

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Hank French, Pastor



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May 2015, Newsletter

April 29, 2015



**Center for Changing Lives
“From Here On” Campaign
Sunday, May 10**

Did you know that nearly half of Minnesota’s homeless population is age 21 or younger? That about a quarter of all children in the US live below the poverty line? That in comparison to the wider adolescent population, youth who experience homelessness suffer higher risks of mental-health problems, suicide attempts, and traumatic-stress disorders?

Caring for children is the church’s work, because the gospel Jesus announced and embodied utterly rejects any assumptions that allow us to consider children as unworthy, insignificant, or expendable. Caring for children connects us to Jesus and the acceptance that he modeled. Jesus held children in high regard. He calls us to do likewise.

As we live out the gospel we are ready to participate in the Northeastern Minnesota ELCA Synod campaign “From Here On,” to support Lutheran Social Services mission to end youth homelessness in northeast Minnesota. The Center for Changing Lives in Duluth will be constructed as a central location where at-risk young people can find safety, support and guidance.

You may have noticed the cardboard ‘house’ in the gathering space at church which serves as a reminder of this campaign. You are welcome to add your support with writing “From here on I will...” or other words of support for the project on the walls of the house. Along with other congregations in our synod, we will receive a special offering for this campaign on Mother’s Day, Sunday, May 10. Please give prayerful consideration to how you can support this campaign.

For more information about the ministries that will be housed at this center and for bible study on this topic, go to www.fromhereon.org. Lutheran Social Services hopes to break ground on the building this year. Thank you for sharing with at-risk young people in this part of Minnesota. *Adapted from “From Here On” campaign, Lutheran Social Services and NE MN Synod*

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**Congregational
Updates**
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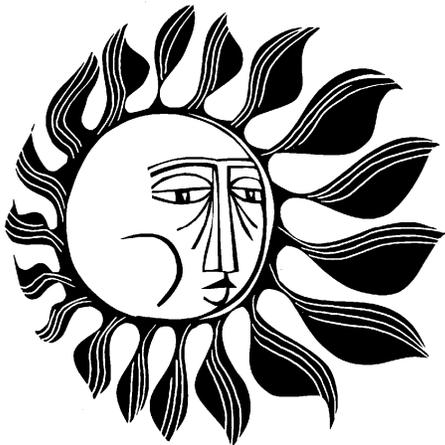
**“Children First”
Christian Preschool**
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**Congrats to our
Grads!**
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Notes from Pastor Hank

You've got to love Minnesota—almost 80 degrees one day and then back into the 30's. But in spite of the chill, the sun is out as I write this, the sky is a rich blue, the grass greener than it was last week and brightly colored pansy's bloom in my front yard. You've got to love Minnesota, and you've got to thank God for giving us such a beautiful, blue-green planet to live on. Today is Earth Day—couldn't have a better day for thanking God and recommitting ourselves to caring for the earth and all its creatures.

On Sunday, May 3rd, in the afternoon, I will be going to a place called *Pacem in Terris* (that's Latin for Peace on Earth). It is a hermitage retreat center in St. Francis, MN. There are 17 hermitages nestled in the woods, and walking paths along a lake, through the woods and across a lovely field where natural grasses and wild flowers grow. A great place to "be still and know that God is God (Psalm46:10). I will be staying in a hermitage for three days—refreshing my spirit in solitude, silence and stillness. I would appreciate your prayers as I spend these three days in silent meditation.



I want to thank everyone who has already completed and submitted their offering commitment cards during our *Changing Lives Together* stewardship campaign. To date we have received 72 commitment cards totaling \$182,312. That's more than half of the \$300,000 in pledged income in this year's budget—income we need to make a real difference through our many ministries in the lives of so many people from the very young to the very old.

If you haven't already turned in your commitment card, I encourage you to do so in the next two weeks. It is a huge help to me, the staff and the Church Council to have clear picture of how much income we can expect to receive from our members and friends as we try to build a reasonable and responsible budget to support all that we do as a community of faith. It would also help us demonstrate to pastors considering a call to First Lutheran that we are willing and able to support the ministry we would be calling them to.

It would be absolutely great if 100% of our households let us know what they expect to be able to give in the next 12 months.

Remember, a commitment card is not written in stone—it is only an indication of what you *expect* to be able to give to your church to make possible the many things we do as followers of Christ. If your financial circumstances change, you can always change the amount of your giving. And be assured, the amount of your pledge is completely confidential.

If you have lost your commitment card, just let Sue Gustner know in the Church Office and she will give you another one. And thank you for taking the time to fill out and return the commitment card. It is deeply appreciated.

And as we get closer to a Minnesota summer my prayer for you is a safe and enjoyable season in the sun.

Pastor Hank

50 DAYS FOR OUR DELIGHT: FOR CHRIST IS RISEN AS ALL THINGS TELL. GOOD CHRISTIAN, SEE YE RISE AS WELL.

Council Highlights

- Approved receiving a special offering for mortgage principal reduction on Pentecost Sunday, May 24.
- Heard about the Center for Changing Lives, and NE MN Synod campaign, From Here On, to support Lutheran Social Services mission to end youth homelessness in our area, special offering on Sunday, May 10
- Heard that \$850 received at Lenten Soup Suppers will be presented to Boys and Girls Club of Morrison County.
- Discussed possible summer midweek worship.

Christian Meditation A class for beginners Mondays, May 11 and 18 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Christian Meditation (also known as contemplative prayer) is an ancient practice that can strengthen and deepen the faith life of modern people. And, along with its spiritual benefits, meditation has been shown to have significant physiological and psychological benefits as well.

If you are interested in practicing Christian meditation or just interested in learning about what it is, how to do it, and why it might be good for you before deciding to begin practicing meditation, here is your opportunity.

Pastor Hank will lead this class on Christian Meditation for beginners of all ages—you are never too young or too old to take up meditation. Pastor Hank has been practicing meditation since 1975 and teaching meditation since 1985.

To participate in the class, sign up in the gathering space or call the church office at 632-6667 by Wednesday, May 6 so that materials can be prepared.

Pentecost Celebration Special Offering for Mortgage Principal Reduction

The church council plans to receive a special offering on Pentecost Sunday, May 24, which will be designated for mortgage principal reduction. The reasoning behind this is simple: we pay down our loan more quickly, pay thousands of dollars less in interest and free up dollars for mission. It's simply a matter of good stewardship. An envelope will be available for this cause. Please give as you are able on Pentecost Sunday, May 24. Thank you for your faithful giving!

Easter Thanksgivings

Thank you to all the many people who made our Lent, Holy Week and Easter celebrations so meaningful:

- † Communion ministers and visitation ministers
- † Musicians: instrumentalists, worship assistants, cantors, choir praise team, and vocalists
- † Scripture readers and worship participants
- † Greeters and Ushers and Hospitality ministers
- † Housecleaners, maintenance helpers, and custodian
- † Art teams, banner makers, drape makers and handlers
- † Ministry team and Commission for Worship and Music
- † Bakers, soup makers, and breakfast preparers
- † Sacristans and altar care
- † Child care providers
- † Teachers and educators

Sunday School News

Thank you to all the children, parents, teachers, station leaders, classroom helpers, opening leaders, and all who have participated and supported the Sunday School sessions in any way – you are all appreciated! Special thanks to those who committed to being present most every Sunday, they are: Debra Yliniemi-Ahlin, Michelle Dahlberg, Jessica Gustafson, Jasmyne Habas, Gail Hittesdorf, Jay Kiel, Camilla Larson, Curt Madsen, Stacia Meyer, Lindsey Nagorski, Becky Nelson, Annalee VanDenheuvell, and Ravonne Whitford. Your time and gifts are so appreciated; we could not do it without you.

Sunday, May 10 is our last session of Sunday School until fall. There will be special end-of-year fun on that day, don't miss it!

The Commission for Education is seeking adults to become a part of the Sunday School experience for fall 2015-spring 2016. Please prayerfully consider how you might share and develop relationships with all God's children at First Lutheran. For more information, contact Amber Sobiech in the church office.



Ride a Bike to Church Sunday Bike Blessing Sunday, May 10

Get out your bike helmet and put air in the tires of your bike and ride on over to church for worship on Sunday, May 10. Following the 10:30 a.m. service, the Little Falls Police Department will be present to share valuable information on bike safety. We will have a drawing for two bicycle helmets for all who attend. Bring your bike or your helmet for a blessing for safe summer riding. All are welcome!

Invite! Sunday, May 31

You are invited to the First Lutheran Church Fifth Sunday Gathering. This is an opportunity for all to come together to share food, fellowship, fun and worship. Add this to your calendar and plan to be present. We'll start the morning at 8:30 a.m. with continental-style breakfast in Stoltz Hall.

At 9:30 a.m. Jay Kiel and the Commission for Congregational Life will lead a conversation adapted from one of the NE MN Synod Discipleship Challenge topics: Invite! What is a story of *invitation* that has made an impact on your life? Maybe it's a story of how you were invited to church, maybe a story where you invited someone else. Throughout the Gospel narrative, Jesus invites and invites again. Rich, poor, old, young, the in crowd and those on the outside looking in – Jesus invites everyone!

There will be activities for children and child care.

We will gather together for one worship service at 10:30 a.m. Come for all or part of the morning. For more information, questions, or ways you can be involved, contact Commission for Congregational Life Chair Mary Pfohl at 632-4760.

Adult Opportunities
May Martha Circle
“Transforming Life and Faith”

Session 9:

The Church Transforming and Reforming

The Martha Circle will meet Monday, May 18, at 10:00 a.m. at the church.

Adult Studies and Events

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. through May 20 when we will take a break for the summer months. Wednesday, May 20 we will meet at 7:00 a.m. at Black and White Restaurant for breakfast. Come when you can, leave when you must!

Book Discussion Group

All adult readers are welcome to read with this group. The May selection is Still Alice by Lisa Genova. Readers, please secure your own copy of the book. The group meets Tuesday, May 26 of the month at 7:00 p.m. for discussion. For more information, contact Tifanii Dahl, at 632-8207.

Women’s Bible Study

“Brave:

honest questions women ask”

Wednesday, May 6, 7:00 p.m.

This seven-session video study by Angela Thomas will dig into six common issues that we all face— insecurities, flaws and struggles that we’re afraid to address. If we can be brave enough to raise the questions, God will answer us. We will order workbooks for the study for those who would like one, cost is \$18.00. For more information, contact Stephanie Adams at 632-3058.

Parish Nurse News

Tracy Moe, RN

We have added new books to the church library that may interest you, they are:

Gray Matter, A Neurosurgeon discovers the Power of Prayer

Author: David Levy, with Joel Kilpatrick

Is there a connection between prayer and healing? Neurosurgeon Levy thinks so. Blending medical drama, scientific exploration, and spiritual insight, he shares how he prays with his patients before performing operations. His musings on what successful and unsuccessful surgical results imply about God, faith, and prayer are honest, moving, and inspiring.

The Faith Club: A Muslim, A Christian, A Jew— Three Women Search for Understanding

Authors: Ranya Idliby, Suzanne Oliver and Priscilla Warner

This is a groundbreaking book about Americans searching for faith and mutual respect, The Faith Club weaves the story of three women, their three religions, and their urgent quest to understand one another.

When an American Muslim woman befriends two other mothers, one Jewish and one Christian, they decide to educate their children about their respective religions. None of them guessed their regular meetings would provide life-changing answers and form bonds that would forever alter their struggles with prejudice, fear, and anger. Personal, powerful, and compelling, The Faith Club forces readers to face the tough questions about their own religions.

Pioneering, timely, deeply thoughtful, and full of hope, The Faith Club’s caring message will resonate with people of all faiths.

**Lutheran Social Service Rummage Sale
Wednesday-Friday, May 13-15**

The spring Lutheran Social Service (LSS) rummage sale co-sponsored by Bethel and First Lutheran Church women will be held at Bethel Lutheran, at 901 West Broadway, on:

Wednesday, May 13, 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 14, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Friday, May 15, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

☞ Dollar Bag Sale Day

Proceeds from the sale are used to benefit residents at the Lutheran Social Services group homes in this area. Set up days are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday morning, clean up begins at noon on Friday. Volunteers are much appreciated, there is lots of 'stuff' to organize – come when you can! The sale is a wonderful recycling opportunity for good, usable, clean clothing, books, linens, small appliances, toys, etc. Clean grocery bags, paper or plastic, are also needed. Please, no televisions, computers or computer parts. Sale items can be brought to Bethel in the morning, beginning Monday, May 4, or on the set-up days. For more information, contact Karen Haaland, at 632-8828.

Servant Opportunity:

Home Delivered Meals

Monday-Friday, May 25-29

First Lutheran participates in delivering Meals on Wheels in the community. Our next dates to deliver meals are Monday-Friday, May 25-29. Meet at the Buckman building at 10:00 a.m., you'll be done between 11:00-11:30 a.m. Contact the church office at 632-6667 to sign up or for more information, or watch for sign-up when you are at worship. Thank you!



**Annual Community Paint-A-Thon
Oasis/Share A Meal
Saturday, August 1**

The Paint-A-Thon committee is recruiting teams to paint a home in Morrison County on August 1. Over the past 19 years, over 175 homeowners have benefited from this program. It takes 10-12 people, 4-5 hours each, to make a big difference in someone's life!

First Lutheran will again sponsor a painting team. Would you be willing to be a painter? Contact the church office to sign up. Thank you for making a difference in the community we share!



**Little Falls Care Center
Bake, Plant and Craft Sale
Thursday, May 28
8:00 a.m. to noon**

Come to the sale; all proceeds directly benefit the residents of the Lutheran Care Center. Your donation of plants, craft items or baked goods are welcome. There will also be silent auction items to bid on. For more information, contact the church office.

Music and Worship Article:

written by Paula Monahan

As we move in to glorious spring, there is one hymn that continually comes to my mind, “This Is My Father’s World!” (If the author was alive today, he could certainly gain inspiration sitting by the Mississippi in Little Falls, watching the ice melt and the water come over the dam!) It was written by Maltbie Babcock and here is his story: “Maltbie Babcock was arguably the most remarkable student Syracuse University had ever seen. Hailing from an aristocratic family, he was a brilliant scholar with a winning personality. Tall and steel-muscled, he was an outstanding athlete, expert swimmer, and captain of the baseball team. He also directed the university’s orchestra, played several instruments, and composed original compositions. A proficient vocalist, he directed the university glee club. He entertained other students by drawing and doing impersonations. On the side, he was an avid fisherman.

“He would have been successful in any profession, but God called him to the ministry; and after further training at Auburn Theological Seminary, he became pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Lockport, New York. It was a beautiful area – midway between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, not far from Niagara Falls – and Maltbie enjoyed hiking and running in the hills outside town. Telling his secretary, ‘I’m going out to see my Father’s world,’ he would run or hike a couple of

miles into the countryside where he’d lose himself in nature.

“It was during his pastorate at Locksport that he wrote a sixteen-stanza poem, each verse beginning with the words, ‘This Is My Father’s World.’

“When he was 42, his church presented him with a special gift – a pilgrimage to the ‘Holy Land.’ With great excitement, Maltbie departed by ship. While enroute at Naples, Italy, he was seized with a deadly bacterial fever and died at the International Hospital on May 18, 1901.”

taken from “Then Sings My Soul” by Robert J. Morgan

“This is my Father’s world,
and to my listening ears,
All nature sings and round me rings
the music of the spheres.
This is my Father’s world,
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;
His hand the wonders wrought.”

“This is my Father’s world,
the birds their carols raise.
The morning light, the lily white,
declare their Maker’s praise.
This is my Father’s world,
He shines in all that’s fair,
In the rustling grass I hear him pass,
He speaks to me everywhere.”

“Grace Notes” Choir

The choir will continue to sing at 8:30 a.m. worship through Pentecost Sunday, May 24. If you or someone you know love to sing but haven’t been singing with the choir, consider coming for rehearsal on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. This is a perfect short-term opportunity to share musical gifts with the congregation. For more information, contact Barb Stumpf, 632-8372.



"Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings from the "Children First" Christian Preschool!

The year has gone by quickly! In April, we experienced classroom fun with themes of Spring, Farm Animals, Earth Day/Recycling, and Insects/Bugs! Check out our themes in the Education Wing. May fun includes camping, bike/trike day, and farm animals! If you have a baby farm animal you would like to show and tell with our Preschoolers please contact Gail or any staff member.

"Children First" Preschool final classes for the year will be the week of May 18.

Preschool families and friends are invited to a "Children First" Ice Cream Social Celebration on Wednesday, May 20 and Thursday, May 21 from 11:00-11:30 a.m. at First Lutheran. We will share songs, stories, ice cream sundaes, and surprises! Friday Friends class will walk to the Dairy Queen on the last day of class, May 22.

"Children First" Christian Preschool continues fall enrollment. Registration packets and brochures with class information are located on the welcome area in the Gathering Space at church. Packets include Registration form, Immunization Record, Healthcare Summary and Questionnaire. The yellow registration form along with a \$60.00 non-refundable registration/activity fee holds your

place. The remaining forms are due prior to the first day of preschool in the fall. Please call if you have any questions.

Watch for "Children First" involvement these community activities: Little Falls Dam Festival Parade, June 20; Green Fair Folk Festival, August 5; Preschool Open House at the end of August; and the Little Falls Arts and Crafts Fair Booth on September 12 and 13. If you would like to assist with any of these activities, please contact Gail at 632-6667 or cell 320-291-4698.

Thank you to all who have contributed to a successful preschool year in any way during this past year. Thank you to Andy's Charter for supporting "Children First" with discounted bussing costs. Thank to you all who supported us financially through our Gifting Campaign, tuition support, the Thrivent Choice® Program, Thrivent Action Team and various fundraisers. Thank you to our staff, Jessica Gustafson, Anna Walker and Chrissi Gesme who have given the children the opportunity to love, live, and learn. Thank you to all who continue to keep the children and families in your prayers. God's Blessings!

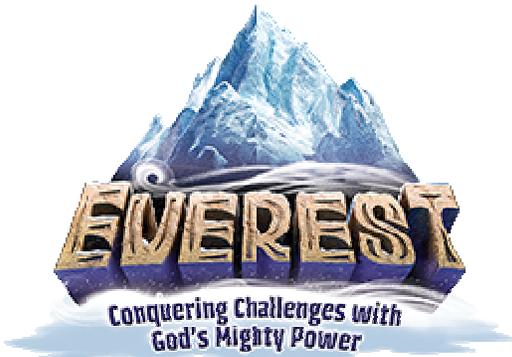
Yours in Christ's Service,
Gail Hittesdorf, Director



Coborn's BBQ Cookout Fundraiser
Friday, May 29, 11:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
Saturday, May 30, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Stop by Coborn's Cookout stand for a bite to eat and support youth ministry programs at First Lutheran at the same time. 50% of the proceeds from the cookout go to ministry support. Thanks, Coborn's! And thank you for your support!

Summer Bible Camp



**Vacation Bible School
August 3-7, 9:00-noon
"Everest"
Conquering Challenges
with God's Mighty Power!**

We'll embark on an icy expedition where we'll learn to face obstacles with God's awesome power. Planning is underway for an exciting week of VBS. Please prayerfully consider how you can be a part of this great week of ministry with young people. Are you unsure, or new to Vacation Bible School? There are experienced individuals wanting to work with you. Watch for the sign up board for Bible School volunteers and for donations requested for the week. For more information, contact Amber Sobiech, 616-9626 or 632-6667.

Can Care Collection
Keep saving those aluminum cans!
Save a can – Save the earth –
Save our youth budget! Keep those cans coming!

It's not too late to register for an awesome week at summer Bible camp! First Lutheran supports the ministry of Luther Crest Bible Camp in Alexandria with mission plan dollars and with time and prayer. Children of all ages (adults too!) will learn how God chooses us, provides for us, forgives all, and sends us out to love as we explore the summer theme "Everlasting Love." If you or someone you know is interested in Bible Camp, please ask in the church office.



**Graduating Seniors
FLC Baccalaureate Sunday, May 17
10:30 a.m. Worship Service
11:30 a.m. Brunch**

We will honor the graduating seniors at the 10:30 a.m. service on May 17. Following worship, brunch is served to the students and their parents. Coordinators are the junior class parents. Please keep the graduates in your prayers.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Rachel Bollin</i> | <i>Emily Leisenheimer</i> |
| <i>Celka Buss</i> | <i>Alex Madsen</i> |
| <i>Tremayne Collins</i> | <i>Emily Marlette</i> |
| <i>Austin Fenske</i> | <i>Heidi Moe</i> |
| <i>Rachel Groves</i> | <i>Justin Moe</i> |
| <i>Kaylee Guck</i> | <i>Kali Neu</i> |
| <i>Kaitlin Hanson</i> | <i>Haley Olson</i> |
| <i>Nikolas Himley</i> | <i>Michael Orr</i> |
| <i>Jason Jopp</i> | <i>Kassidy Overn</i> |
| <i>Thomas Kottschade</i> | <i>Cecealia Schultz</i> |
| <i>Hannah Krupke</i> | <i>Alicia Storkamp</i> |
| <i>Dilan Lange</i> | <i>Maja Sullivan</i> |
| <i>Maddison Larsen</i> | <i>Timothy Wilbur</i> |
| <i>Forest Wonderlich</i> | |
| Congratulations! Go with God! | |

News of the Family



Levi Lawrence Nyreen, son of Jeffrey and Robyn Nyreen, was baptized on April 19. Welcome to the family of God!



Sunday Worship Schedule

8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship
using a variety of
liturgical settings

9:35 a.m. Sunday School
through May 10

10:30 a.m. Contemporary
Worship led by a
Praise Band

Holy Communion is received at
both services

Come and See!



Items for the **June NEWSLETTER** are due
on **May 20, 2015!**