



**First...Moving Forward:
Worship Space Enhancement
Celebration Sunday!**

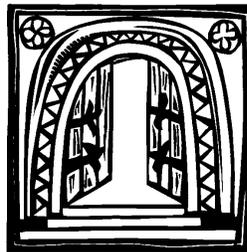
**Sunday, October 6
10:00 a.m. worship
followed by catered lunch**

You are invited to be present at worship on Sunday, October 6. On this special day we gather together in ONE service of worship at 10:00 a.m. to dedicate to God's glory the renewal of the space in which we lift our voices in praise and hear God's word preached.

Rev. Vicki Taylor, Assistant to the Bishop, NE MN Synod will be our guest that day as we continue to give thanks for many years of faithful worship in the sanctuary and look forward to the next 50 years of worship in a warm and welcoming space.

Many people have invested time, thought, prayer, resources, and energy to envision the enhanced space and to help the project come to fruition. We are thankful for all of these efforts! You are a blessing!

Please continue to keep the congregation and all those who come through the doors of this facility in your prayers as we continue to move forward being *First... Servants of all.*



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Pastor Dave's Article

Ever wonder about the creation of the eye? Eyes have nearly one hundred thousand cells. God created us in his image so when we look at others we are looking upon the image of God himself.

So what is it about us that makes us see more of the negative than the positive? You know what I mean? We miss the big picture and so often see the small flaw, or the small tear, or the stain on the carpet? It seems our eye is just drawn to the negative at times doesn't it?

I believe it has to do with our bound will. Luther called this the bondage of the will. Because we are all infected with original sin, we will not only see the negative but left on our own, we will do the negative as well.

People like to think we have free will and that God has given us free will to choose him or deny him. Well, this is, or I should say WAS true only at one time. Only for a very select few people. Two people in fact—Adam and Eve. They were the only two who had any sort of free will to listen to and obey God or not. They chose to listen not to God, but to the serpent who “tricked” them into eating the forbidden fruit. They had a choice: obey God's command or not. They chose not to obey. They wanted to be like God and they chose to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Now we are all infected with this very knowledge and

left on our own, we will choose evil or see the flaws in things. It's a natural tendency for us.

Yes, we can blame Adam and Eve, but now we have been given the Holy Spirit to help us. Without the Spirit's help, we will choose evil, see the flaws in things and in people. We certainly would never choose to follow God on our own. But, thanks be to God! He has given us the Spirit to call us, gather us, and enlighten us with the faith and the trust in, not ourselves and our choices, but in God the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

We are called to fix our eyes on Christ who is the author and the perfecter of our faith. We are a new creation each day on his account and through his call to us.

So today, may the Holy Spirit help you direct your eye not to the negative or the flaw, but the image of God himself.

Pastor Dave Sperstad
dsperstad@flclittlefalls.org



Sunday Morning Worship Schedule for Fall 2013

Begins Sunday, September 15

8:00 a.m. – Traditional liturgical Worship

9:30 a.m. – Contemporary/Praise Worship

10:30 a.m. – Sunday Morning Education Ministry Time

10:45 a.m. – Traditional liturgical Worship

New Steward/Member Group

First Lutheran Church fall New Steward/Member Group meets in October. This group is meant to help joining members to find their place in the mission of the congregation, get to know other members, and discuss the foundations of the faith we share. If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a new steward/member of First Lutheran, plan to attend a get-to-know-you session on either Wednesday, October 16 or Sunday, October 20, at 6:30 p.m. Current members are encouraged to attend and get to know joining members. New steward/members will be received in worship on All Saints Sunday, November 3.

To sign up for the session or for more information, please call the church office at 632-6667.

Are you a Facebook™ fan?

Many First Lutheran members and friends use this social networking site to stay in touch, share, and communicate in a fun way. First Lutheran has a Facebook page!

Search for us under the name '1st Lutheran Little Falls, MN' (be sure to use a number 1) and 'like' our page—you'll be able to view and upload pictures, get current event updates and give feedback, or maybe find a little bit of inspiration for your day.

We have friends all over the country. Thanks for being our Facebook friend. ☺



Council Highlights

- ✦ Heard that the week of Vacation Bible School was an amazing week with over 225 young people from near and far in attendance! Thank you to all of the kids, families, and volunteers for making it a special time to learn to stand strong for God!
- ✦ Announce that the Dedication Worship for the Worship Space Project is scheduled for Sunday October 6, one service at 10:00 a.m.
- ✦ Welcomed new council member, John Haas, appointed to serve in a vacant position until elections are held in January 2014.
- ✦ Approved a request from Ray Stumpf to serve as fiscal host for a new scholarship fund, "His Hands and Feet" to provide financial assistance to Christian students in the Little Falls school district pursuing post-secondary education.
- ✦ Brainstormed visions and dreams for the future of the congregation. *See page four.*



Dreams and Visions

An Update from First Lutheran Council Leadership

We are almost at the completion stage of the construction remodel of the sanctuary. We believe that the consensus is that it has been very well done. And we are still under the anticipated cost of the project.

Yes, we still have kinks to work out: temperature control, sound, lighting and camera usage and other things. But, for the most part it will just take some time to learn the new systems.

While the construction may be complete, we will now try to figure out how to utilize the spaces that have been enhanced; the kitchen, the closet, gathering space and the sanctuary as well. There are a few things we were unable to include in the project that have been compiled into a 'wish list.' If there is something you would like included on the 'wish list' please feel free to let Pastor David know.

During the past couple of months the church council began to talk about two things.

One of these is whether we will have, if asked, same-sex marriage ceremonies at First. Just for clarification, this is not what was decided upon in 2009, by our congregational vote. That had to do with a different matter entirely. The church council is in ongoing discussion about this and no decision has been made at this time by anyone, pastor or council. Officially, the state of Minnesota has authorized same-sex marriage, but the ELCA has not. The ELCA does not have a church-wide "Approved Rite" of the church for same-sex marriage. So, we as council are in continued discussion about this as are many other congregations. If you have comments, please feel free to share them with any council member who will bring your comment along with your name to the next council meeting. If you have questions please ask either a council member or Pastor

David, he would be more than happy to hear from you.

The second thing that the church council has started pondering is what does First Lutheran Church look like in 2017, or 2020, or 2025? The council brainstormed a list of 20 to 25 dreams or wishes on their first try! Very exciting things are on peoples' minds about ministry and happenings in and through First Lutheran in the future. Here is a partial list of "visions" so far: parish nurse, pastoral intern, part-time clergy, full-time clergy, additional lay staff, youth intern, more volunteers, repair and added parking in parking lot, alternative time of worship other than Sunday morning, shower/bath facilities, everyday day care facilities, adult mission trips, family mission trips, mission trips to Haiti, Honduras, or elsewhere, buying and utilizing the house next door, Holy Land trip, Education wing bathrooms, theater room, Boundary waters trip, family camping opportunities, canopy over the front entry walk, Spokefolk base (or the like), coffee bar with smoothies, cross-generational focus, church van, church bus, church trailer, partnering with other area churches when we can so we don't reinvent the wheel, First Lutheran Church shirts, be a part of the 'development' of the Gull lake property with Luther Crest. Continue to be First... Servants of ALL!



Adult Opportunities

Martha Circle

Martha Circle meets Monday, September 16, at 10:00 a.m. at the church. Hostess is Betty Bengtson.

Women's Bible Study "The Patriarchs"

Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.

Plan to attend this study of Genesis—the Book of Beginnings. Discover God's pursuit of a relationship with humans and marvel as God's plan to bless all people unfolds. In this Beth Moore study you will explore such concepts as blessing, covenant, and promise, and see how they affect our lives as New Testament believers. This 10-week video study begins Wednesday, September 18, at 7:00 p.m. Childcare is provided as needed. Watch for signup at church in the gathering space or call the church office. For more information, contact: Stephanie Adams, 632-3058.

Quilters Group

The Thursday morning Quilters Group resumes meeting on Thursday, September 5 at 9:00 a.m. You do not need to be skilled at sewing to help out! There are a variety of ways to serve. And hey, there's always food! For more information, call Marlene Williams, 632-4290 or Marlys Plante, 632-8055.

Adult Bible Study Monday evenings at 6:30 p.m.

All are welcome and encouraged to attend this evening study led by Pastor David beginning Wednesday, September 16 and continuing through October 14. Bring your Bible and come prepared to dig into God's word. There will be conversation and learning and coffee! See you there!

Men's Morning Bible Study Wednesday, September 4 6:15 a.m.

All men of the congregation and friends are invited to Men's Bible Study. We meet on the first and third week of each month on Wednesday morning at the church.

The 6:15 a.m. study includes breakfast. The study will be completed by 7:40 a.m. to allow time to get to work. Come when you are able, leave when you must. For more information, call the church office at 632-6667.

Servant Opportunity Meals on Wheels

First Lutheran participates in delivering Meals on Wheels to home-bound individuals in the community. Our next dates to deliver meals are Monday-Friday, September 10-14. Meet at the Buckman building at 10:00 a.m., you'll be done between 11:00-11:30 a.m. If you can assist with this important service ministry, please contact the church office.

Book Club

All adult readers are welcome to read with this group. The selection for September is The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry by Rachel Joyce. Readers, please secure your own copy of the book. The group will meet in the church library on Tuesday, September 24, at 7:00 p.m. to share and discuss the month's book. The October selection is Ordinary Grace by William Kent Krueger. For more information, contact Tifanii Dahl, 632-8207.

Music Ministry Opportunities:



The Followers of Christ Children's Choir Rehearsals begin: Wednesday, September 11

All kids in Kindergarten through Grade 5 are welcome to sing with the children's choir. The first rehearsal is Wednesday, September 11 from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Transportation from Lincoln and Lindbergh Elementary schools to First Lutheran Church will be provided by school bus. Parents are asked to register for this singing opportunity. Registration forms are available in the gathering space or on the church website at www.flclittlefalls.org. For more information, contact Becky Nelson at 749-2336 or rpnelson@brainerd.net.

Adult Choir Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. Beginning October 2

We resume rehearsals this fall on Wednesday, October 2. We will gather at 1:00 p.m. and rehearse for one hour. The choir will sing at the 8:00 and 10:45 a.m. services about three times per month. If you or someone you know loves to sing please come and use your voice to praise God! New singers are welcome! Schedules are available in the church office. For more information, contact Kathy Pederson, choir director, at 468-2324 or Becky Nelson, Director of Music Ministry, at 749-2336.

Music Ministry Opportunities

Praising the Lord with music is an integral part of worship at First Lutheran. All are welcome to share their musical gifts and participate in music ministry. Vocalists can serve as cantor for worship services, sing in ensemble groups or choir, or provide a gift of music. Instrumental musicians may play with the praise band, provide gifts of music at worship or special events. For more information, contact Becky Nelson, Director of Music, at 749-2336, or 320-360-0209 or via email at rpnelson@flclittlefalls.org.

The Ministry of "Being Here"

It is a genuine ministry for you to be present at church. It is a ministry, first of all to yourself. You need worship, Bible study and other activities because your Christian life needs constant attention, nurture and support.

It is a genuine ministry for you to be present at church...for the rest of us who attend. When you are here, you strengthen my resolve to follow Christ in every way. I enjoy it when you sing with me. I am enriched when you share with me what God is doing in your life. I am called to prayer when you share with me your burdens. You allow me to share my gifts with you.

It is critical ministry for you to be here for the lost and for the ones searching for a church home. When you are here, they sense that God is real and necessary. When you are absent, God does not seem as important. When you are here, they see a very different testimony.

Think about this the next time you are tempted to say, "I won't go today. No one will miss me," or "What difference does it make whether I'm at church or not?" Remember, just being here is a ministry!

Author Unknown

Confirmation Ministries

Parents: Please register your children for confirmation and youth ministry activities now. Forms are available in the church office. Eleventh and Twelfth grade students please register in order to participate in youth activities.

Third Grade: Youth entering third grade have received their Bibles. Parents and youth will share Family Devotions in September. Each youth will receive a home visit in October.

Fifth Grade: class on Stewardship meets in September. Youth will practice stewardship by making communion bread together on Wednesday, September 11, at 6:30 p.m. class continues on September 19, and 26, at 7:00 p.m.

Ninth Grade: New Testament class begins on Wednesday, September 11, at 7:00 p.m. Pastor Dave will teach this class.

Eleventh Grade: Confirmation Reception on Sunday, September 29, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. for students, parents, and mentors. Students will share mentor activities. Confirmation Sunday is October 27 at 10:45 a.m. worship.

Luther Crest Bible Camp Quilts for Camp Extravaganza held at Carlos Creek Winery Saturday, October 19

New this year! Luther Crest is partnering with Carlos Creek Winery's Fall Apple Fest event with over 5,000 participants. Apple Fest begins at 11:00 a.m. with fun events such as: pumpkin carving, pumpkin chucking with catapults and trebuchets, pie eating contest, live music, and more. Quilt viewing begins at noon in the barn. There will be silent auction, artisan crafts for sale, wine tasting, live quilt auction begins at 4:30 p.m. This event will be fun for the entire family all day long! Food and beverages will be available to purchase throughout the day. Carlos Creek Winery is located at 6693 County Rd 34 NW, Alexandria, near Luther Crest. Let's support the Bible Camp at this event!

Child Care Volunteers

First Lutheran is blessed with the gift of many children. As a church family, we want to provide safe, quality care for these precious little ones in the Child Care Space on Sunday mornings and at other events. We have a staff Child Care Attendant, Stephanie Kiel, to coordinate care in the child care room. From time to time, assistance is welcome with child care. If you or someone you know is interested in serving in this way, please contact the church office or Stephanie Kiel.

Thank you!

Thank you to all who came with brush in hand and served as members of First Lutheran's annual Paint-A-Thon team on Saturday, August 3. Thanks to Jerome and Karen Haaland for coordinating this year's team.

Thank you!

Dear First Lutheran friends,

As usual it was great to work with all of you again for Vacation Bible School. It would seem that it was another excellent year. I do so appreciate all of the planning and prep work that goes into it and it is a great ministry to be able to share. So thank you very much!

Peace and all good,
Pastor Damen Heitman, First United Church

Thank you!

The Vacation Bible School Mission Project, Operation Backpack provided over 64 backpacks filled with school supplies to area schools! Due to your generosity we were able to also contribute three large boxes of extra supplies to the schools. Thank you to everyone who donated supplies, backpacks, sorted, counted, packed, and delivered the backpacks! You have assisted many children with learning needs. Thanks for being Jesus' hands and feet in this part of the kingdom.

Thank You Thrivent Members!

Thrivent Choice: Thank you to all who have designated their Thrivent Choice dollars to First Lutheran Church and to "Children First" Christian Preschool. This year we have seen an increase in the number of Thrivent members who are eligible to donate these funds, and an increase in the amount. Thank you for putting your Thrivent Choice dollars to work in mission and ministry at First Lutheran! If you have questions about this program or would like assistance in designating your Thrivent Choice dollars, please contact the church office.

Sunday Morning Education Ministry Begins on Rally Sunday, September 15 at 10:30 a.m.

This fall we are excited to offer Sunday Morning discipleship learning to people of all ages. Plan to participate and grow into the disciple Jesus intends for you to be. Children and parents/guardians gather in Stoltz Hall at 10:30 on Sunday, September 1. We will introduce you to this year's theme "Rock with God!" We will "practice" our faith together.

Youth and Education registration forms were sent by mail, additional forms are available at the church. Please complete these forms and return to the church office as soon as possible.

For more information, contact Gail Hittesdorf, 632-6667.



Welcome Three-Year-Olds!

Each year we help prepare our three-year-olds for Sunday School by inviting them and their parents to participate in an orientation gathering. This year's gathering is scheduled for Wednesday, September 11, at 6:30 p.m. Youth and their parents will visit their classroom, meet their teacher, and get acquainted with one another. Any child who is three years old by September 1 is welcome. Three-year olds will receive the gift of a story Bible at worship on Rally Sunday, September 15 at the 9:30 a.m. service. Please enroll your child to ensure they receive a Bible. If you have questions, please call Gail Hittesdorf at church, 632-6667, or at home, 632-2218.

"Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings from "Children First" Christian Preschool!

We welcome new and returning families and staff, teachers, Jessica Gustafson and Sarah Olson and teacher's aides, Chrissy Gesme and Anna Walker for the new school year. Parent/guardian orientation is Wednesday, September 4, at 7:00 p.m. The first days of class are Monday and Tuesday, September 9 and 10. These sessions will meet from 9:00-10:30 a.m. Students and parents will experience the classroom together for 1/2 hour, and then the parents will attend a special session while the children have fun. Wednesday and Thursday, September 12 and 13 will be regular classroom days. The September themes are Royal Welcome!, All About Me, and Apples.

Openings remain in the following classes:

- ☺ *Noah's Animals* is a two-day class for children 33 months to three years old, meeting Monday and Wednesday from 9:00-11:30 a.m.
- ☺ *Jesus' Gems* is a two-day class for children four and five years old, meeting in two sessions, either Monday and Wednesday, or Tuesday and Thursday, from 9:00-11:30 a.m.
- ☺ *Friday Friends* the additional of this class gives children a three-day classroom experience. Children must be enrolled in one of the other class times.

The preschool hosts a booth at the Little Falls Arts and Crafts Fair on Saturday-Sunday, September 7-8. We're on the corner of Broadway and Second Street (courthouse corner). If you can help with the booth, please contact Gail.

'Give Us a Hand!' Come to Morrison County Kids' Day on Saturday, September 21 at the Morrison County Fairgrounds. We will make a quilt for Habitat for Humanity. Come and place your hand print on our quilt top!

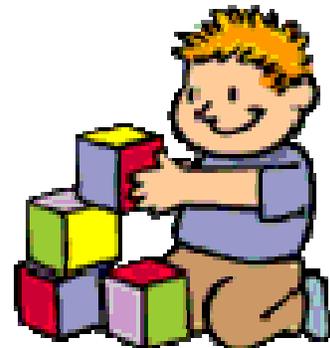
"Children First" continues to collect the following items: Coborn's Food Club points (found on your grocery receipt), Campbell's food points (on the labels), Dairy Queen wrappers, and used ink jet cartridges. You may deposit these items in the boxes in the church gathering space or in the education wing. The preschool receives money or products in exchange for these items. Thanks for saving them for us!

Thank you to those who sponsor tuition for preschool students. Please consider whether you or someone you know can contribute all or part of tuition for a family in need, this is a life-long gift to a child and the families are so grateful! Thank you for your continuing support through Thrivent Choice or any other means. Please include "Children First" in your prayers as we begin an exciting new school year.

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." *Matthew 19:14*

In Christ's Service,

Gail Hittesdorf
Director



News of the Family

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Keri Baumann and Joe Hommerding were united in marriage on August 17.

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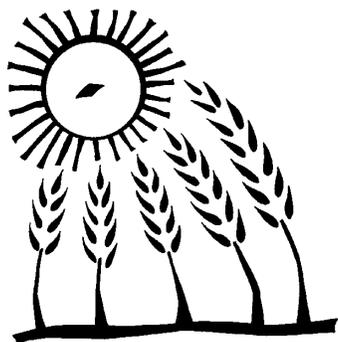
Adisyn Sienna Ramos, daughter of Armando and Cyrena Ramos, was baptized on August 25.

Reid Adam Surma, son of Adam and Rose Surma, was baptized on August 25.

Welcome to the family of God!

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Items for the **October NEWSLETTER** are due on **September 20, 2013!**



Reminder: Fall Worship schedule begins Sunday, September 15. Worship at 8:00, 9:30 and 10:45 a.m.