



***“Servants of All”***

March 2015, Newsletter

March 5, 2015

***Who is He?*** by First member Gladys Hokanson

If you are the Son of God  
Come down from off that tree  
And we'll believe you are the One  
That you have claimed to be.

He said He was the Son of God  
I wonder, could it be  
That God would send His Son to die  
On a cross for you and me?

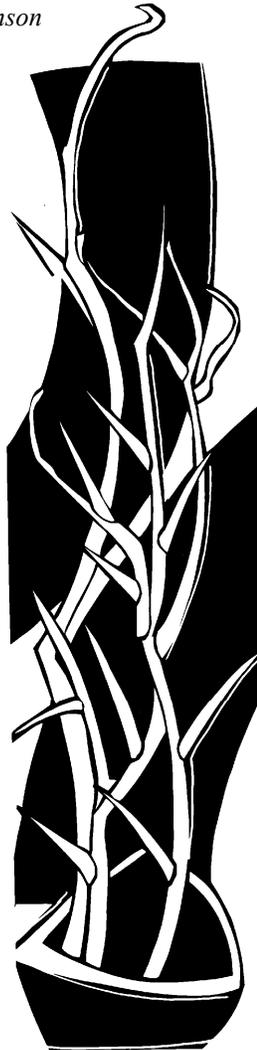
When Jesus hung upon the cross  
On the hill called Calvary  
All the people mocked and jeered  
And said He couldn't be.

Darkness fell at three o'clock  
The earth began to shake  
Even graves were opened  
As His last words, Jesus spake.

The curtain of the temple  
Made up of linen strands  
Was torn from top to bottom  
Untouched by human hands.

Then the frightened soldiers  
Admitted their mistake,  
Surely this was God's son  
The blame we now must take.

Yes, He truly is the Son of God  
He rose up from the grave.  
He died but lives again that He  
Our blighted souls might save.



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We have entered the season of Lent, a time of intentional reflection on the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth and on what it means to follow him in the Way of God in our world—a world so different from the one he lived in. The paraments on the altar and pulpit have changed from white to purple; a purple drape hangs from the cross over the altar. As I explained to the kids in a children’s sermon, purple is the color of kings and Jesus is our king; but a strange king. Unlike the kings and queens of human history, unlike emperors, unlike presidents and prime ministers, Jesus’ power is not the coercive power of armies, not the killing power of the sword. Rather his power is the persuasive power of love, and those who follow him have the high privilege and responsibility of sharing his power and thereby growing his kingdom.

My prayer is that your observance of Lent would draw you more deeply into the mystery of Jesus’ life and death, and more deeply into the mystery of King Jesus’ kingdom of love.

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Those of you who worship regularly at our 10:30 service and at our Wednesday night Lenten services will have noticed that we are now using the contemporary version of the Lord’s Prayer rather than the old English version of the Prayer. Starting in March, we will be using the contemporary version of the Lord’s Prayer at the 8:30 service as well. I know change is not easy, but there are good reasons for praying the Lord’s Prayer in contemporary rather than old English.

- The old version of the Lord’s Prayer that most of us memorized as children was translated into English in 1549, and slightly changed in 1611 and again in 1662. It was the language that people spoke in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is not the language we speak today. “Thee, thou, thy and thine” were commonly used as second person pronouns. We don’t use them. “Art” was commonly used for “is.” We don’t say that. I would never say “My wife who art at the grocery store.” In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, what we call “sin” in everyday language was called “trespasses.” The only time we use “trespasses” today is to talk about someone who illegally goes on someone else’s property. Our prayer should be in our language, not in language spoken centuries ago and not spoken today.
- The Lord’s Prayer was taught by Jesus in everyday Aramaic; it was translated into everyday Greek; it was translated from Greek into everyday 16th century English. Finally, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (about 25 years ago) it was

put into our everyday English. Christianity is a living religion and should be expressed and experienced in living language.

- Language influences belief and behavior. By using archaic language that never occurs in everyday speech to pray the Lord’s Prayer, we are implying that there is a special, sacred “prayer language” reserved for talking with God. That’s simply not true, but it is why lots of people are uncomfortable praying—especially praying out loud in the presence of others. That’s not what we should be teaching our children. We want them to know that God listens to them when they use their everyday language to talk with him.
- The biggest change in the modern version of the Lord’s Prayer is at the end. In the old version, we pray that *God would not* “lead us into temptation,” which implies that maybe God *does* lead folks into temptation, which would make God somewhat responsible for sin. That’s not what we want to teach either. As James put it: “No one, when tempted, should say, “I am being tempted by God;” for God cannot be tempted by evil and *he himself tempts no one*” (1:13). Modern Biblical scholars have concluded that, rather than “Lead us not into temptation,” a more accurate translation of Jesus’ words would be, “Save us from the time of trial.” As we move through life, we all face times of trial, difficult periods in our lives, times of crisis, times of suffering and uncertainty, and we pray that God would

“save us from the time of trial”—a far more hopeful prayer than fearfully pleading for God not to “lead us into temptation.”

In recent years, we have updated our liturgies, exchanged many of the old hymns for new songs, switched from hymnbooks to projection screens, and done many other things that better express for our day the living faith we proclaim, and that show clearly that we are people of faith unafraid of change in a changing world.

In that spirit, I hope you will take the time to get used to the Lord’s Prayer in today’s language and let these small changes in an ancient prayer refresh our experience of the prayer as we teach our children and ourselves how to pray to the God who is always listening.

We are focusing on the Lord’s Prayer throughout our Wednesday evening Lenten services. Come for a bowl or two of soup, a piece of bread, and a time of quiet reflection on this powerful prayer.

*Pastor Hank*

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### **New Members**

If you or someone you know would like to become a member of First Lutheran, we are preparing for the next new member group. We have set aside a time for the group to meet; we ask that you attend this session. The group will meet on Tuesday evening; March 17 at 7:00 p.m. New members will be received in worship on Sunday, March 22. First’s council and commission members host a fellowship reception between worship services.

The group session is meant to help new 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 members are encouraged to attend and make a new friend.

If God is calling you to membership at First Lutheran, this session is for you. For more information, or to sign up for the group, please call the church office at 632-6667.

### **Council Highlights**

- Welcomed new council members: Peter Eckstrom, Ty Gangelhoff, Cindi Habas, Robert Johnson each serving a three-year term; and Lucy Dale, serving a two-year term.
- Council members read and signed the 2015 Group Covenant.
- Approved the Call Committee Continuing Resolution. Received a copy of the Ministry Site Profile which will be submitted to the NE MN Synod office for approval.
- Approved the designation of proceeds from Lenten Soup Suppers to Boys and Girls Clubs of Morrison County.

### **World Day of Prayer**

**Friday, March 6, 1:30 p.m.**

**Jesus Said, “Do You Understand  
What I have Done for You?”**

This year, Bethel Lutheran hosts the World Day of Prayer service in Little Falls on Friday, March 6 at 1:30 p.m. All men and women in the community are welcome.

This year’s service is prepared by the women of Bahamas and based on John 13:1-17.

World Day of Prayer is a worldwide ecumenical movement of Christian women from many traditions who come together to observe a common day of prayer each year on the first Friday in March. 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. For more information, contact the church office.

## Music and Worship Article:

### HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED...

Why do we bury our “Alleluias!!” during Lent?

Lent is a penitential season, a time of repentance, self-examination, confession and study. The church has traditionally marked Lent by various practices of self-denial, such as singing music with a penitential rather than exuberant tone, and ceasing the use of “ALLELUIA!!” in the liturgy. Not only do such practices remind us of our own need for self-denial, but when we burst forth with an empty cross, brilliant flowers, exuberant music and shouts of “ALLELUIA!! CHRIST IS RISEN!!” on Easter Sunday, we celebrate the joy of Christian hope. (credit in part to Tom Ehrich)

### Devotions for Lent 2015

#### grace & peace

As a part of your Lenten journey, we have available a small daily devotional book, grace & peace. For each of the days of Lent, this small book contains a colorful photo, scripture text, quote to ponder, and daily reflection. You may pick up a copy in the church office. Please let us know if you would like to receive a copy in the mail.



#### 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.

## Who is My Neighbor? Opportunity

### 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. In 2014 we assembled 60 Personal Care Kits during Lent. Let's increase that number this year! Here is the collection schedule:

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| February 22 | Bars of soap, 4-5 ounce, any brand in original wrapping   |
| March 1     | Bath towels, lightweight, 52"X27" max, dark color is best |
| March 8     | Toothbrushes, adult size, in original packaging           |
| March 15    | Combs   |
| March 22    | Nail clippers, metal, attached file optional              |
| March 29    | Bars of soap, as above                                    |

When you are at church you will see the contributions growing in the basket 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 to others.

#### Lent 2015

For this year's mid-week worship services, through Wednesday, March 25, we gather for soup and worship using Holden Evening Prayer. Come between 5:30-6:45 p.m. to share fellowship over a simple bowl of soup and slice of bread, worship is at 7:00 p.m. Thank you to all who have already volunteered to provide soup or help with serving and cleanup. If you would like to lend a hand, please see the weekly board in the gathering space or contact Gail Hittesdorf, 320-291-4698, or the church office.

## **Adult Opportunities:**

### **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!

### **Adult Bible Study Thursdays at 11:30 a.m.**

Bring a friend and your Bible and come for spirit-filled discussion around the lectionary texts for the coming Sunday. This is a good opportunity for in-depth conversation and learning about the assigned texts and an added dimension to weekly worship. Pastor Hank leads this study at 11:30 a.m. We meet for about an hour. See you there!

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

#### **"Easter Experience" Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m.**

We continue this six-session video study of the passion, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. 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  
"Transforming Life and Faith"  
Session 7: Suffering and Endurance  
Martha Circle**

The Martha Circle will meet Monday, March 16, at 10:00 a.m. at the church.

## **Pastoral Call Process:**

### **Townhall Forum**

One of the first steps in the process of a congregation to call a pastor is to complete an ELCA Ministry Site Profile (MSP). We have completed and submitted the profile to the ELCA and it has been approved by the NE MN Synod. The profile was compiled based on input and consensus gathered at the council and staff retreat in January. The MSP is a valuable tool for prospective pastoral candidates to learn about us as a congregation and community.

On Sunday, March 8 at 9:35 a.m. all who are interested in hearing an update about the call process are welcome to gather in the sanctuary following 8:30 worship. We will have copies of the Ministry Site Profile available on Sunday, March 1 for you to review prior to the forum.

### **Prayer Team**

The time of calling a pastor can be a special time for reflection and prayer in the life of a congregation. All members and friends of First Lutheran are invited to participate in the pastoral call process by praying for all who are involved in the process. The power of prayer is tangible. Prayer supports us in times of trial, reaches out to us when we are lonely, comforts us when we grieve, gives us hope when we despair, strengthens us as we heal, and draws us into community and deepens our relationship with God.

You are encouraged to pray for the congregation, Pastor Hank, call committee members, church council, volunteers, synod staff, church staff, and potential candidates for pastor. At this important time in the life of First Lutheran it is vital that this journey we share be guided by prayer.

We are asking for your commitment to pray for the Holy Spirit to enter, bless, and surround our church during the call process.

Prayer partners will intentionally pray during each scheduled call committee meeting time. We will send out (via email) specific prayers before the meetings. If you can participate, please contact the church office or Debra Yliniemi-Ahlin at [dyliniemi@lfalls.k12.mn.us](mailto:dyliniemi@lfalls.k12.mn.us). Thank you!

One can tell a person over and over to get out and exercise. I know it gets old and tiring hearing this and sometimes it is difficult to do in Minnesota winters. There is an Internet site I occasionally read called [faithandhealthconnection.org](http://faithandhealthconnection.org). I wanted to share this article with you. Below is an excerpt of an article by Robert Bruce titled Confessions of a Couch Potato.

“The most important thing I’ve learned since starting this (running and fitness) journey is that my health and my faith are not part of two separate worlds. For most of my life, I’ve pretty much eaten whatever I wanted and lived a fairly inactive lifestyle—all while trying to be a “good Christian.” I never saw the connection between physical fitness and faith, though the two are inextricably linked. Paul said that our bodies are temples designed to glorify God (1 Cor. 6:19-20). In other words, the way we manage our physical health affects our spiritual well-being.”

In the article, Bruce shares how he embarked on becoming fit through becoming a long distance runner.

Running is probably not the right choice of physical activity for everyone, but it’s one vehicle you can use to take good care of your physical health. The important thing is that we do something on a regular basis to move our bodies... to care for the temple that they are for God’s Holy Spirit.  
*1 Corinthians 6:19-20*

Here are a few questions on spiritual fitness to ponder. How physically fit are you? How spiritually fit are you? How well are you caring for and honoring your body, the temple of God’s spirit?

So, go move your body. Go for a walk, run, snow shoe, ski, or swim. Take a class, put in an exercise video, play hard with your kids or dog, sign up for yoga, or silver sneakers, just move!

**Couple’s Retreat: For Better...Forever  
Marriage and Pre-Marriage  
Saturday, April 25, 9:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.  
at Lord of Life Lutheran, Baxter**

“For Better...Forever” is an enjoyable couple’s seminar led by Ron Hunt. Ron is a licensed Psychologist an ordained pastor and spiritual director. With wit, humor, and spirit, couples will learn from the latest research what works for couples in happy and lasting relationships.

*Gender and Personality Differences* – how to keep them working for you rather than against you.

*Communication* – Everyone can learn to communicate better. The sooner the better!

*Spirituality: The Divine Love* – Secrets to feeling your love is “heaven sent.”

Cost is \$130 per couple includes refreshments, lunch and materials. The retreat is sponsored by the ELCA churches of the Brainerd Lakes Area and Lakeside Center. To register, call 218-829-3330 or online at [www.bethlehem-online.org/couples-retreat](http://www.bethlehem-online.org/couples-retreat).

**Love for a Lifetime  
Friday-Sunday, April 17-19  
Clearwater Forest, Brainerd Lakes Area**

With fun, spirit, and the latest research, couples learn the ingredients that make for a happy and lasting marriage. Modern research will be the guide as well as wisdom throughout the ages. Topics will include: The 7 Keys to a Great Marriage, Love Languages, Stages of Marriage, Spirituality in Marriage: The Divine Love. The retreat is created and led by Ron Hunt. Ron is a licensed Psychologist an ordained pastor and spiritual director and the founder of Lakeside Center in Deerwood.

Cost of \$299 per couple includes two nights in private room, meals, refreshments, and all materials. To register, call 218-330-5936 or email [info@LakesideCenterMN.com](mailto:info@LakesideCenterMN.com)



## 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:

- ✦ One in 10 Minnesotans or more than 500,000 state residents, experience food insecurity on a regular basis.
- ✦ More than 49 million Americans, including more than 16 million children, live in households that do not have consistent access to nutritious food. That is the equivalent of the populations of California and Ohio going hungry.
- ✦ In 2011, 900,000 veterans (not including homeless vets) relied on the SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) to provide food for their families.
- ✦ Of the families with children suffering from food insecurity and hunger in the US in 2012, 68 percent contained at least one adult working full-time, 10 percent had at least one adult working part-time, 7 percent had an unemployed adult actively looking for work, and 7 percent were headed by an adult with a disability.
- ✦ There were more than 3 million visits to Minnesota food shelves in 2013.
- ✦ Forty percent of food is thrown out in the US every year, or about \$165 billion worth. This uneaten food could feed 25 million Americans.
- ✦ During the 2013 Legislative session, a group of Minnesota lawmakers challenged one

another to try to eat for a week on the average SNAP budget of \$1.29 per meal. Not one of them could do it.

- ✦ Morrison County Food Shelf serves an average of 1160 individuals or 406 families each month.
- ✦ 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.

“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, call 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*

## "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, America, and "I Love to Read." Check out Preschool artwork and excitement in the Education wing hallways. March themes include: Space, Opposites, Weather, Jungle and Holy Week and Easter.

You may want to 'like' us on Facebook© — Children First Christian Preschool! We use Facebook as another opportunity to share and grow together as a Preschool family. We post photos (without names) along with comments regarding class activity. Please keep your comments, photos, and postings Preschool related.

Registration for the 2015/16 Preschool year begins Monday, March 16 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. You can find links to registration forms at the church website [www.flclittlefalls.org](http://www.flclittlefalls.org) on the preschool page.

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.

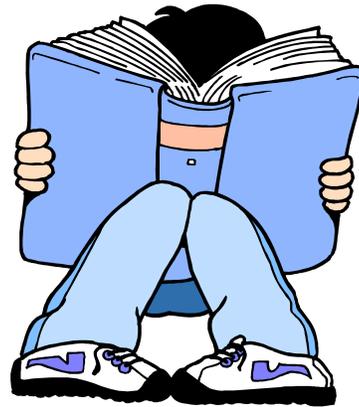
**"Friday Friends"** (33 months-5 year olds) meets Friday morning 9:00-11:30 a.m. Children must be enrolled in one of the other classes to participate in the "Friday Friends." This provides families with a three-day per week preschool experience.

Monthly tuition is \$85.00 per month with additional \$35.00 per month for the "Friday Friends" class. Registration forms will be available on Sunday, March 5, in the First Lutheran Church gathering space. Registration opens to the community on Wednesday, April 1, 2015.

Registration questions may be directed to Gail Hittesdorf, Director, at 632-6667 or by email at [childrenfirst@flclittlefalls.org](mailto:childrenfirst@flclittlefalls.org).

"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:** one session on Holy Communion, “The Welcome Table” is Sunday, March 15 from 3:00-5:00 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 April 2 at 7:00 p.m. Letters have been mailed to students. If you do 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 5-10. Campers will spend time 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. \$100 deposit is due March 13. Campers registering after this date will pay an additional \$50. If you did not receive a letter, please contact the church office.

**Tenth Grade:** We completed Means of Grace session on February 11. Students and mentors are encouraged to continue their mentor activities.



### Vacation Bible School 2015

It’s time to begin planning for VBS! This year we will experience “Everest” 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 the church office.

### Sunday School News

**Preschool Sunday School** (Ages 3-PreK) continues to meet in the Moses room (south ed wing) from 9:35-10:20 a.m. each Sunday. Thank you to all who assist with this class, you are appreciated! Big thank you to teacher Jessica Gustafson for her ministry with the preschool age class!

**TREK Rotation** (Kindergarten-5th Grade) Students began a new rotation “Jesus in the Temple” on Sunday, February 22. For more information about TREK Rotation, contact Amber Sobiech.

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

If you have questions or would like to volunteer, contact 632-6667.

### 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, March 16-20. 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 the church office. Thank you!

<p><b>Palm Sunday Lefse Sale</b> <b>March 29, 2015</b></p> <p>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 27 or Saturday, March 28, call the church office 632-6667. Uff da!</p>
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**“Spring Ahead”  
Daylight Savings Time  
begins on SUNDAY, MARCH 8**

Daylight Savings Time begins earlier than in the past. Remember to set your clocks *ahead* one hour on Saturday evening, March 7 – then you’ll be on time for church on Sunday, March 8! ☺

**Sunday Worship Schedule**

- 8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship using a variety of liturgical settings  
9:35 a.m. Sunday School Hour  
10:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship led by a Praise Band
- Holy Communion is served at all services.

**Come and See!**



**Holy Week Worship Schedule:**

- Palm Sunday, March 29, 8:30 and 10:30 a.m.  
Maundy Thursday, April 2, 7:00 p.m.  
Good Friday, April 3, 1:00 and 7:00 p.m.  
Easter Sunday:  
7:30 a.m. Sunrise Holy Communion  
8:30-10:00 a.m. Easter Breakfast  
10:30 a.m. Festival Holy Communion

Items for the **April NEWSLETTER** are due on **March 20, 2015!**