like to donate for the Green Fair booth, please bring to First Lutheran Church office before August 1. Thank you!

Enjoy the Summer and God’s Blessings!

Yours in Christ’s Service,  
Gail Hittesdorf, Director



## **Green Fair Folk Festival at St. Francis Convent Wednesday, August 2, 4:00-8:00 p.m.**

This outdoor event sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls is a free family-friendly event that promotes a healthy and sustainable lifestyle. The evening will include exhibitors featuring organic foods, renewable energy, green building, recycled/green art, fashion, eco-gifts and earth friendly products plus music, food, activities for kids, and much more. The 2016 festival included over 60 exhibitors and more than 900 attendees. 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! “Children First” preschool will sponsor a Stuffed Animal Clinic and Adoption Center. 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).

### **Thank you!**

Thank you to all who are assisting with upgrades to the playground. This project is underway and we expect to have it completed soon. Thank you to the family of Ken Tenney for a generous gift given in memory of Ken to be used for playground updates. The playground receives lots of joyful use by the preschool classes and children in the congregation and neighborhood. Thank you!



### Senior High Canoeing Day Sunday, August 6

Meet at church at 12:30 p.m. for pizza (you could stay after 10:30 worship to help with VBS decorating?!) We will drop in at Belle Prairie Park at 1:30 p.m. Bring life jacket, sunscreen, water, please let Pastor Jake know if you have a canoe and paddle, we will rent as needed. Please sign up on the youth table in the gathering space or call the church office to let us know you can canoe.

### 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 project also provides money for youth activities.

The church garage is filling with cans. If you can assist with bringing cans to the recycler on an upcoming Tuesday or Wednesday afternoon, please contact Sue in the church office. Your willing hands and/or a trailer or truck are needed for this task.

Keep saving those aluminum cans! Thanks!

### 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).

### Youth Ministry Confirmation Ministries

**Third Grade:** Watch for a letter about third grade confirmation. Youth entering third grade will receive a Bible in worship on Sunday, August 20. Students and parents will have only one class session, tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, August 16 at 7:00 p.m. Students and parents will learn about their Bibles and learn about sharing family devotions in September.

**Sixth Grade:** During the week of Vacation Bible School (August 7-11), youth entering seventh grade in the fall will be studying the Lord's Prayer. Watch for a letter containing more info about this class.

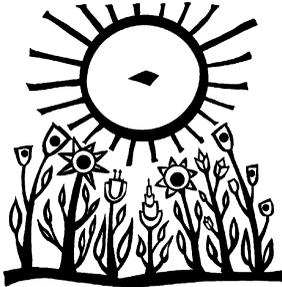


## News of the Family



Bob Orr died on June 17. His memorial service was held June 24 at First Lutheran.

May God grant peace to his family and friends.



### Summer Worship Schedule

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

Summer Worship at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. continues through July and August. Stay after the 8:30 a.m. service, or come early for the 10:30 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, 2017!**