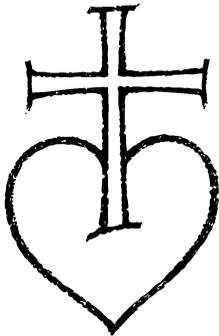




“Servants of All”

February is American Heart Month



Here at First Lutheran we say that our purpose is “to nurture a joyful, *healthy* community in the name of Jesus.” As February is American Heart Month, we will emphasize the healthy aspect of our purpose.

Sudden cardiac arrest, commonly referred to as massive heart attack, kills more than 365,000 Americans each year, making it the number one health care problem and leading cause of death in the United States. This is nearly one death every minute. About every 25 seconds, an American will have a coronary event. These events are a major cause of disability as well.

Did you know that sudden cardiac arrest, also called a massive heart attack, can strike anyone, anywhere, at anytime? When AEDs (automated external defibrillators) are available and used quickly, most cardiac arrest victims survive. Survival rates increase dramatically with each minute earlier that treatment is started.

Thanks to a generous contribution by a First Lutheran member/steward, we now have available at the church an AED for use in the event of a sudden cardiac arrest. You may have seen this device housed in a white cabinet near the entrance door to Stoltz Hall. Please take a moment to locate the device.

The device is intentionally made in an easy-to-use way so that anyone, with or without training, may help a victim when emergency personnel are not available. Published studies have shown that early defibrillation, within the first few minutes of sudden cardiac arrest, can save up to 74 percent of victims. When such an event should occur, the first step is always to call ‘911’ then proceed with using the AED as indicated.

As we live out our purpose here at First Lutheran “to nurture a joyful, healthy community in the name of Jesus” why not take a little time this month to become informed about the signs and symptoms of heart attack, and the risk factors associated with heart disease. Healthy diet and lifestyle are the best weapons you have to fight heart disease. You can find information from your medical provider, and at many websites; try CDC.com, American Heart Association, or many others. A ‘*hearty*’ thank you to the donor who provided the AED device – let’s get heart healthy!

Pastor Dave’s Article
see page 2

New Steward Group
see page 3

Adult Opportunities
see page 4

Annual Report
Highlights
see 5-6

Mission Life
see page 7

Confirmation News
see page 8

Youth Activities!
see page 9

Pastor's Article

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven ... a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance...
Ecclesiastes 3:1 and 4

This past Sunday we had a tremendous annual meeting. We talked about and processed and will proceed with some exciting opportunities for us and God's Mission for First Lutheran. Leading up to the meeting I prayed for Guidance – not only for myself but also for First Lutheran.

As I prayed for guidance, I noticed the word “dance” at the end of the word. I reflected upon how doing God's will is a lot like dancing. When two people try to lead, nothing feels right. The movement doesn't flow with the music, and everything is quite uncomfortable and jerky. When one person realizes this and lets the other lead, both bodies begin to flow with the music. The one leading gives gentle cues, perhaps with a nudge to the back or by pressing lightly in one direction or another. It's as if the two become one, and in the end they move beautifully together. Dancing with another takes surrendering, willingness, and attentiveness to the leader to gently be guided and directed.

As I look again at the word GUIDANCE. I see “G,” God, followed by a “u” and an “i.” “God,” “u” and “i” dance together at First Lutheran—God, you, and I dance. This statement is what God's guidance into the future together for us means to me. God is leading and as we lower our head, and follow the lead with a willingness to trust the leader, we get guidance about our lives and the life of the church.

At our annual meeting we made some decisions to let God lead. Yes, it is exciting and even a little scary – however God has us and God will lead First Lutheran as he has for the past 120 years.

My prayer for all of us today is that God's blessings and mercies be upon each and every one of you and your family. May we abide in Him as He abides in us as we begin the next dance

together with God, trusting Him to lead and to guide.

*Again I will build you, and you shall be built,
O Israel! Again you shall take your tambourines,
and go forth in the dance of the merrymakers.*
Jeremiah 31:4

See you in Church!

Pastor Dave



When to Call the Church Office: 320-632-6667

-  When you or a family member is hospitalized or will be hospitalized.
-  When there is a birth or death in the family.
-  When there is a crisis.
-  When you change your address or telephone number.
-  When new neighbors move in near you and they are looking for a church home.
-  When you have good news to share.
-  When you have a suggestion to make or a concern to share, you can contact a council member or a member of the Pastor Parish Relations Team.

Pastor Dave and lay visitors are available to call on you and walk with you in times of sadness and joy.



A Word from Bishop Tom Aitken

Dear pastors and people of First and Bethel Lutheran Churches:

How honored I was to preach in both of your congregations earlier this month. How encouraged I was to see so many at worship, to hear you singing your praises to God, to watch your faces as you heard the Word of Christ proclaimed, to be together with so many of you after worship at the local café, having fun together.

Something good has happened at Bethel and First. A new day has occurred for both congregations. The issues of those who left, turned into opportunities for new clarification of what it means to be an ELCA Lutheran, focusing on God's unconditional love for all people –

no exceptions! I marvel at the strength I see in you. I commend your pastors for their fine leadership, their gifts of gentleness combined with the clear and strong message of God's grace. I'm thankful for their awareness of the need to move forward with the mission and ministry of the gospel to the Little Falls community and, of course, beyond. As I often say, the congregations that focus on mission will grow. Those that concentrate only on the four walls of their building will shrivel up. You are focused on Christ and the Gospel! I am proud of you.

Carry on in God's Amazing Love for all!

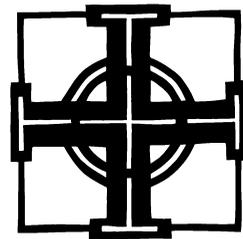
+ **Bishop Thomas M. Aitken**

New Steward Group

First Lutheran Church New Steward Group begins this month. We have set aside four times for this group to meet; we ask that stewards attend two of these sessions. The group will meet on either Sunday evenings; February 20 and 27, at 6:30 p.m. or Wednesday evenings, February 23 and March 2 at 7:00 p.m. New members will be received in worship on Sunday, March 13. First's council and commission members will host a new member fellowship meal following worship on that day.

These sessions are meant to help joining members to find their place in the mission of the congregation, get to know others in the congregation, and discuss the foundations of the faith we share. Current member stewards are encouraged to attend and make a new friend.

If God is calling you to stewardship at First Lutheran, these sessions are for you. Come and walk alongside your sisters and brothers in Christ in mission to the world. For more information, or to sign up for the group, please call the church office at 632-6667.



Thank You!

Dear Friends at First,

I received your support for the Morrison County Chaplaincy and was overwhelmed with emotion. You will never know how much you encouraged me! I pray that God will richly bless you in 2011 the way you have blessed others!

Love in Christ,
Chaplain Gregg

Thanks so much for your help with the Lutefisk Supper. Together we made it a fun, social event. We look forward to working with you again. Thank you again! God's blessings to you all!

Bethel Lutheran Church Congregation

Adult Opportunities

Council Highlights

- + 2011 is the 120 year anniversary of the founding of First Lutheran Church. A celebration team will be coordinated by Nancy Ratzloff.
- + Council expressed thanks to outgoing members Wayne Liljegren, Rick Walen, and Jim Weiss.
- + First Lutheran hosts Share A Meal on Thursday, February 10.
- + Council will bring recommendation to the annual meeting that Pastor Dave Sperstad's letter of call be revised from Associate Pastor to Senior Pastor.
- + Approved the 2011 Mission Plan for presentation at the 2011 Annual Meeting.
- + Approved the ministry staff addition proposal for presentation at the 2011 Annual Meeting.



Library News

These latest additions to the library are on display on the table outside of the library.

Adult Fiction:

The Lost Quilter, by Jennifer Chiaverini

An Amish Gathering, by Beth Wiseman

Inspiration:

Same Kind of Different as Me, by Ron Hall and Denver Moore

Devotionals:

Renewed Day by Day – A Daily Devotional

Art:

The Bible in Art: Old Testament

The Bible in Art: New Testament

Visit the library and check out a book or a movie to warm you on a cold day!

Women's Bible Study

"Uppity Women of the Bible – Ruth"
Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. or 6:30 p.m.

We have just begun a new video study on the book of Ruth. The Rev. Dr. Lisa Wolfe takes us on an enlightening journey through the Book of Ruth. We will consider the vulnerability of widows and the difficulty of being a foreigner in biblical times. Dr. Wolfe combines humor and careful study to bring new insight and understanding to all the characters of the Book of Ruth. There is still room for you!

Women's Martha Circle:

"To God's Beloved"

Paul's Letter to the Romans

Trust: Does God Keep Promises?

Romans 11:29

The Martha Circle meets Monday, February 21, at 11:30 a.m. at the church. Diane Grosso is hostess.

Men's Bible Study Breakfast

All men of the congregation and friends are invited to a Men's Bible Breakfast study. The study meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 6:15 a.m. at the church for breakfast. You are welcome to attend – come when you are able, leave when you must. For more information, contact Pastor Dave.

Adult Bible Study Discussion Group Revelation

Contrary to popular belief, the message of the book of Revelation is not scary or confusing. In contrast, the message is one of comfort and encouragement to all believers: To remain strong in the faith! Things are not as they seem! It may appear that the forces of evil are triumphant in the world, but that is not true. In studying Revelation, we will be reminded that God remains in control of His universe and all that takes place within it. Pastor Dave leads the study, continuing Mondays at 6:30 p.m., come, and bring a friend.

Mini Annual Report First Lutheran Church

The Annual Meeting of First Lutheran Church was held on Sunday, January 30, 2011. Thanks to all who made this meeting a priority! This “mini-report” is provided to help inform you of the important decisions made at this year’s Annual Meeting and to give highlights from the Annual Report. The complete Annual Report is available in the church office.

A few of the many ways that First Lutheran’s commissions and you were servants during the past year:

Serving together in mission:

- ✚ Participated in food packing events
- ✚ Support of local agencies: Morrison County Food Shelf, Hands of Hope, Habitat for Humanity, Morrison County Chaplaincy
- ✚ Hosted meals at St. Cloud Dream Center

Serving together thru our building and grounds:

- ✚ New exterior sign
- ✚ Painted women’s restroom, gathering space walls, youth room flooring
- ✚ Purchased membership database software

Serving together in faith formation:

- ✚ Growth in Bible Study opportunities for all ages
- ✚ Held Vacation Bible School cooperatively with local congregations
- ✚ Sponsored mission trips for middle school and high school youth
- ✚ Supported youth attending Bible Camp

Serving together in worship and praise:

- ✚ Addition of ELW hymnal
- ✚ Three services of worship
- ✚ Children’s choir

Statistical Reports

Baptized Membership (January 1, 2011)	1,058	Baptisms	18
Confirmed Membership (January 1, 2011)	761	Affirmation of Baptism/Confirmation	14
New Members Received	13	Marriages	11
Transferred Out	38	Funerals	8
		Average Worship Attendance	2010 – 221

Summary Notes from Congregational Annual Meeting

Not Official Minutes

Paula Monahan, Council President, declared a Quorum and called the meeting to order.

Elected to the Church Council were: Stephanie Adams, Mark Hanson, Paula Monahan and Gail Olson, each to a 3-year term.

Jeff Bigalke, Ken Johnson, and Doug Luepke were elected as the congregational representatives for the Nominating Committee.

The Heartland Conference Gathering is Sunday, February 13 at Light of the Cross Lutheran Church in Garrison. The Synod Assembly will be held April 29-May 1, 2011, at Cragun’s, Brainerd. Voting members are Doug and Michelle Dahlberg, and Ted Pfohl. Alternates are Doug Luepke, Mary Pfohl, and Linda Weiss.

A motion was made and approved to update the Letter of Call for Pastor Dave Sperstad from Associate Pastor to Senior Pastor.

The 2011 Mission Plan was approved as presented.

A ministry staff proposal was brought as a motion from the council to add a part-time pastor and a full-time youth and family minister to the staff when appropriate candidates become available. For the year 2011, the increase to the Mission Plan would not exceed \$72,000. The motion passed with 54 voting ‘yes’, three voting ‘no’, and one abstention.

Following the Annual Meeting the Council met to elect officers; they are: President – Michelle Dahlberg, Vice-President – Craig Ahlin, Treasurer – Matt Dahl, Secretary – Lola Faufau.

Excerpts from the Treasurer's Report

Thank you for your faithful support to what we knew would be an unpredictable year. We thank God that we came through it essentially as planned and we look forward to 2011. This year's stewardship efforts resulted in amounts on the Giving Cards received exceeding last year by about 15%. If you have not completed a Giving Card and are able to do so, please contact the church office.

In 2010, offerings fell short of the 2010 Mission Plan projection. Expenses also were less than the Mission Plan. The net result was a deficit of 2010 larger than was projected in the 2010 Mission Plan. These amounts are exclusive of "Children First" Christian Preschool.

Mission Plan 2011: The Mission Plan proposal for 2011 projects giving of \$301,500. Expenses are projected at \$295,650. The reduction in expenses is mainly the result of changing the health insurance provider for Pastor Dave Sperstad and family, and the refinancing of the church mortgage loan which resulted in a reduced monthly payment. These amounts are exclusive of the preschool.

Thank you for your additional gifts, both in-kind for various ministries, and those received from special offerings for the following missions and projects:

ELCA Disaster Relief for Haiti	\$ 1,011.00
Morrison County Food Shelf	108.00
Souper Bowl of Caring	
Kids Against Hunger	280.00
Thanksgiving Offering	
NE MN Synod Partners	420.00
Gideons International	218.00
Lenten Soup Supper/Easter Breakfast/Change 4	
Change:	
Kids Against Hunger	500.00
Dream Center	400.00
Luther Crest Bible Camp	500.00
Angel Tree Gift Giving - in-kind	
Pentecost Offering for Mortgage	
Principal Reduction	4,279.00
Total	\$7,766.00

God's blessing be with you, Jim Weiss, Treasurer

2010 Income and Expense Report and 2011 Proposed Mission Plan

MISSION LIFE

Souper Bowl of Caring

First Lutheran will participate in the “Souper Bowl of Caring” on February 6. This Sunday, 128 million people all over the world will tune in to the Super Bowl football game. There will be parties with abundant food, friendship and fellowship. At the same time, there will be people worrying about staying warm, finding shelter and a warm meal. Please join young people at First Lutheran and around the U.S., as they demonstrate God’s love by loving their neighbors through the “Souper Bowl of Caring”. It’s a simple, yet significant act of caring for others.

This Sunday, young people with soup kettles will stand by the church doors after worship. All worshipers are invited to drop \$1 or more in the soup pot as they leave worship. Funds raised will go directly to help hungry people in Morrison County through the Food Shelf.

Last year, 14,000 organizations across the country raised over \$10,000,000 in the “Souper Bowl of Caring”. Thank you for helping to fight hunger through this special offering!

Share A Meal Thursday, February 10

First Lutheran provides and serves the meal on Thursday, February 10. We will serve hot roast beef sandwiches with potatoes and gravy, vegetable and dessert. Watch for the food signup at church. If you would like to assist, please contact the church office.

Fair Trade Products

FLC serves fair trade coffee at all church functions. This is a simple way that we can be involved in mission in day-to-day life. Fair trade items are available for purchase in the church office. Not a coffee drinker? We also carry tea and hot cocoa mix.

Donations to defray the cost of purchased coffee are also welcome. Thank you for making a difference!



Commission for Mission Update

Outreach and mission activities at First thrived during 2010. Twice we went to the Dream Center in St. Cloud to serve a meal and be with residents of this halfway house that helps men who have been released from prison get back on their feet.

First Lutheran is involved in many hunger-related activities, including our ongoing commitment to open our doors to the public each Thursday for Share A Meal. Several First Lutheran groups provided and served the meal during the year. Several times during 2010, we gathered to pack meals for Kids Against Hunger. In support of Lutheran World Relief, we serve fairly traded coffee at all church functions. You may purchase assorted of fair trade products to support global ministry and the growers themselves.

While you enjoy a cup of coffee and a treat on Sunday mornings, your donation in the basket goes to support many local mission partners. Some of these are Morrison County Food Shelf, Habitat for Humanity, Morrison County Chaplaincy, Hands of Hope, and more.

Each year through the Mission Plan we commit as a congregation to support other organizations in their gospel-centered work. First Lutheran folks are also involved throughout the community in countless outreach, mission and volunteer efforts. Thank you!

The Commission for Mission meets the second Tuesday of each month. We share a fellowship meal at 5:30 p.m. and meet together at 6:00 p.m. If you have an interest in mission and outreach at First Lutheran and would like to serve, please contact the church office.

"Children First" Christian Preschool Update

"Children First" Preschoolers enjoyed January with making snowmen, and pretending to be snowmen. The children made hot chocolate mix to share with their families. For polar animal week, Miss Aisha dressed up as a penguin for classroom fun! In February, preschoolers will learn about opposites, talk about transportation, and enjoy Friendship week with Valentines.

Over the past month, we have received generous financial gifts that were shared as tuition assistance with several families. Thank you for keeping "Children First" in your hearts, minds, and prayers. All are truly grateful.

The annual Fish Fry and Silent Auction is Friday, April 1, 2011. To donate an item for the silent auction or to assist with the event, contact Gail Hittesdorf (632-2218).

We welcome two new children to the Noah's Animals (33 months-3 years) class. This class is now fully enrolled with 20 students for the first time in "Children First" history. We give God thanks and praise! God's blessings on your month!

Yours in Christ's Service,
Gail Hittesdorf, Director

Confirmation Ministries

Second Grade: Looking ahead—class for students and parents, "Welcome Table" Holy Communion instruction, will take place on Sunday afternoons during Lent, April 3 and 10. A letter will be mailed to families. Students who wish to receive communion as a class can plan to do this on Maundy Thursday, April 21.

Seventh Grade: Class on the Ten Commandments ended on January 26. Thank you to Linda Weiss for teaching this class. The seventh grade class on the Apostles' Creed is scheduled at Luther Crest Bible Camp during the week of June 19-24. Please turn in your Camp registration form and deposit to the church office.

Eighth Grade: Class on the Old Testament ends February 16. Watch for a letter with information about a trip to Temple Israel for a Seder Meal on Sunday, March 27.

Tenth Grade: Two-session class on Means of Grace meets Sundays, March 6 and 13. Mark your calendars. Confirmants and mentors will visit the Franciscan sisters together on Wednesday, February 2 at 6:30 p.m.

Sunday School News

The current TREK rotation for kids in kindergarten through grade five is "Respect." Jesus teaches us to love God and to love others. One way we show love to God and others is by being respectful. Children learn what the Bible says about respect, and explore concepts of the Golden Rule – treating others as you would like to be treated; good manners and good sportsmanship, and accepting others. All are welcome to attend Sunday School and/or lead a station such as games, cooking, storytelling/video or art. The memory verse for this rotation is: *"In everything do to others as you would have them do to you."* *Matthew 7:12 (The Golden Rule)*

Our next rotation on the Ten Commandments begins Sunday, February 6.

Grades 6-8 meets with Ray Stumpf and Toni Dickmann in the youth room at 10:30 a.m. on Sundays. The group continues with Witness curriculum which is focusing on the books of Luke and Acts. The February mission project is to assemble health kits.

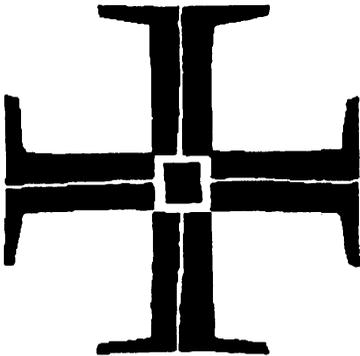
News of the Family

Lloyd W. Holst died January 24. His funeral service was held January 28 at First Lutheran. May God grant peace and comfort to his family and friends.

Can Care Collection

Save a can – Save the earth
Save our youth budget!
Keep those cans coming!

Items for the **March NEWSLETTER** are due on **February 20, 2011!**



Reminder:

This newsletter and archived issues are available online at www.flclittlefalls.org. You can find the church event calendar there, as well as photos and information. Check it out! You can also ‘friend’ us on FaceBook for some interactive social networking and current information. Search for us as ‘1st Lutheran Church Little Falls MN.’