

# FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Pastor: Jake Dyrhaug

Ministers:

All God's People at First Lutheran



*“Servants of All”*

2100 Riverview Drive  
Little Falls, MN 56345  
(320) 632-6667  
(320) 632-1050 Fax  
[firstserv@flclittlefalls.org](mailto:firstserv@flclittlefalls.org)  
[www.flclittlefalls.org](http://www.flclittlefalls.org)

September 2017, Newsletter

August 30, 2017



**Welcome  
Diana Kempenich  
new Youth Associate!**

The Church Council and Search Team are excited to welcome Diana Kempenich as we partner with Luther Crest Bible Camp to call Diana to serve as our new Youth and Family Minister. She will be half-time at Luther Crest and half-time here at First Lutheran. In addition to her time here, she will implement retreat/hosted ministries programs on a year-round basis at Luther Crest. The Youth Associate program at Luther Crest has provided over fifty Youth Associates to churches; Pastor Jake formerly worked with a Youth Associate from the camp. Diana attended Little Falls High School. She has recently graduated from Concordia College in Moorhead, majoring in Psychology and Communications. In high school and college Diana participated in Swimming and Diving, Cheerleading, Gymnastics and Wind Ensemble, and she has served as a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity and as Minnesota National Guard Youth Camp Counselor. Diana served as a Counselor and Support Staff Member at Luther Crest, and worked as a Student Manager and Gymnastics coach. She recently completed an internship in Youth Ministry at Good Shepherd Lutheran in Moorhead. *See Diana's article on page nine.*

Welcome, Diana!

*First... Servants of all.*

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**Jesus Loves the Little Children, ALL the Little Children of the World**

*“They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying, ‘Peace, peace, when there is no peace.’”*

*Jeremiah 6:15*

What an intense time. I don't remember seeing riots and street fights on the news in places like Charlottesville, Virginia, since I was just a kid and people were protesting over civil rights injustices and the Vietnam War. It's so terrible that a woman was intentionally run over with a car by someone so filled with hate; and then two police officers died in a helicopter crash while monitoring the white nationalist rally. Neo-Nazi's and white supremacists gathered, broadcast to our smart phones and televisions and computers, who proudly and with caustic hatred shouted slogans born in Nazi Germany before that whole thing ended up in the deaths of over 70 million people in a World War, a war in which many men and women whose funerals I've conducted served and sometimes gave up life and limb to fight against tyranny and oppression—no one should rally with those people at the same rally, in my opinion. Plain and simple.

The difference about this demonstration and counter-demonstration was that both the “Alt-Right” and “Alt-Left” demonstrators came with clubs, with the intent to have a brawl. Part of me thinks inside, that's no way to change society if you really want to, whatever your convictions. History and sociological studies are clear that non-violent protest is far more effective, basically because if people see either side wearing black masks and home-made body armor and carrying clubs like thugs in our streets, they will be less inclined to come and join in the cause the next time. Who wants chaos and anarchy? Really. The police and military are the ones given the task of restraining violence, sometimes with violence if necessary. But something just seems so wrong to me to see crowds of Americans beating on each other on the streets, whatever their political views. I've been wondering, how far will that go? I've been relieved that demonstrators have been kept in two different areas by police in subsequent rallies, because that just can't be good in the long run.

One way or another, I've been thinking in these times of the prophet, Jeremiah, who was openly pleading with those in Israel in his time (in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Centuries, B.C.) to stop just saying, “Peace, peace” when there was no peace. In other words, some for political reasons were saying, all is ok, but that wasn't true. In this time, I think people need to say somehow that not all is ok if folks are thinking Nazis and white supremacists are fine. White supremacy is racism, pure and simple. Racism is wrong, and Jesus many times in scripture lifts up people who are from other cultures and races as the good guys, too—look up the Centurion (*Luke 7:1-10*) or the Good Samaritan (*Luke 10:25-37*) and the Syrophenician Woman (*Matthew 15:21-28*) who came to Jesus, pleading with him to help her daughter, for starters. There are all kinds of verses in the New Testament that point out that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female, for instance see Galatians 3:28.

So, in a time when even primetime news stations are vying for our attention for “who's telling the truth”, remember this uncompromising truth we confess as Christians—that God so loved the WORLD, and as one friend of mine put it, “Jesus brought God's radical love to all, regardless of race, ethnicity or political world-view. Follow him.” And as the old Sunday School song put it well, “Jesus loves the little children, all the little children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world.” If you'd like to read a petition just recently signed by a whole lot of Lutheran pastors like me on this topic, go to <https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/lutheran-clergy-against-white-supremacy>.

In Christ,

Pastor Jake Dyrhaug



### Council Highlights

- ✚ Hired Diana Kempenich, Youth and Family Associate in partnership with Luther Crest Bible Camp, effective August 21.
- ✚ Thrivent members are encouraged to ask a council member about Thrivent Action Team funds.
- ✚ Heard that Rally Sunday and the start of Sunday School is September 17. Confirmation classes begin in September. *See the Education page for details.*

### Worship Serving Opportunities

Each Sunday, many worshipers 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.

#### Reformation Sunday, October 29

The Congregational Life Ministry Team invites you to a special Reformation Sunday breakfast and fellowship. Come for hot cinnamon caramel rolls, fresh fruit, milk, juice and of course...coffee! We will serve between the 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. services in the gathering space and Stoltz Hall.

See you there!

### Financial Update

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

We want to give you an idea of the congregation’s financial status so far this year. The following amounts are as of July 31. We have received as offering for the 2017 Mission Plan \$218,003 of the planned \$249,689 for this date. We have disbursed \$234,890 for expenses as of July 31. As you can see this is a deficit of \$16,887. Know that your ministry team staff and leadership works to keep expenses in line with the mission plan. We are aware that many of you are traveling or away from home during the summer months. We hope to see you in worship this fall and encourage you to give as you are able. Your mail-in offerings are appreciated when you are away.

Thank you to all who participate in the 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 in the church office to enroll. Thank you!



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

## Adult Opportunities

### Martha Circle

Martha Circle meets Monday, September 11, at 9:30 a.m. at the church. Hostess is Mary Larson. The group welcomes new members!



### Quilters Group

The Thursday morning Quilters Group resumes meeting on Thursday, September 7 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. The group meets until 11:30 a.m. with a break for coffee, treats and conversation. Sunday, September 24 we will have a special Blessing of Quilts at worship. For more information, call Marlene Williams, 632-4290 or Marlys Plante, 632-8055.

### Men's Morning Bible Study Wednesday, September 13

All men of the congregation and friends are invited to Men's Bible Study which resumes on Wednesday, September 13 at 7:00 a.m. at church. The study includes breakfast. Come when you are able, leave when you must. In order to accommodate schedules, meeting dates may vary. A calendar will be available at the breakfast. September dates are 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. For more information, call the church office at 632-6667 or Doug Luepke, 584-5957.

### Coming Up: Adult Bible Study

Pastor Jake will lead this Crossways study tentatively on Monday evenings beginning in October. Watch for more details in the coming weeks and plan to attend. All are welcome!

### Luther Crest Bible Camp Quilts for Camp Extravaganza held at Carlos Creek Winery Saturday, October 21

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 will be 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!

### Women's Tuesday Morning Bible Study

This study will meet Tuesday, September 5 at 9:00 a.m. at church. We will take a break for the remaining weeks of September. Watch for a start date in October.

### Women's Evening Bible Study

Watch for information about a new evening study for the fall. If you have questions, please contact Stephanie Adams, 632-3058.

### Book Club

All adult readers are welcome to read with this group. The selection for September is Small Great Things. Readers, please secure your own copy of the book. The group meets in the church library on Tuesday, September 26, at 7:00 p.m. to discuss the month's book. For more information, contact Tifanii Dahl, 632-8207.



## Music Ministry Opportunities:

### **The Followers of Christ Children's Choir**

**Wednesday, September 13**

All kids in Kindergarten through Grade 5 are welcome to sing with the children's choir. The first rehearsal is Wednesday, September 13 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](http://www.flclittlefalls.org). For more information, contact Becky Nelson at 749-2336, 320-360-0209, or [rpnelson@brainerd.net](mailto:rpnelson@brainerd.net).

### **Grace Notes Adult Choir Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. Beginning September 20**

We resume rehearsals this fall on Wednesday, September 20. 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-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 will be available at the first rehearsal. The choir is under the direction of Barb Stumpf.

Do you love to sing praises? Do you have instrumental gifts? Consider sharing your gifts in a variety of ways at First Lutheran. For more information, contact Director of Music Ministry, Becky Nelson at 749-2336, 320-360-0209, or [rpnelson@brainerd.net](mailto:rpnelson@brainerd.net).

## Parish Nurse News: Tracy Moe RN

### **Labyrinth Prayer Walk**

What is your motivation to be healthy and well? Is it your experience that the healthier you are the better enabled you are to serve God and others with the gifts he's given you? Our health is not only physical but spiritual as well.

Come for a short prayer walk on Sunday, September 17 at 12 noon. We will meet behind St Francis Convent after church and walk through their labyrinth and pray. I will have a few ideas on topics we can pray about or you may have your own. If that isn't enough walking, we can continue the prayer walk around the grounds of the convent. Let's all work on our spiritual endurance this day!



### **No Bake Energy Bites**

- 2/3 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup old fashioned oats
- 1/2 cup ground flax seeds
- 2 Tablespoons honey

Combine all five ingredients in a medium bowl. Stir to combine. Place in refrigerator for 15-30 minutes to make easier to roll. Roll into 12 bites and store in refrigerator for up to one week.

## **Sunday Morning Education Ministry Begins on Rally Sunday, September 17 9:35-10:20 a.m.**

The Sunday morning schedule is intended to allow families to worship together at the service of their choice and 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. Youth participate by rotating through areas such as cooking, drama/storytelling, arts and crafts, and games as we explore a theme for a three week period. Middle School and High School youth meet separately. If you or someone you know has a passion for teaching and youth, there are many levels of involvement and something for each one's gift!

For more information, contact the church office, 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 13, at 6:30 p.m. Children and their parents/guardians 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 17 at both services. Please enroll your child to ensure they receive a Bible. If you have questions, please call the church office, 632-6667.

## **Confirmation Ministries**

**Parents:** Please register your children for confirmation and youth ministry activities now. Forms are available in the church office. High School 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 16 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 13, at 7:00 p.m. Communion bread will be served at Holy Communion on Rally Sunday, September 17. Class continues on September 20, and 27, at 7:00 p.m. Thank you to Pat Moller and Nancy Ratzloff for leading these sessions.

**Seventh and Eighth Grade Confirmation:** These classes will meet together with Pastor Jake to continue their study. Classes begin on Wednesday, September 6 at 7:00 p.m. Students and parents should have received a letter about the class and the class schedule. If you did not receive a letter or if you have questions, please contact Sue Gustner in the church office.

**Ninth/Tenth/Eleventh Grade:** Confirmation Reception on Sunday, September 24 at 6:30 p.m. for students, parents, and mentors. Students will share mentor activities. Confirmation Sunday is on Reformation Sunday, October 29 with a special 2:00 p.m. worship service.

### **Blessing of Backpacks Sunday, September 3**

Most students and teachers are heading back to school. We offer a special backpack blessing for all ages at worship on Sunday, September 3. You are welcome to bring your backpack!

## "Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings from "Children First" Christian Preschool!

Welcome new and returning families for the 2017-2018 Preschool year. We are excited to begin a new year! We welcome our Preschool staff: Teachers, Jessica Gustafson and April Erpelding, and Substitute Teacher Chrisse Gesme. Our September classroom begins with the theme "I am Special—All about Me!"

We begin the year with Parent/Guardian Orientation on Wednesday, September 6, at 6:30 p.m. This is a State of Minnesota mandated time for Parents/Guardians to become familiar with our Parent Handbook. The information shared during this time will not be "child-friendly" so we ask that children not attend this orientation. The first day of class is Tuesday, September 12. This session will meet from 8:30-10:00 a.m. Students and parents will experience the classroom together for one-half hour, and then the parents/guardians will attend a special session while the children have fun! Please bring a photo of your preschooler along with two photos of something they enjoy doing and a family photo. Regular classroom time begins Thursday, September 14 from 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Openings remain for the following classes:

Noah's Animals (Tuesday/Thursday) This is a two-day class for children 33 months to three years old.

Jesus' Gems (Tuesday/Thursday) This is a two-day class for 4 year-olds to Pre-Kindergarten.

Friday Friends (+Friday) is an additional class intended to create a three-day Preschool week.

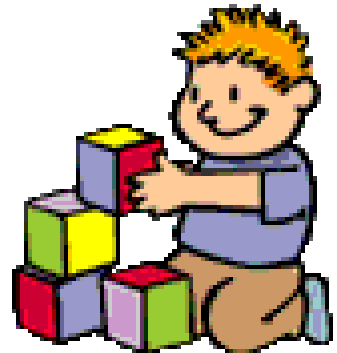
All classes meet from 8:30-11:30 a.m. "Children First" registers students throughout the Preschool year. All ages 33 months through Pre-Kindergarten are welcome! If you would like to discuss Preschool or come for a visit please contact me.

"Children First" will again, host a booth at the Little Falls Arts and Crafts Fair on Saturday and Sunday, September 9 and 10. Our booth will be located on the corner of Broadway and Second Street (courthouse corner). We will be serving hot chocolate, coffee, pop, and water. We look forward to seeing you at our booth and at the Fair! If you wish to volunteer your time at the booth contact Gail or sign up on the Volunteer Sheet located in the Gathering Space.

Thank you again to those who are sponsoring tuition for a Preschool student. You remain anonymous but the Preschool families pass along a humble thank you! Also thank you to those who contribute through Thrivent Giving or other financial gifts, for the gift of time and talents and to all who continue to keep the Preschool in their prayers. You are appreciated.

In Christ's Service,

Gail Hittesdorf  
Director



### **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 5. The homeowner was so appreciative. Thanks to Jerome and Karen Haaland for coordinating this year's team.

### **Thank you!**

Thank you to everyone who helped with Vacation Bible School – Maker Fun Factory week this year!

You all rocked and showed that our God is an amazing creator! Wow, God!

The Vacation Bible School Mission Project, Operation Backpack provided over 75 backpacks filled with school supplies to area schools! Due to your generosity we were able to also contribute 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. The auction is the main fundraiser for the camp and this year's event raised over \$62,000! Thank you!

### **Family Hayride in October**

Watch for a date in October for this fun annual event at Darrell and Arlene Larsen's farm!

### **Can Care Collection**

The congregation uses the proceeds from aluminum can recycling to fund youth activities. Your help collecting and saving cans for recycling saves the earth and helps the kids! You can bring your aluminum cans to church, place them next to the garage; please be sure bags are securely closed. Thank you to those who brought a trailer and helped to take cans to the recycler at the end of August!



### **ELCA National Youth Gathering 2018**

Thanks to all who have registered for the gathering to take place next June in Houston. We will keep Houston and the cities and towns in Texas who have experienced Hurricane Harvey in our prayers as recovery gets underway. Stay tuned for further updates.

### **See You at the Pole**

**Wednesday, September 27, 7:00 a.m.**

### **“Fix Our Eyes”**

Gather around the school's flagpole for a time of prayer with other students. Come for prayer that is focused on friends, leaders, elders, community, and the world.



## Youth News

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Hello Friends,

It's been a busy transition, moving from working on the summer staff at Luther Crest Bible Camp to becoming a full-time employee there, working half-time at FLC. While it's been a strange change not packing my stuff to go back to school for another year, waiting for that sweet return, seeing all the familiar faces and buying my textbooks again last minute, it's been a good one. It can be easy to lose sight in God, especially when life gets chaotic and crazy, but finding peace in God can help guide us.

**Deuteronomy 31:6** says, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." It can be scary starting a new point in life, whether it's beginning a new grade, entering a new school, or maybe on a completely older scale, deciding which college you want to tour, or rather where you want your child to attend preschool for the very first time. Change can be a challenging barrier, but it helps to have faith in God and trust that we can always lean on Him when we struggle. There will always be transition, but Hebrews 13:8 shows that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

No matter how frightened we might become, how much we might dread our lives filled with business again, Christ is always there to shine His light and love on us, to be with us on our journey. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't a little nervous about starting the next chapter of my life, but after focusing on how God has already guided me through an internship at a church, a fun college experience with a double major, a lifetime already full of love and friendships, I realize that there's so much more ahead. I'm looking forward to meeting all the people I'll be interacting with here at First, and excited to be a servant to all.

Peace,  
Diana Kempenich

### **FLY (First Lutheran Youth) Night Begins Wednesday, September 13 6:00-8:00 p.m.**

Youth in grades 6 through 12 are invited to come for this fun night whenever there is school. The first night – September 13 – we will meet for supper at and get-to-know-you. Students in seventh and eighth grade can come at 6:00 for supper and attend confirmation class with Pastor Jake at 7:00 p.m. There will be time for games, conversation, faith and fun! Parents, families, and other adults are welcome and encouraged to assist with these events. You can provide a meal, supplies for a meal, monetary donation, help with cooking and cleanup, leadership for an evening, or come and get to know the kids. Love for Youth and Love for Jesus makes this a great night! See you there!

### **NE MN Synod Middle School Gathering**



### **Cragun's Resort, Brainerd Friday-Saturday, November 17-18**

This fun gathering of youth in grade 6-9 is a great time to grow in faith, build friendships and digging into confirmation teaching in a unique way! This year's theme is the Lord's Prayer. We will be led by a band and keynote speaker, Dave Holtz, Director at Luther Crest Bible Camp. Register before October 16, your cost is \$40.00, after that date, \$50.00. First Lutheran covers \$26.00 for each youth. What a deal!

## News of the Family



Aiden Forrest Neese, son of Tyler and Carrie neese, was baptized on August 20.

Ruth Ann Neese, daughter of Tyler and Carrie Neese, was baptized on August 20.

Aubrey Joan Nyreen and Ellie Jean Nyreen, twin daughters of Jeff and Robyn Nyreen, were baptized on August 27.

Welcome to the family of God!



Items for the **October NEWSLETTER** are due on **September 20, 2017!**

## Worship Schedule

Sunday Worship at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m.

Worship at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. continues throughout the year. Stay after the 8:30 a.m. service, or come early for the 10:30 service, for coffee (leaded and unleaded!), treats and fellowship. All are welcome!

