

# FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Ministers: All God's People at FLC

Jake Dyrhaug, Pastor

# FIRST



*“Servants of All”*

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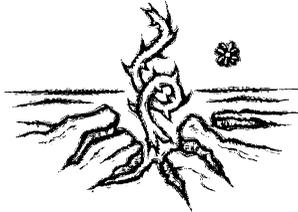
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March 2017, Newsletter

March 1, 2017



## Lent 2017

**begins on Ash Wednesday, March 1  
at First Lutheran Church**

**Soup Supper served at 5:30 p.m.  
7:00 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion  
and Imposition of Ashes**

With ash and soot we begin this Lenten season with confession; we begin with Psalm 51. Today this ancient prayer placed on our lips becomes new again: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.” As we confess our unfaithfulness to God, our lackluster love for our neighbors, our neglect of suffering and injustice in the world, we ask God to wash us, to purge us, to create in us clean hearts.

We pray in the words attributed to Francis of Assisi:

**Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.**

**Amen.**

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You are one. Pastor and writer Al Rogness in The Word for Every Day, writes,

“We can deny our oneness. But, like it or not, we are one. We are one, great human family. Each human being on earth has one heart, one brain, two lungs, two eyes, two feet. We are all created by the same God who already has claimed us all as his children... We can deny that we are one, and we do. We divide into races, into nations, into groups of all kind. This denial is futile, for we are created to be one.

We who have allowed Christ to capture us are another group, his body on earth. We are his church. As a smaller circle rests within a larger, the Christian church lives within the larger circle of humanity. We do long lie alongside the rest of humanity. We are at once human and Christian... The variables that separate us are the accidents of our existence—birth, fortune, color, nationality—to a certain extent, even creeds. Overarching all our diversity, and pervading them all, is the fact and the blessing of a great oneness.”

In a time when people seem to be far from seeing things as one, in a time of “alternate facts” and heated rhetoric about world events, churches have to remember that we are to set the bar for being one. Theologian Karl Barth once said something to the effect of, “The church is a provisional display of God’s original intention for humanity.” One reason the church grew like crazy in those first few hundred years is because people saw how folks in church communities lived with a “oneness” never seen before. God will continue to “call, gather, enlighten and sanctify” the whole church on earth, as Luther put it, in new and powerful ways that will continue to surprise the world. Somehow, even in divided times, God will continue to make us one. I truly believe it.

This Lent we will journey through the days before Easter pondering this mystery of how God in Christ makes us one, as he told us that we are so in need of unity in this world.

Steph and I will return from a trip to the Holy Land on March 11 and will look forward to joining you on this Lenten journey. On Wednesdays in March we will gather for soup supper at 5:30 p.m., then all are welcome to Lenten Worship with Holden Evening Prayer at 7:00 p.m. each week as we hear Jesus’ words defining more of *who we are*.

**Ash Wednesday Worship  
with Holy Communion and Imposition of Ashes**

Wednesday, March 1, 7:00 p.m.

Guest Preacher, Rev. Dave Hoadley

**You are—Loved and Forgiven**

Wednesday, March 8, 7:00 p.m.

Guest Speaker, Mavis Buker

**You are—Light**

Wednesday, March 15

Pastor Jake

**You are—Salt**

Wednesday, March 22

Pastor Jake

**You are—Hope**

Wednesday, March 29

Pastor Jake

**You are—**

Wednesday, April 5

Pastor Jake

In Christ,

Pastor Jake Dyrhaug

## Worship through the Church Year:

### Ash Wednesday and the Season of Lent

We have journeyed through the seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. These seasons have revealed Jesus to us as the Light of the World. We sang our last “alleluia” on Transfiguration Sunday and now we enter the season of Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday.

Throughout the Old Testament ashes were a sign of private remorse. Ash Wednesday, or “Day of Ashes” as it was originally called, became a public rite of repentance in the sixth century. Remember the palms we waved on Palm Sunday? Those palms are burned and used for our ashes. Originally the ashes were poured over each parishioner’s head (imagine the mess!). Now, ashes are traced on the parishioner’s brow in the form of a cross, as a reminder of how it was traced on our brow in our baptism.

The season of Lent lasts 40 days, not including Sundays, beginning this year on March 1 and ending on Maundy Thursday, April 13. The Council of Nicaea first instituted Lent in the year 325 a.d. as a period of reconciliation to God. The length of time was adopted in imitation of the forty days that Jesus spent in the desert at the beginning of his public ministry.

The English word “lent” is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word meaning to “lengthen.” The season of Lent comes at a time when the hours of daylight are lengthening. As Christians, we too can lengthen—stretch out and grow spiritually. The English language has a play on the words ‘sun’ and ‘son.’ As the world enjoys longer hours of nurturing sunlight, so it is with the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who does the work of nurturing our spiritual growth. The image of Jesus as the Light of the world is still with us in the Lenten season!

“What will you give up for Lent?” This question is often considered when Lent is approaching. This year perhaps you might consider growing or adding something to your spiritual life that will help you grow toward the light of Jesus. You could pick up a devotional book, [free indeed](#), at church to help you do just that. Other resources are

available in the church library. There are several online resources and devotionals that will challenge you to stretch and grow in generosity, kindness and love.

At First Lutheran, Lenten worship services are simpler and more meditative. Hymns and songs will have a slower tempo and may be in a minor musical mode. We will not sing the “Song of Praise” or the “Alleluia” at the liturgical services. The sung liturgy of Holden Evening Prayer will provide an additional opportunity for quiet meditation and prayer.

Return to the Lord!

### 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 28 at 6:30 p.m. New members will be received in worship on Sunday, April 2. First’s council and ministry team 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.

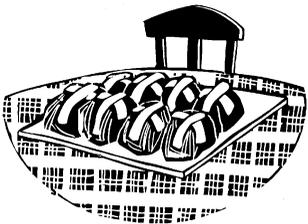


### **Eco-Palms for Palm Sunday Worship April 9**

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, April 10.



### **Easter Breakfast**

Come and enjoy the fellowship of Easter Breakfast on Sunday, April 16, from 8:30-10:00 a.m. A free-will offering will be received. Thanks for your support! Watch for more information and ways that you can assist with this traditional event. To offer your assistance, contact the church office.

### **Lent 2017**

For this year's mid-week worship services, 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.

### **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 2016 we assembled 60+ Personal Care Kits during Lent. Let's increase that number this year! Here is the collection schedule:

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| March 5  | Bars of soap, 4-5 ounce,<br>any brand in original wrapping   |
| March 12 | Bath towels, lightweight,<br>52"X27" max, dark color is best |
| March 19 | Toothbrushes, adult size, in<br>original packaging           |
| March 26 | Combs  |
| April 2  | Nail clippers, metal,<br>attached file optional              |
| April 9  | 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.

## 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 7:00 a.m. Come when you can, leave when you must!

### Women's Tuesday Morning Study

9:00 a.m.

We meet on Tuesday mornings at 9:00 a.m. We are using an audio dramatic reading of the Bible. We are studying the gospel of Matthew and considering what it means to be a disciple of Christ and how to be a disciple to others. Naomi Engel leads this study, come when you are able and bring a friend.

### Women's Evening Bible Study

"Breaking Free From Fear"

Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.

We continue this study "Breaking Free from Fear" by author Kay Arthur. No study on Ash Wednesday, March 1. The evening study will then meet at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesdays during Lent. There is room for you!

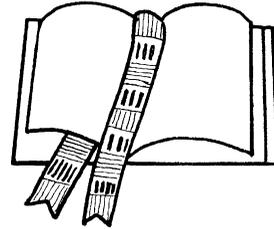


### Martha Circle

The Martha Circle will meet Monday, March 13, at 9:30 a.m. at the church. Diane Grosso is the hostess

## Book Club

All adult readers are welcome to read with this group. The March selection is A Man Called Ove by Fredrik Backman. Readers, please secure your own copy of the book. The group meets on Tuesday, March 28 at 7:00 p.m. in the church library to discuss the book.



### Reformation 500 Book Fair

March 5-19

We have a great opportunity to learn more about Martin Luther, his writings and the impact of the Reformation for the church today by hosting this book fair. Check out the display of books and resources in the gathering space, you can place an order and you will receive a 50% discount and free shipping on any of these resources. We also receive all of the display copies for the church library at no charge from Augsburg Fortress. What a great deal!

### Council Highlights

- Welcomed new council members: Dale Gohl, Jerry Neumann, Bob O'Neill, Kerry Olson and Jennifer Schott, each serving a three-year term.
- Council members read and signed the 2017 Group Covenant.
- Pastor Jake was elected NE MN Synod Heartland Conference Dean at the Heartland Conference gathering on February 12. Congratulations!
- Accepted with regret the resignation of Gloria Kofoed from the position of Financial Clerk, effective April 15, 2017. Heartfelt thanks to Gloria who has served in this position for 15 years!

**Blood Pressure Screening:** Sunday, March 12, 9:30-10:30 a.m. Come to the library between services and have your blood pressure checked.

**Family Ice Skating at Little Falls Exchange Arena:** Sunday, March 12, 6:30-7:45 p.m.  
We have reserved the Exchange Arena for First Lutheran families and friends to ice skate. Sharpen your skates and come out to the arena for a skating workout. Bring a friend or two.

**Senior Game Day:** Tuesday, March 21, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Come to enjoy relaxation and fellowship and games. Bring a friend and your favorite board game or puzzle and a snack to share.

### **Prayer Ministry**

One important ongoing ministry at First Lutheran is the ministry of praying for one another in times of difficulty or sorrow, and also in times of joy and celebration. Members and friends are always encouraged to lift one another in prayer. You are welcome to participate in ongoing opportunities for prayer in the congregation.

A Monday morning group meets at 7:30 a.m. in the prayer chapel for intentional prayer.

Prayer requests are shared (mainly by email) via a prayer “chain” as requested. These requests are asked to be held in prayer for ten days.

Staff ministry team spends time each week in prayer for concerns as requested. Prayer concerns may be shared in the weekly bulletin if requested or prayed over confidentially. Please contact the church office if you would like a name removed from the prayer list.

Individual personal prayer is encouraged as we grow in our relationship with God.

### **World Day of Prayer Friday, March 3, 1:30 p.m. “Am I being unfair to you?”**

This year, Grace Covenant Church, 17117 Riverwood Drive, Little Falls hosts the World Day of Prayer service in Little Falls on Friday, March 3 at 1:30 p.m. All men and women in the community are welcome.

This year’s service is prepared by the women of Philippines and based on Matthew 20:1-16, the parable of the laborers in the vineyard.

World Day of Prayer is a worldwide ecumenical movement of Christians 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 info, contact the church office.



### **Welcome!**

First Lutheran is blessed with many young families and children—a gift from God! We are thankful for the presence of children and seek to provide a place of nurture, safety and caring for people of all ages and especially the little ones among us.

We are pleased to welcome Aisha Thompson as our Sunday morning child Care Attendant. Aisha is a Little Falls native who has served in this capacity previously before relocating to Bemidji. Aisha is also employed full-time at Brandl Motors. Stop by the child care room to meet Aisha and her children and thank her for serving!



## 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 3.2 million visits to Minnesota food shelves in 2015, half of which were made by children and seniors.
- ✦ In 2014, 11% of all Minnesotans and almost 15% of Minnesota kids lived below the poverty level.
- ✦ 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,"

Spring is coming! February fun included our love for Books, Beach Day, Ocean fun along with Valentine's Day and sharing God's love with friends. March will have themes celebrating Dr. Seuss, Space and Weather. Friday Friends class continues the weekly theme and spends time focusing on specific letters of the alphabet. Be sure to visit the project gallery hallway in the Education wing to see our preschool projects and artwork!

Thank you to all who contributed their gifts, time and talents this past month. We appreciate you and all you do to further the ministry of "Children First".

Registration for the 2017-2018 preschool year begins! Registration for current families and First Lutheran Church members begins Sunday, March 12. Community registration will begin Sunday, March 26. Register by turning in the completed yellow Registration form along with the \$60.00 non-refundable Registration/Activity fee. Registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Registration forms will be available on March 12 and will be placed in the cubbies of the current Preschoolers and on the information table in the First Lutheran Church gathering space.

"Children First" Christian Preschool will offer the following classes for the 2017-2018 school year:

Jesus' Gems (4 Years-Pre-K)  
Monday/Wednesday, 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Jesus' Gems (4 Years-Pre-K)  
Tuesday/Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Noah's Animals (33 Months-3 Years)  
Monday/Wednesday, 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Noah's Animals (33 Months-3 Years)  
Tuesday/Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Friday Friends (33 Months-Pre-K)  
Fridays, 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

*\*(Note: Friday Friends class is an additional class to the Jesus' Gems and Noah's Animals intended to create a three-day Preschool week)*

The cost of registration and tuition will remain the same as the current school year. Tuition is \$85.00 per month with an additional cost of \$35.00 per month for the Friday Friends class.

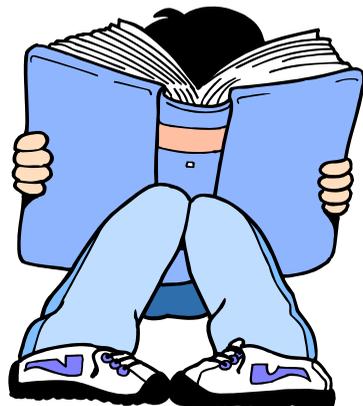
If you have any questions regarding registration please call Gail Hittesdorf, Director, at First Lutheran Church 632-6667 or 320-291-4698.

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

Yours in Christ's Service,

Gail Hittesdorf, Director

"Teach a child how he should live, and he will remember it all his life" *Proverbs 22:6*



### Confirmation Ministries

**Second Grade:** two sessions on Holy Communion, “The Welcome Table” are Sundays, March 19 and 26 at 4:00 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 13 at 7:00 p.m. Letters have been mailed to students. If you do not receive a letter, please call.

**Grades Seven through Ten:** Classes will not meet during Lent. The final two sessions are Wednesdays, April 19 and 26.

**Mentor Program:** Students in grades eight through ten are beginning their mentor relationships. Please keep the students and mentors in your prayers.

### Vacation Bible School 2017 August 7-11

It’s time to begin planning for VBS! This year we will experience “Maker Fun Factory” where kids will discover they are created by God and made for a purpose. 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 Ruth/Naomi room (south education wing) from 9:35-10:20 a.m. each Sunday. Thank you to all who assist with this class, you are appreciated!

**TREK Rotation** (Kindergarten-5th Grade) Students began a new rotation “The Good Samaritan” on Sunday, March 5. For more information about TREK Rotation, contact the church office.

**Youth in Grades 6 through 12** meet each Sunday 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, April 10-14. If you or someone you know can give an hour or so to deliver meals, please contact the church office. Thank you!

### Thank you!

**Thank you** to all who have designated their Thrivent Choice dollars to First Lutheran Church and to “Children First” Christian Preschool. We have seen an increase in the number of Thrivent members who are eligible to donate these funds, and an increase in the amount. **Reminder:** March 31 is the last date to designate Thrivent Choice @ dollars from 2016. Please call the church office if you need assistance with this or have questions. Thank you for putting your Thrivent Choice dollars to work in mission and ministry at First Lutheran!



**“Spring Ahead”  
Daylight Savings Time  
begins on SUNDAY, MARCH 12**

Daylight Savings Time begins earlier than in the past. Remember to set your clocks *ahead* one hour on Saturday evening, March 11 – then you’ll be on time for church on Sunday, March 12! ☺

## News of the Family



John Hewett “Jack” Lemme died on February 14. His memorial service was held at First Lutheran on February 24. May God grant peace and comfort to his family and friends.



### 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!**



Items for the **April NEWSLETTER** are due on **March 20, 2017!**