



**Let Not My Will but Thine Be Done**

*by Erin Makela*

And going a little farther, Jesus threw himself on the ground and prayed, that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.”  
*Mark 14:35-36*

We all stumble, Lord.  
We all fall down,  
Even the strongest among us fail.  
We balk at obstacles in our path,  
We cry out “Abba, Father deliver us.”  
We are weak, Lord,  
So weak.  
Only your hand saves us,  
Picks us up,  
Dusts us off,  
And sets our feet on the right path.

First Lutheran steward/member and poet, Erin Makela, lives in Pristinë, Kosovo where she teaches at the American School of Kosova. Erin shares that this poem is based on the text from Mark 14. She writes, “I have always liked these verses because it is at that moment that we see Jesus as a truly human being, as he is supposed to be, fully God and fully Man. Often I think we forget the ‘man’ part, because we focus on the miracles that he performed and we forget that, like each of us, Jesus struggled with temptation and following the path laid out for him.”

You can read this and another of Erin’s poems published in “The Lutheran Journal” and available at church in the gathering space.

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I have a confession to make, and I don't think it's going to be easy to hear, let alone say. But here goes: I'm not perfect. I'm sure if he could talk, our son, Kyle, would verify that I have shortcomings. I'm also sure that some of you could verify the same thing. My confession is not really a surprise, as we all have shortcomings and no one is perfect.

So why am I talking about imperfection, or more specifically my imperfection? We are in the season of Lent, and as some Christian thinkers have said: Lent is the spiritual equivalent of an annual physical. Another has said; "Lent is a time for us to reflect on our relationship with God, a time to repent from our sins, a time to rearrange our priorities in life."

Granted this is not how most of society views Lent. Society, for the most part, sees Lent as the time of the year Christians talk about giving up something that often seems insignificant like chocolate or TV; I say *insignificant* because in the grand scheme of life how does going without chocolate or TV enhance our relationship with God? Is it about fasting or "giving up" as a form of sacrifice?

Giving up or fasting from something for Lent came from the Catholic tradition. The tradition of fasting began because Lent is 40 days long and Jesus was in the desert for 40 days. In fasting, the believer was to remember the trials that Jesus went through while in the desert. The hunger pains were supposed to remind the person to focus on God, and to use meal time as a time of worship.

As time (and medical knowledge) progressed, fasting was not recommended for the sick, the young, nursing mothers, or the elderly (for the most part it is no longer recommended that Catholics fast for whole days, but that they give up meat on Fridays). Those unable to fast from food were encouraged to give up something meaningful in their lives.

Lent is a time to look for God moving in and through us; a time to better realize who God is. As we learn about God, we learn about His grace. As we learn about God's grace, we learn that we

are not deserving of this free gift. As we learn that we are undeserving, we begin to learn the need for repentance, and the need to "rearrange our priorities in life." Martin Luther's view of Lent has been summarized this way: "all of life is repentance, but this is a season designed for a more focused look at our brokenness." It is a time when we give our spiritual lives that annual physical and look for areas where we need to repent. Lent is the time of year when we specifically set aside time each week (Lenten services and Sunday morning worship) for self-examination and repentance.

In the book of Joel, we are reminded that we should mark our hearts with our repentance and with God's love. By this Joel meant that we should not put on a religious show for others. Fasting or "giving up" can be an important part of Lent, but Lent is not about making a right sacrifice that will please God. Nor is it about showing how much one can rely on God. There is nothing we can do to earn God's forgiveness or prove our worthiness. Lent is about taking note of what God has already done for us, what God is doing here and now, and the promises He has made for the future. We can begin by using Lent as a season for repentance; a season to remember that none are perfect and all are freely given God's grace.

As this Lenten season progresses, let us continue with repentant hearts toward God and one another and be open to taking on new perspectives. In the process may we learn more about who God is; how He has been, and is, active in our lives. May we repent when needed, show God's love and grace to those who repent; and may our relationships with God be strengthened in the process.

In Christ,

Pastor Tony Oltmann

[toltmann@fclittlefalls.org](mailto:toltmann@fclittlefalls.org)

## News of the Family

### Baptisms



Rilee Allen Bergren, son of Stacy Ganz and Michael Bergren, was baptized on February 19.

Kate Marie Larson, daughter of David and Camilla Larson, was baptized on February 25.

Welcome to the kingdom of God!



### World Day of Prayer

Friday, March 2

“Let Justice Prevail”

### Marks of Discipleship

Discipleship—a Christian’s intentional journey in grace. Jesus commanded us to “*go and make disciples*” (Matthew 28:18). The goal—maturity in Jesus Christ, “*to grow into the maturity of the full stature of Christ*” (Ephesians 4:13).

The invitation is to **come grow with us** through

1. Personal faith demonstrated in daily **scripture** reading, *Psalm 119:105*
2. Personal faith demonstrated in daily **prayer**, *1 Thessalonians 5:16-19*
3. Weekly **worship** (First Lutheran Church), *Psalm 122:1 & Hebrews 10:23-25*
4. Active Christian **giving** through
  - a. **servicing** in a ministry of First Lutheran Church, *1 Corinthians 12:4-13*
  - b. **tithing**, or a commitment to move to tithing, *Malachi 3:10 & 2 Corinthians 8:12*
  - c. involvement in a **mission** project outside of First Lutheran Church at least once a year, *Matthew 25:31-46*
5. Commitment to ministry through **relationships**, *Mark 6:7*
6. Intentional spiritual **growth**, *Ephesians 4:11-16*

World Day of Prayer is a worldwide movement of Christian women of many traditions who come together to observe a common day of prayer each year. Women in more than 170 countries celebrate a day which brings together races, cultures, and traditions in understanding and action. Through this day, we affirm that prayer and action are inseparable and both have immeasurable influence in the world.

This year, First Lutheran will host the World Day of Prayer service in Little Falls on Friday, March 2, at 1:00 p.m. All men and women in the community are welcome.

This year’s service is prepared by the women of Malaysia with the theme “Let Justice Prevail.” Malaysia is a diverse nation with about 7% of the population being Christian. Malaysia is covered by about 70% rainforest and is also full of modern cities, historic cities, colonial resorts, rice paddies, and rubber and oil palm estates.

The women of Malaysia remind us that in the midst of diversity, it takes courage, compassion and active engagement for justice to prevail. They say, “We are continuously learning to tolerate, understand and accept one another.” Therefore, they begin the worship service with “Selamat datang”—“Peace and welcome.”

For more information, please contact Susan Gustner in the church office.

**March Women's Circle**  
**"To Follow and To Serve"**  
**The Gospel of Mark**  
**Session 7: Rising Expectations**  
 Mark 13:31  
**Martha Circle**  
 The Martha Circle will meet Monday, March 19, at 1:30 p.m. at the church. Hostess is LaVerne Hempeck.

**Adult Opportunities:**

**Cornerstones**  
**(Seniors age 55 and better!)**

We continue to share food, conversation and laughter at a monthly potluck lunch, normally on the third Tuesday of each month, March 20 is the next meal. Bring a friend and a dish to share—all are welcome.

**Men's Bible Study Breakfast**

All are welcome to come for breakfast and Bible study! We meet the first and third Wednesday of each month at 6:15 a.m. Come when you can, leave when you must! Pastor Dave leads this study. For more information, speak to him.

**Confronting Death-**  
**a Christian Approach to the End of Life**

This five-week video conversation continues Mondays at 6:30 p.m. Lutheran pastor, author, and professor Walter Wangerin, Jr., draws from his own recent experience with cancer to explore that which comes to all people: we are going to experience dying. But there is a difference between us and the world—the world looks away from that fact—but we as faithful people have the power and ability to look death straight in the eye and understand it. You are invited to lay aside your reservations and fears and come to explore a Christian approach to death. This course is for any adult who wishes to grow in awareness of how Jesus meets us in our weakness and mortality. For more information, contact the church office.

**New Steward/Member Group**

On February 19, First Lutheran welcomed new steward/members into the life of the congregation. They are:

- Chad and Elizabeth 'Beth' Cooper, Matthew and Grace,
  - John and Deb Freudenrich
  - John and Jane Haas
  - Robert and Christina Johnson, Camilla and Anika
  - Lisa Kobliska and Jeremy Culbertson, and Samuel Liebel
  - Becky Kronbeck, and Rachel Hansen, Kelsi Bzdok, and Aimee Bzdok
  - Pat and Bev Kronbeck
  - Zac and Michele Miller, Olivia and Eli
  - Norm and Sarah Pollock
- Check out the bulletin board for photos and information about the new members and give them a warm welcome!

**Council Highlights**

- Welcomed new council members: Larry Engel, Jim Gehant and Lora McChesney each serving a three-year term; and Les Hittesdorf, serving a second three-year term. Installation of council members was Sunday, February 5 at 9:30 a.m. worship.
- Council members read and signed the 2012 Group Covenant.
- Council members will suggest steward-member names (one position) to serve on the Pastor Parish Team.
- Council is excited to welcome the new stewards being received during the month of February.
- First Lutheran continues "Moving Forward."



## Lent 2012

For this year's Wednesday mid-week worship, on Wednesday, February 29 through Wednesday, March 28, we gather together each week with the congregations of **First United Church and Episcopal Church of Our Savior**, and their pastors. We will worship together at First United Church, 1000 First Street SE. Come to church before worship and share fellowship over a simple bowl of soup and slice of bread from 5:30-6:45 p.m., worship is at 7:00 p.m.

### Lenten Offering

As a part of our Lenten discipline all are encouraged to consider ways that we can share the love of Christ with others. As we live during anxious times, pray about how we each might share what God has provided. Thank you for your generosity as you serve as Jesus' hands and feet in this part of the kingdom.

### Lenten Devotions

You can sign up to receive daily Lenten devotions on-line from Luther Seminary. This year's devotionals "Water Marks" are written by Diane Jacobson, professor emeritus of Luther Seminary and director of the ELCA Book of Faith Initiative. Go to [www.luthersem.edu/lent](http://www.luthersem.edu/lent) to sign up for daily devotions delivered to your e-mail mailbox.

## Lenten Soup Suppers

Are you wondering how you can be a part of the Lenten Soup Suppers? You can get involved in this fellowship opportunity in the following ways.

- ✝ Come for a bowl of soup before worship each Wednesday in Lent. Soup is served from 5:30-6:45 p.m. at **First United Church, 1000 First Street SE**. Sit at tables with others from First Lutheran, First United, and Episcopal Church of Our Savior and enjoy a warm meal and conversation.
- ✝ Help to serve the meal by setting tables, making coffee, heating soup and buttering bread from 4:30-7:00 p.m.
- ✝ Provide saltine crackers, bread, milk and/or peanut butter.
- ✝ Prepare two gallons of soup for Wednesdays, March 7 or 21.

You can volunteer by contacting the "Soup Steward," Linda Weiss at 632-1733, or the church office. Thank you!



### Worship Arts

Worship life in the congregation is enhanced in a variety of ways, music, written and spoken word, movement, and visual arts. Each one of us is gifted for ministry in some way! If you or someone you know is interested in participation in the worship arts, please let a pastor or staff member know of your interest. We will work with you to share your gifts. Thank you!



## March is Food Share Month

“Make us worthy, Lord, to serve those throughout the world who live and die in poverty or hunger. Give them, through our hands, this day their daily bread; and by our understanding love, give peace and joy. Amen.”

*Mother Teresa of Calcutta*

### Hunger Facts:

- ✦ In 2010, there were more than 3 million visits to Minnesota’s food shelves. Food Shelves distributed 63 million pounds of food.
- ✦ From 2008 to 2010, there was a 62 percent increase in food shelf visits in Minnesota—in the nine-county metro area, the jump was 97%.
- ✦ According to the Minnesota Department of Human Services, there were 515,000 residents enrolled in food support in April 2011, an 18.8% increase in one year.
- ✦ In 2010, 39% of visits to food shelves were for children under age 18 and 9% were made by the elderly.
- ✦ According to U.S. Census Bureau figures, 15% of Minnesota children, or about 190,000, were living in poverty last year, an increase of about 18,000 from 2009.
- ✦ More than 50 percent of adult food shelf visitors are employed and 65 percent make less than \$1,000 a month, not enough income to cover their basic needs.
- ✦ More than 35% of eligible Minnesotans were not enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in 2010, even

though they qualified, according to the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

- ✦ Morrison County Food Shelf hours are Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, 10:00-12:00 noon, and Thursdays, 6:00-8:00 p.m. The Food Shelf is located at 912 1<sup>st</sup> Ave SW.

Minnesota FoodShare is a program of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches founded in 1982. This interfaith organization provides education and advocacy about hunger issues in Minnesota and coordinates the largest food drive in the state each March. Through it’s efforts the shelves of more than 260 food pantries in the state are filled.

“Incentive allocation” funds received from Minnesota FoodShare are based on the amount raised locally. Food shelves receive a percentage of money from what is donated to Minnesota FoodShare during March. Your generosity at this time increases the buying power of dollars contributed. You may drop off food donations at First Lutheran Church, or Coborn’s. Your financial gift may be given through First Lutheran, please write “Food Shelf” on the memo line of your check. For more information about the Morrison County Food Shelf, contact Gloria Thomes at 632-8304.

“...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me”

*Matthew 25:35*

## Mission News

### Fair Trade Products

First Lutheran serves fair trade coffee at all church functions. Fair Trade coffee is a simple solution that can mean the difference between surviving and not surviving for small-scale coffee farmers. By making a simple purchase, we make a direct impact on the hard-working women and men whose dreams look a lot like ours. This is a simple way that we can be involved in mission in day-to-day life. Fair trade items are available for purchase in the church office. Try a new blend, we have a dark organic French roast coffee, and several other varieties to choose from. Not a coffee drinker? We also carry tea, (a new organic chai tea is available), and cocoa. Chocolate bars, baking cocoa and dried cranberries are also available. These all make great gifts and support small farmers around the world at the same time!

Donations to defray the cost of purchased coffee are also welcome. Thank you for making a difference!



### Food for the Poor Sunday, March 3

Rev. Dick Hafer, an ELCA pastor with Food for the Poor, is our guest on Sunday, March 3. Food for the Poor was founded in 1982 and is an interdenominational Christian ministry working to end the suffering of the poor in 17 nations in the Caribbean and Latin America. Food for the Poor supplies food, medicine, educational supplies and other items to brothers and sisters in need. More than 75,300 housing units for families in need of shelter have been built. Come and hear about the work being done by God's grace and the assistance of caring and compassionate people.

### Food for Kidz

Food for Kidz is the mobile packing arm of the organization known as Feeding Children of Stewart/FCS. This organization, based right here in Minnesota, has grown from feeding 1 million children in 2003 to over 10 million children in 2010! *Thank you* to all who took a break in their Sunday morning routine on Sunday, February 19 to package food. Together we packaged 10,368 meals for hungry people around the globe! Watch for information about the next packing date and be there to make a difference in the lives of hungry children.

### Home Delivered Meals

First Lutheran participates with other congregations and organizations in Little Falls to deliver meals to homebound people each weekday. The rotation has First delivering meals about five weeks each year. Our next scheduled week is Monday-Friday, April 2-6 (Holy Week). It works best to have two teams of two people deliver each day. If you or someone you know can give an hour or so to deliver meals, please contact our coordinator, Kim Liebel, 632-8065, or the church office. Thank you!

### Thank you!

Thank you so much for the use of your space for our annual Morrison County Animal Humane Society Book Sale. The event was a huge success and all of the money we raised will be used at the shelter to care for the homeless animals and help them to find loving homes. Thank you again!

Rose Surma, President  
Morrison County Animal Humane Society

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Thank you for your donation of your kitchen and fellowship hall for Share A Meal each week. You have been a very important partner to Oasis Central Minnesota and we are excited to continue partnering with you. Thank you for your support and generosity.

Tim Poland  
Oasis Central Minnesota

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## "Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings from "Children First,"

The Annual Fish Fry and Silent Auction Fundraiser was held on Friday, February 17. Thank you to all who helped with the meal, came to eat, donated and/or purchased items at the silent auction. Your support is appreciated!

Two "Come and See Days" are scheduled for Monday and Tuesday, April 16 and 17, from 5:00-7:30 p.m. If you or someone you know is interested in enrolling in preschool, this is a great opportunity to visit the classroom and meet the staff.

- ☺ Fall 2012/13 registration for current preschool families and First Lutheran Church members begins Monday, March 12. Community registration begins April 9. Register early to hold your spot, registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- ☺ Register by submitting a completed registration form along with a \$50.00 non-refundable registration/activity fee. Forms will be available on March 12.

- ☺ Class offerings are:
  - "Jesus' Gems" (4-5 year olds) meet on Monday and Wednesday mornings (9:00-11:30 a.m.)
  - "Noah's Animals" (33 months-3 year olds) meet on Tuesday and Thursday mornings (9:00-11:30 a.m.)
  - "Friday Friends" (33 months-5 year olds) meet Friday morning (9:00-11:30 a.m.) Children must be enrolled in one of the other classes to participate in the Friday Friends. This provides families with a three-day-a-week preschool experience.
- ☺ Registration questions may be directed to Gail Hittesdorf, Director, at 632-6667.

"Children First" is ready to partner with families to build and strengthen academic, physical, social, emotional and spiritual growth of children.

Thank you for the many ways you continue to support the preschool!

Gail Hittesdorf, Director, and Preschool Staff

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### Sunday Morning Education Ministry News

**Preschool Sunday School** (Ages 3-PreK) continues to meet in the Moses room (south ed wing) from 10:30-11:30/45 a.m. each Sunday.

**TREK Rotation** (Kindergarten-5th Grade)

March 4 is the last Sunday in the "Breakfast on the Beach" theme. We will celebrate with a Fish Fry! Just as Jesus prepared a meal for the disciples on the beach; a meal of fried fish, pancakes and fruit will be prepared for the kids! Parents are welcome to assist and share how you see God in everyday living.

"Symbols of Holy Week" is the next rotation theme. Children will use the symbols of Holy Week (palm branches, coins, towel, heart, crown of thorns, cross etc.) to learn the events of Holy Week and create a way to share the story of Holy Week with others through the symbols. Children will also review the four Gospel accounts of Holy

Week comparing the symbols. Sign up to lead cooking, art, storytelling, games/science with family, friends, spouse, or by yourself. The rotation dates are March 11, 18, 25, and April 15. Substitutes are available if you are unable to lead on one of the Sundays. Contact Beth Storkamp 632-4747, Gail Hittesdorf 632-2218, or the church office if you have questions.

Youth in Grades 6 through 12 meet each Sunday with Tonie Dickmann, Ray Stumpf and Jay Kiel in the youth room for food, lessons, and fun!

If you have questions or would like to volunteer, contact Gail Hittesdorf, 632-2218 or 632-6667, or Simon and Beth Storkamp, 632-4747.

**Not at Your House,  
House Party  
Saturday, March 3  
11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.**



Come to shop from your favorite vendors gathered in one place here at church. You can purchase from your favorite vendors, such as: Tupperware, Tastefully Simple, Scentsy, PartyLite, Norwex, Premier Designs, Schwan's Foods, and more. A portion of your purchase supports the July youth trip to the ELCA National Youth Gathering in New Orleans. Schwan's Food pre-orders will be available for pickup, or you can buy directly from the Schwan's truck on Saturday. If you or someone you know is interested in participating as a vendor, please contact Jay Kiel. Thanks for your support of youth ministry events!

**Confirmation Ministries**

**Second Grade:** the sessions on Holy Communion, "The Welcome Table" are Sundays, March 18 and 25. This class is for second graders and their parents. Letters have been mailed to students. If you did not receive a letter, please call.

**Seventh Grade:** The seventh grade class on the Apostles' Creed is scheduled at Luther Crest Bible Camp during the week of June 17-24. Registration letters have been mailed to families. If you did not receive a letter, please contact the church office.

**Tenth Grade:** We meet for Means of Grace sessions: Sunday, April 15 and Sunday, April 22. Both sessions meet from 3:00-5:00 p.m. Pastor Dave will teach this class. These sessions are the last formal class times until fall.

**Youth Fundraiser  
Pizza Ranch Tip Night  
Monday, March 5  
5:00-8:00 p.m.**

Would you like to take a night off and away from the stove? You can enjoy a meal at Pizza Ranch and raise funds for youth ministry at First Lutheran at the same time! Come to Little Falls Pizza Ranch on Monday, March 5 between 5:00 and 8:00 p.m. You eat the pizza, we'll supply workers, and Pizza Ranch donates a percentage of the night's receipts to First Lutheran Church youth ministry—what a great deal! Thanks for your support. Adults – if you can assist with this event, please contact Jay Kiel, Youth and Family Minister, 632-6667.

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**Summer 2012 Mission Trip:**

**Wild and Crazy Saints  
(Grades 6-8)  
June 24-June 29, 2012**

Prepare your hearts to serve and plan on spending a week on a life-changing mission trip. We will attend ServeCAMP at Camp Onomia on Lake Shakopee near Onamia. During the week we will enjoy God's great creation at camp and also have the opportunity to serve local people in and around the camp community. Early bird cost for the week is \$198.00 if you register before March 11; after that date, \$248.00. For more information or to register, contact Youth and Family Minister, Jay Kiel.

**Palm Sunday Lefse Sale  
April 1**

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 23 or Saturday, March 24, call the church office 632-6667. Uff da!

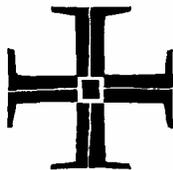
**“Spring Ahead”  
Daylight Savings Time  
begins on SUNDAY, MARCH 11**

Daylight Savings Time begins earlier than in the past. Remember to set your clocks *ahead* one hour on Saturday evening, March 10 – then you’ll be on time for church on Sunday, March 11! ☺

**When to Call the Church Office:  
320-632-6667**

- ☎ When you or a family member is hospitalized or will be hospitalized.
- ☎ When there is a birth or death in the family.
- ☎ When there is a crisis.
- ☎ When you change your address or telephone number.
- ☎ When new neighbors move in near you and they are looking for a church home.
- ☎ When you have good news to share.
- ☎ When you have a suggestion to make or a concern to share, you can contact a council member or a member of the Pastor Parish Relations Team.

Pastor Dave, Pastor Tony and lay visitors are available to call on you and walk with you in times of sadness and joy.



Items for the **April NEWSLETTER** are due on **March 20, 2012!**