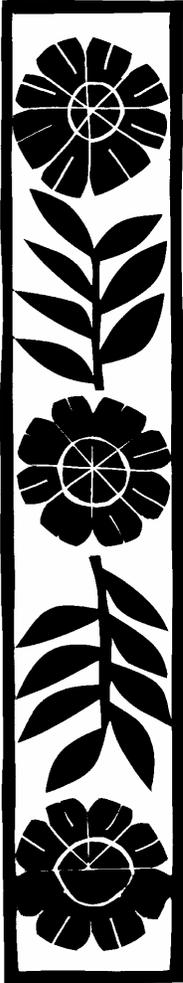




“Servants of All”



**Holy Week and Easter Worship
and Activities**

March 24 Palm Sunday

Hosanna!

8:00 a.m. Holy Communion

9:30 a.m. Praise Worship
and Holy Communion

10:45 a.m. Holy Communion

March 28—Maundy Thursday

The service of Christ: footwashing and meal

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

March 29—Good Friday

The passion and death of Christ according to John

1:00 p.m. – Good Friday Worship

7:00 p.m. – Tenebrae Service

March 30—Saturday

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

*special event for youth age 3 thru second grade
see page 3 for more information*

March 31—The Resurrection of our Lord

The resurrection of Jesus is announced

7:00 a.m. – Sunrise Holy Communion

8:00-9:30 a.m. – Easter Breakfast

10:00 a.m. – Holy Communion

**Pastor David's
Article
see page 2**

**Lenten/Easter
Opportunities
see page 3**

**Food Share Month
see page 6**

**Mission News
see page 7**

**“Children First”
Preschool News
see page 8**

**Education News
see page 9**

**Youth Activities!
see white pages**

Pastor's Article ✚

It's Spring! And these are exciting times at First Lutheran Church!

As I write this I recall the activity that God had planned for me—for us—during this past week and a half. Here's an "update."

On February 18-19, I was at Luther Seminary visiting with potential student interns that First Lutheran might possibly host, nurture, feed, and be fed from as a part of the larger church.

To give you a little background: a couple of years ago your church council made a prayerful decision to take a new direction with the configuration of ministry staff. They recommended, and the congregation approved, that the congregation hire a full-time Youth and Family minister, and an eleven-month master of divinity student intern or a part-time ordained minister. As a result, Jay Kiel was hired and fulfills the role of Youth and Family minister very nicely. We had the pleasure of Pastor Tony Oltmann fulfilling the part-time pastor position for about 18 months. As Pastor Tony made the decision to not renew his contract with First Lutheran, we have an open position on our ministry staff. The congregation council has determined to fill the position with either a part-time ordained clergyperson or a master of divinity student intern.

The process of finding or acquiring a student intern is different from the process used for calling/hiring a part-time ordained clergy. This past week I visited with a few individuals who may have interest in serving as an intern with us. After speaking with these students, I have to say the future of the church is in good hands! We expect to know in April if First Lutheran is selected by the seminary as an internship host for the 2013-2014 academic year.

In the meantime, if you know an ordained clergyperson who might be a good fit at First Lutheran, feel free to suggest they contact the

church office. You can also let me know and I will contact them directly.

Now for an update on the Worship Space Enhancement project! Contractor bids for the project were received on February 21. The Executive Committee met on February 25 and awarded a contract to Eagle Construction of Little Falls. They will serve as General Contractor for the Worship Space Enhancement project. This is exciting! We are getting close to "ground breaking" for FLC! We hope to begin work outside of the sanctuary (Stoltz Hall) soon. Planning is underway for celebration worship on Sunday, May 5. Then, work inside the four walls of the sanctuary will begin officially on May 6. The end result will be beautiful and truly enhance our worship for years to come. We undertake this project so that we continue to be "First Servants of All..." to those who walk through the doors.

Each and every Sunday we see new people come to visit and return to worship. I believe this is affirmation that God is continuing to lead, direct and call us into a bright future with him as our guide.

Yes, these are exciting times at First Lutheran! I am thankful for the ministry that you support in so many ways. Pray that the mission to Proclaim... Provide... and Prepare... be achieved now and in the future.

In Christ!

Pastor David Sperstad
dsperstad@flclittlefalls.org

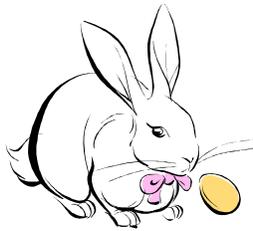
Let love be genuine.
Romans 12:9-13

Lent 2013

For this year's Wednesday mid-week worship, on Wednesday, February 20 through Wednesday, March 20, we gather together each week with the congregations of **First United Church and Episcopal Church of Our Saviour**, and their pastors. We worship together at here at First Lutheran Church. 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 with the meditative service of Holden Evening Prayer 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.



Easter Eggstravaganza Scramble! Saturday, March 30, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Kids! age 3 through second grade, please come with an adult for this **free** event here at First Lutheran. Experience the Easter story through sight, sound, taste, touch and smell as families work together to complete the Easter Story Challenge. We'll have games, crafts, lunch, an Easter egg hunt, and hear the Easter story from a special guest. Don't miss this *eggciting* time!



Eco-Palms for Palm Sunday Worship

One small way that First Lutheran practices stewardship is through the purchase of Eco-Palms. Traditional harvesting of palms in Mexico and Guatemala has contributed to destruction of the forest and harm to the indigenous communities. Eco-Palms are harvested in a way that preserves the trees and also gives the workers a fair wage. May God bless the hands that do this work.

Easter Flowers

Share in the Spirit of Easter by sharing your Easter flowers (for example: lilies, tulips, etc.) with your First Lutheran family. The flowers may be given in remembrance of a loved one or in celebration of a special event or person. Flowers may be dropped off in the Library on Holy Saturday. Please label your flowers. If you would like a remembrance noted in the bulletin regarding your flowers, please call the church office by Monday, March 25.



Easter Breakfast

Come and enjoy the fellowship of Easter Breakfast on Sunday, March 31, from 8:00-9:30 a.m. A free-will offering will be received. We are serving a hot breakfast of pancakes, sausage, eggs, fruit, muffins, juice, milk and coffee. Thanks for your support! Thank you to the Commission for Youth for coordinating this year's breakfast. For more information or to offer your assistance, contact Jay Kiel, in the church office.

News of the Family



Aiden Julian Richard Zellgert, son of James and Jodi Zellgert, was baptized on February 17. Welcome to the kingdom of God!



Darwin Risting died on February 2. His funeral was February 7 at First Lutheran. May God grant peace and comfort to his family and friends.

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*

New Steward/Member Group

We have set aside two times for this group to meet; we ask that stewards attend one of these sessions. The group will meet on Sunday evening; March 17 at 6:30 p.m. or Monday evening, March 18 at 6:30 p.m. New members will be received in worship on Palm Sunday, March 24. First’s council and commission members host a fellowship reception between worship services.

These sessions are meant to help joining members to find their place in the mission of the congregation, get to know others in the congregation, and discuss the foundations of the faith we share. Current member stewards are encouraged to attend and make a new friend.

If God is calling you to stewardship at First Lutheran, these sessions are for you. For more information, or to sign up for the group, please call the church office at 632-6667.

World Day of Prayer

Friday, March 1, 1:30 p.m.

“I was a stranger and you welcomed me”

This year the Franciscan Sisters host the World Day of Prayer service in Little Falls on Friday, March 1 at Sacred Heart Chapel. All men and women in the community are welcome.

This year’s service is prepared by the women of France with the theme “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” The French World Day of Prayer committee looks for a Christian response to struggles concerning immigration and for ways to welcome “the stranger.” Through visual interpretation and personal stories, participants begin to put themselves in the shoes of “the stranger,” remembering their own feelings of being on the outside—and the blessings of welcoming.

World Day of Prayer services begin at sunrise in the Pacific and follow the sun across the globe on this day of celebration. Bring a friend or two and come for worship.

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 Wednesday 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.

Women's Bible Study

"24 Hours that Changed the World" Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. or 5:30 p.m.

This video study by Adam Hamilton will take us to the Holy Land and the sites where events of the last day of Jesus' life took place. The evening study meets at 5:30 p.m. in order to conclude in time for Lenten worship at 7:00 p.m. There is room for you!



March Women's Circle "Gathered by God" Session 7: Beneath Her Wings Martha Circle

The Martha Circle will meet Monday, March 18, at 10:00 a.m. at the church. Hostess is LaVerne Hempeck.

"Building on Blessings"



These are *exciting* times at First Lutheran Church! Later in March you will hear more about "Building on Blessings" so this is just a preview—not unlike the previews you see for new tv shows or movies about to be released. "Building on Blessings" is the culmination of many months of work by congregational leaders, specifically the worship space enhancement team. We have plans to renovate, upgrade, and enhance the building. Some time ago there was talk of painting the sanctuary. The conversation continued. We asked each other "What else could we do?" And here we are! So get ready for information, inspiration, and invitation. Together and with God's help we will build on our many blessings at First Lutheran Church.

Council Highlights

- Welcomed new council members: Deb Scott, Scott Sobiech and Tanna Stucky each serving a three-year term; and Craig Ahlin, serving a second three-year term. Installation of council members was Sunday, February 3 at worship.
- Council members read and signed the 2013 Group Covenant.
- Heard that First Lutheran received a \$5,000 Challenge Grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.
- Heard that Youth and Family Minister, Jay Kiel is participating in a NEMN Synod Practice Discipleship group.
- Approved designating the financial gift received from Bethel Lutheran in appreciation for assistance at the Lutefisk Supper to the Worship Space Enhancement project.



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 2012, 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 542,389 residents eligible for food support in December 2011, an 11% increase in one year.
- ✦ Almost 37,000 of those eligible for food support were age 60 or older.
- ✦ 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, about 200,000 Minnesota children were living in poverty last year.
- ✦ 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 1st 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!



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 29-May 3. 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!

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 routine on Sunday, January 20 to package food. Together we packaged 10,475 meals for hungry people around the globe! The next packing date is Sunday, March 24, 9:00 a.m. to noon. Plan to be there to make a difference in the lives of hungry children.

Baskets of Promise for Lutheran World Relief

This Lent we will participate in Lutheran World Relief's Baskets of Promise appeal. Each week, we'll collect a different item that we will use to assemble Personal Care Kits that give people around the world tools to stay healthy in life's most challenging situations. Our goal is to assemble 150 (or more!) Personal Care Kits during Lent. Here is the collection schedule:

February 17	Bars of soap, 4-5 ounce, any brand in original wrapping
February 24	Bath towels, lightweight, 52"X27" max, dark color is best
March 3	Toothbrushes, adult size, in original packaging
March 10	Combs
March 17	Nail clippers, metal, attached file optional
March 24	Bars of soap, as above

When you are at church you will see the contributions growing on the table in the gathering space. Lutheran World Relief will distribute the assembled kits to people around the world who lack even the most basic needs. Thank you for providing a means to preserve dignity and give hope.

"Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings from "Children First,"

It is already March and yes, Spring is right around the corner. February themes included: Dinosaurs, Valentines and Friends, Five Senses, and "I Love to Read." Check out Preschool artwork and excitement in the Education wing hallways.

You can now 'like' us on Facebook© —Children First Christian Preschool! We are using Facebook as another opportunity to share and grow together as a Preschool family. We will post photos (without names) along with comments regarding class activity. Please keep your comments, photos, and postings Preschool related. Any non-Preschool related items and conversations will be removed.

Registration for the 2013/14 Preschool year begins Monday, March 18 for current preschool families and First Lutheran Church members. A \$60.00 non-refundable registration fee along with the yellow registration form is required to hold your place.

Class offerings are:

"Jesus' Gems" (4 year olds-PreKindergarten) meets mornings 9:00-11:30 a.m. on either Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday.

"Noah's Animals" (33 months-3 year olds) meets mornings 9:00-11:30 a.m. on either Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday.

"Friday Friends" (33 months-5 year olds) meets 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 per week preschool experience.

Monthly tuition is \$80.00 per month with additional \$35.00 per month for the "Friday Friends" class. Registration forms will be available on Wednesday, March 13, in the First Lutheran Church gathering space. Registration opens to the community on Tuesday, April 2, 2013.

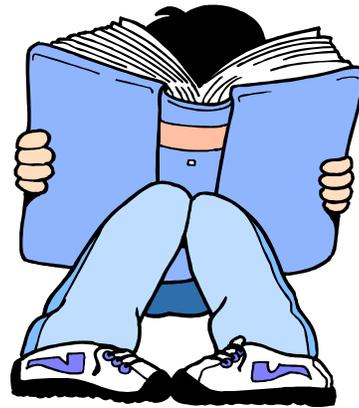
Registration questions may be directed to Gail Hittesdorf, Director, at 632-6667.

"Children First" Christian Preschool hosts a "Come and See Day" on Tuesday, April 16 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. for new preschoolers and interested families. If you know of families with preschool children, encourage them to "Come and See!"

We begin our Dutch Mill Flower Bulb Sale Wednesday, March 20, 2013. If you are interested in ordering please see the Brochure/Order Form in the church office or contact a preschool family. We anticipate bulb arrival prior to Mother's Day.

"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



Confirmation Ministries

Second Grade: the sessions on Holy Communion, “The Welcome Table” are Sundays, March 3 and 10, both from 4:00-6:00 p.m. This class is for second graders and their parents. Students who wish to receive communion as a class can plan to do this at Maundy Thursday worship on March 28 at 7:00 p.m. 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 July 7-12. Campers will spend time each day as a class learning about the Creeds. The balance of the time they will enjoy the camp activities with the counselors and other youth. Registration letters have been mailed to families of students in grades six through eight. If you did not receive a letter, please contact the church office.

Tenth Grade: We meet for Means of Grace sessions: Wednesdays, April 10 and 17. Both sessions meet at 7:00 p.m. Pastor Dave will teach this class. These sessions are the last formal class times until fall. Parents and mentors are welcome!



Vacation Bible School 2013

It’s time to begin planning for VBS! This year we will experience “Kingdom Rock: Where Kids Stand Strong for God!” Please give prayerful consideration to your call to this ministry opportunity. Many adult hands are necessary to have a fun-filled week of caring, sharing, and personal spiritual growth. To learn more, contact Gail Hittesdorf at church.

Sunday School 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. Thank you to parents and grandparents for assisting in this class, you are appreciated! Please sign your child in when you come to class, and you can also signup to help in the classroom at the same time! Only a few times remaining. Big thank you to teacher Jessica Gustafson for her ministry with the preschool age class!

TREK Rotation (Kindergarten-5th Grade) March 3 is the last Sunday in the “Three Women of Faith” theme. Next up on Sundays March 10 and 17 and April 7 is “Peter’s Story.” You can sign up to lead a station on the easel in the gathering space at church, or contact Gail Hittesdorf. Thank you to steadfast leaders, Michelle Dahlberg, Tonie Dickmann, Sue Sperstad, and Annalee VanDenheuvel.

Youth in Grades 6 through 12 meet each Sunday with Ray Stumpf 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.

Palm Sunday Lefse Sale March 24

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

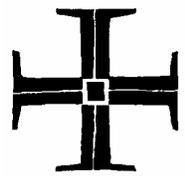
**“Spring Ahead”
Daylight Savings Time
begins on SUNDAY, MARCH 10**

Daylight Savings Time begins earlier than in the past. Remember to set your clocks *ahead* one hour on Saturday evening, March 9 – then you’ll be on time for church on Sunday, March 10! ☺

**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 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, 2013!**