

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Pastor: Hank French
Ministers:
All God's People at First Lutheran

FIRST



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“Servants of All”

September, 2014, Newsletter

August 29, 2014

**New Sunday Worship and Education Schedule
begins September 21**



At their meeting on Tuesday, August 12, church council leadership heard and approved a proposal to move to a new Sunday worship and Sunday School schedule beginning on Sunday, September 21. The new fall schedule is as follows: 8:30-9:30 a.m. traditional worship using a variety of liturgical settings, 9:35-10:20 a.m. Sunday School, 9:30-10:30 a.m. coffee fellowship, 10:30-11:30 a.m. praise worship. We anticipate that this change will create a greater sense of community for all worshippers and allow families and all worshippers to attend the service of their choice as well as Sunday School.

Council leadership also approved a proposal to offer Holy Communion at all Sunday worship services. This practice will affirm that Holy Communion is a powerful way that God speaks to and nourishes the human spirit and ensures that more worshippers have regular access to the Sacrament.

- 8:30 a.m. Traditional Liturgical Worship**
- 9:30 a.m. Coffee Fellowship**
- 9:35-10:20 a.m. Sunday School**
- 10:30 a.m. Praise Worship**
- Holy Communion at all services**

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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A Note from Pastor Hank

It is hard to believe that September is here—school is about to start, church programs that took some time off in the summer are up and running again, the air has a cool edge to it and God is getting ready to paint the trees in the vivid colors of autumn. Autumn brings with it the promise of a fresh start for both the young and the not so young.

A period of transition, such as First Lutheran is experiencing, is to some degree a fresh start. It is a great opportunity to look carefully at where we have been, where we are, and where we want to be. It is a great opportunity to affirm all the good things that are going on in our various ministries and an opportunity to identify any areas of ministry where we could be doing better. A period of transition is also a time of discernment, a time of prayerfully and carefully seeking to catch God's vision for our community of faith as we move forward into the future God wants for us. Like all fresh starts, a period of transition can be both scary and invigorating at the same time. I count it a privilege to share this experience with you—it's going to be good!

As an interim pastor, I will focus on those things that need to be done before a new pastor can be called, but you can also expect me to do everything else a pastor does. Don't assume that because I am "only" an interim pastor that I won't be fully engaged in the life of the congregation. For both Bobbi and me, First is now our community of faith and you can expect us to be fully here.

There is much to do, but it seems to me that, here at the beginning of our shared ministry, the best place to begin is for me to get to know you and for you to get to know me. I would love to have one-on-one conversations with as many of you (individually or as couples) as possible. We can meet in my office at the church, or we can meet in your home if you prefer, or we can meet at Pete and Joy's or Zoomskis—whatever is convenient and comfortable for you. So, grab me on Sunday morning and we can set up a time to visit, or stop

in or call the church office to set up a time to talk. The better I get to know you and the better you get to know me the better we can worship and work together in this community of faith.

I am especially interested in providing timely pastoral care. There are times in life for everyone when help is needed, when it would be good just to have someone to talk things over with, when advice or direction or a new perspective on things would be helpful. First Lutheran wants to be there for you in such times. So,

if you or someone you care about is seriously ill or in an accident and hospitalized;

if there is a death in the family;

if you lose a job;

if you are having relationship problems;

if you are going through a divorce;

if you are having parenting problems;

if you are having emotional difficulties;

if you or someone you love is in trouble with the law;

if you are lonely;

if you are depressed;

if life just seems too much, too dark, too difficult, then

call me at the church (320-632-6667) or call my cell phone (320-279-0647) and we will get together. You could also call our Parish Nurse, Tracy Moe, at (320-282-5928). You don't have to go through tough times alone. Your community of faith is here for you.

Also, if you have any questions or concerns about issues of faith and spirituality, let me know and we will talk them through. In my understanding, spiritual formation/faith formation is a central responsibility of pastors and I'd love to talk about the things of faith with you.

Finally, my e-mail address at church is hfrench@flclittlefalls.org. Email sent to this address is completely confidential. If you have any concerns, questions or comments on how things

are going at First, don't hesitate to call or email me.

In God's grace, I am confident that it is going to be a good year at First. I will be praying for you and I hope you will be praying for me as we worship and work together.

Pastor Hank



Council Highlights

- ✚ Welcomed Pastor Hank French!
- ✚ Heard that the week of Vacation Bible School was an amazing week with many 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 that Jesus Loves Us!
- ✚ Approved a proposal for a new worship schedule. Beginning Sunday, September 21, service times are: 8:30 a.m. traditional service, 9:35-10:20 a.m. Sunday School/Adult Ed, 10:30 a.m. Praise Worship.
- ✚ Approved a proposal to offer Holy Communion at all Sunday services.
- ✚ Heard that First Lutheran provides the meal and serves Share A Meal on Thursday, August 21.



Rally Sunday Sunday, September 14

Plan to be present on Sunday, September 14 as the fall season gets underway and we celebrate the many ways that we are God's Hands and Feet here at First Lutheran. Between worship services on this Sunday the six working commissions will showcase the activities that are done with servant hands and feet. Come and see what the commissions—Education, Facilities and Property, Health, Mission, Worship and Congregational Life, and Youth—have been up to! There are countless ways for you to be involved and your new ideas are welcome too.

You may wish to pick up a "God's Work, Our Hands" bright yellow tshirt in the gathering space at church (donations welcome) or wear your shirt from last year. Thank you for being "First...Servants of All."



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**
God's work. Our hands.

Parish Nurse News:

CPR/First Aid Class

Do you know how to administer CPR? Do you occasionally care for your grandchildren? Have you ever witnessed an injury or accident? Learning the skills of basic life support and first aid can save lives. First Lutheran members have an opportunity to learn First Aid and CPR on September 13. First Aid will be from 10:15 a.m.-1:00 p.m. and CPR from 1:30-4:30 p.m. Each class is \$35. Class will be held at First Lutheran. Preschool staff will be also take the class. This is a great opportunity for our church family to be skilled in responding to emergencies. Call Jessica Nutz at 320-749-2557 for questions or to sign up. Tracy Moe, Parish Nurse and Commission for Health

Walking for Wellness

The American Heart Association recommends people get 30 minutes of physical exercise five times a week. Are you getting this exercise each week? A group has met to walk throughout the summer and will continue each Wednesday. Meet at church at 6:00 p.m., we will walk (as much as you like) and enjoy the company of others. Any level of adult walkers are welcome. For more info, contact Parish Nurse, Tracy Moe at 320-282-5928.

Thank you!

Thank you to Dr. Mark Moe for presenting the End of Life forum. He graciously provided valuable information on planning for that time in our lives for which it is very difficult to plan. If you missed the forum and would like resources about end of life issues, please contact Tracy Moe, Parish Nurse at 320-282-5928.

Worship Serving Opportunities

Each Sunday, many worshippers come to worship at First Lutheran Church, every week someone is here for the first time. Your servant hands are an integral part of providing hospitality to all who enter here. Stop at the table in the Gathering Space or call or email the church office to offer your gifts in service to Christ's body at First Lutheran. Serving areas are greeters, ushers, scripture readers, communion ministry, child care, coffee hospitality. You can sign up for a time that fits your schedule. **Sign up now for September and October.** Training for each serving ministry is available—please ask! For more information, contact the church office.

Mission Fundraiser

Saturday, September 13, 7:00 p.m.

Bethany Lutheran, Cushing

Bethany Lutheran Church in Cushing hosts the singing duo of Dawn and Gary Timbs of Staples on Saturday, September 13 at 7:00 p.m. A free-will offering will be received to support members of Bethany travelling to work together with congregations in Iringa province of Tanzania, East Africa. For more information, go to www.bethanylutherancushing.org.

Simply Giving

Thank you to all who faithfully contribute to our shared ministry at First Lutheran Church!

You are welcome to participate in an electronic funds transfer giving plan, Simply Giving. Simply Giving ® allows you to automate your giving. This benefits First Lutheran by ensuring regular giving throughout the year and benefits the giver with ease of use. First Lutheran covers the nominal fee per transaction. Please see Sue or Gloria in the church office to enroll. Thank you!

Adult Opportunities

Martha Circle

Martha Circle meets Monday, September 15, at 10:00 a.m. at the church. The group welcomes new members! Hostess is Tulla Enerson.

Women's Bible Study

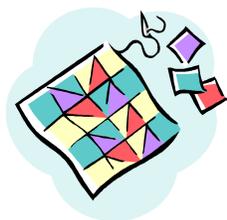
"The Way –

Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus"

Begins Wednesday, September 17

at 7:00 p.m.

We will begin a new study by Adam Hamilton, "The Way, Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus" in September. This study with a 40-day focus uses historical information, archeological data and stories of the faith to follow the footsteps of Jesus from his baptism through his temptations to the heart of his ministry. All are welcome to come and learn more about the life of Jesus. 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 4 at 9:00 a.m. The group welcomes anyone who would like to use their hands in service to others. You do not need to be skilled at sewing! 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.

Men's Morning Bible Study

Wednesday, September 3

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 Tuesday-Friday, September 2-5. Meet at the Buckman building at 10:00 a.m., you'll be done between 11:00-11:30 a.m. Thank you to all the servants who have filled the September dates— You are a Blessing! Our next time to deliver is November 10-14. 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 Fully Alive by Ken Davis. Readers, please secure your own copy of the book. The group will meet in the church library on Tuesday, September 30, at 7:00 p.m. to share and discuss the month's book. The October selection is The House Girl by Tara Conklin. For more information, contact Tifanii Dahl, 632-8207.

Music Ministry Opportunities:



The Followers of Christ Children's Choir Rehearsals begin: Wednesday, September 10

All kids in Kindergarten through Grade 5 are welcome to sing with the children's choir. The first rehearsal is Wednesday, September 10 from 3:30-4:15 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.

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.

Adult Choir Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. Beginning September 17

We resume rehearsals this fall on Wednesday, September 17. We will gather at 7:00 p.m. and rehearse for one hour. The choir will sing at the 8:30 a.m. service two 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.

Share Your Musical Gifts!

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.

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. If your third grade student missed the class on August 20 or was unable to receive their Bible, please contact the church office to make other arrangements.

Fifth Grade: class on Stewardship meets in September. Youth will practice stewardship by

making communion bread together on Wednesday, September 10, at 6:30 p.m. Communion bread will be served at Holy Communion on Sunday, September 14. Class continues on September 17, and 24, at 7:00 p.m. Thank you to Pat Moller and Nancy Ratzloff for leading these sessions.

Ninth Grade: New Testament class begins on Wednesday, September 10, at 7:00 p.m. Pastor Hank will teach this class.

Eleventh Grade: Confirmation Reception on Sunday, September 28, at 6:30 p.m. for students, parents, and mentors. Students will share mentor activities. Confirmation Sunday is October 26 at 10:30 a.m. worship.

Luther Crest Bible Camp Quilts for Camp Extravaganza held at Carlos Creek Winery Saturday, October 18

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 2:00 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

Luther Crest Bible Camp Annual Meeting Saturday, October 4, 9:30 a.m.

First Lutheran is a member congregation of Luther Crest Bible Camp. This means that as a congregation we support the outdoor and camping ministry of this beautiful camp on Lake Carlos near Alexandria with our prayers and our dollars. You are welcome to attend the camp's annual meeting to see the great things that God is doing at camp! Contact the church office if you would like to attend with First's voting members.

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 2. Thanks to Jerome and Karen Haaland for coordinating this year's team.

Thank you!

The Vacation Bible School Mission Project, Operation Backpack provided over 82 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!

First Lutheran has provided a quilt and provided assistance for many years with the Camp Knutson quilt auction fundraiser. Camp Knutson provides a camp experience for persons with special needs such as those with heart disease, HIV or AIDS, Down syndrome, severe skin diseases, autism and other diseases. This year's auction raised an all time high of \$58,350! Thank you!

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 Sunday, September 21 9:35-10:20 a.m.

Sunday School begins at a new time this fall. The Sunday morning schedule is intended to allow families to worship together at the service of their choice and also conveniently attend Sunday School. Preschoolers meet with their teachers in a classroom setting. T.R.E.K. (Teaching, Reaching, Educating, Kids) rotational style education ministry is for children in Kindergarten through Fifth Grade. You are encouraged to participate and explore the following themes: Paul, Christmas Around the World, Isaiah, 10 Commandments, Jesus in the Temple, the Lord's Supper, and Easter People. Middle School and High School youth meet separately. There are many levels of involvement and something for each one's gift!

For more information, contact Amber Sobiech, 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 10, 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 14 at both services. Please enroll your child to ensure they receive a Bible. If you have questions, please call Amber Sobiech at church, 632-6667.

"Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings from "Children First" Christian Preschool!

We welcome new and returning families and staff, teachers, Jessica Gustafson and Anna Walker and teacher's aide, Chrissy Gesme. Parent/guardian orientation is Wednesday, September 3, at 6:30 p.m. The first days of class are Monday and Tuesday, September 8 and 9. 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. Please bring a photo of your preschooler, and a family photo. Wednesday and Thursday, September 10 and 11 will be regular classroom days. The September theme is "I am Special – all about me."

Openings remain in the following classes:

- ☺ *Noah's Animals* is a two-day class for children 33 months to three years old, meeting Tuesday and Thursday 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 addition 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 6-7. 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 27 at the Morrison County Fairgrounds. We will make a quilt for a Habitat for Humanity family. Come and place your hand print on our quilt top!

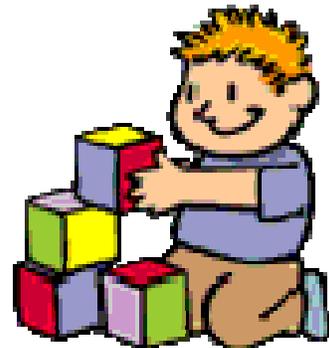
"Children First" continues to collect the following items: Coborn's/Cashwise Food Club points (found on your grocery receipt), Campbell's food points (on the labels) and used ink jet cartridges. You may deposit these items in the boxes in the church gathering space or in the education wing. The preschool receives money or products in exchange for these items. Last year we received \$150 from Coborn's and received a musical bell set from the Campbell's point. 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 for your anonymous gift! 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

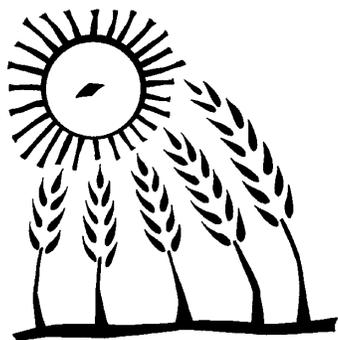
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Finley Joseph Virnig, son of Hannah Groves and Hank Virnig, was baptized on August 24.

Welcome to the family of God!

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Items for the **October NEWSLETTER** are due on **September 19, 2014!**



Reminder: New Worship schedule begins Sunday, September 21. Worship at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday School at 9:35 a.m. See you in church!