



**Vacation Bible School
Pandamania!!**

**“Where God is Wild About You!”
August 1-5, 2011
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon**

VBS is coming! Come on down to the bamboo forest with Pandamania Pete and his friends. Consider bringing a friend or perhaps inviting a family without a church home. VBS is for kids ages 4 through 6th grade. At “Pandemania: Where God is Wild About You!” kids will explore Psalm 139 and experience God listening to them, watching over them, and loving them, no matter what! Thank you, God!

Pandemania has a rotational style where kids move to a variety of bamboo forest locations with their “crew.” Kids and staff will share their VBS experience in worship on Sunday, August 7.

This year’s VBS will be a joint effort of First Lutheran and First United Churches. To register, your child must be 3 years old (by September 1, 2010) through 6th grade. You may pick up a registration form at church or you can find the form on the church web-site, www.flclittlefalls.org. Registration is free; you are encouraged to register your child even if they may not attend every day. Your advance registration helps us have adequate supplies for each child.

If you are interested in helping with VBS, there are many fun ways for you to get involved. You can participate for the full week or for part of the week. Thanks to all who have volunteered to date. See the sign up board in the gathering space or talk to one of the coordinators. Coordinators are, Gail Hittesdorf (First Lutheran), and Diane Spillum (First United). Come and learn about how God is wild about you! Thank you, God!

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Pastor Dave's Article

So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it. Colossians 3:12-14 *The Message*

July – the middle of the summer! In July we celebrate the beginning of this country we call home. We are citizens of this country. However, not only are we citizens of this nation, we are also citizens of the Kingdom of God! Through both of our citizenships, we enjoy countless blessings and freedoms. In the US, we enjoy and perhaps take for granted, the ability to worship freely as we choose. Within the Kingdom of God, we have the freedom that comes through the forgiveness of sins that grants us life and salvation. These freedoms and blessings come to us at a great cost—not on our part, but on the part of those who have gone before us and sacrificed for us. The greatest sacrifice given for us was Jesus who offered Himself up to death to take away the sin of the whole world and granted us life and freedom for eternal life. Even though we can never adequately express our thanks, we can with the help of the Holy Spirit, live each day so that others will see that we are not only Americans, but children of God.

As American citizens, we have freedoms and responsibilities. As God's children we also have responsibilities. The Bible calls us stewards—or managers—of the many blessings that God has bestowed upon us. Our being called stewards is not meant to be an oppressive or demeaning response to God's grace and goodness. We offer a joyful response. Stewardship can be defined this way: *“Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the church, in managing all of life and life's resources for God's purposes.”* What a beautiful definition for Christian stewardship!

Because Christ has redeemed us to be the children of God and heirs of salvation, we have the privilege, responsibility, and authority to give evidence of this precious freedom through our words and actions. Jesus changes everything in our lives so that we practice our stewardship. Not in order to gain salvation, but rather as a free and joyous response to what God has already done for us through the sacrifice of Jesus and the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

What a joy to freely and joyfully practice stewardship. Not because we have to, but because we get to! May you enjoy your freedom and celebrate not only being a citizen of the United States of America but also a citizen of the kingdom of God and let your life show it!

See you in church...

Pastor Dave Sperstad

New Steward Group

This small group experience is for any worshiper at First Lutheran Church who wants to become a steward of this church, and for any current member/steward who wants to help welcome new stewards. The purpose of the group is to help all servants grow in discipleship at First Lutheran. Childcare is provided as requested. Stewards are asked to attend **one session**, either Sunday, July 31 or Wednesday, August 3, both at 6:30 p.m. New stewards will be received in worship on Sunday, August 7; the church council hosts the new stewards at a welcome reception during the fellowship hour. For more information, contact the church office.

Pastor Tony's Article

Recently, I was turned onto the “six marks of discipleship”. I had never heard of them before; though I should have (they were in a book I was supposed to read in seminary). Since learning about them, from my wife, I have become increasingly drawn to them. If you have not heard of the “six marks of discipleship” here they are:

1. **PRAY**
2. **WORSHIP**
3. **READ**
4. **SERVE**
5. **RELATIONSHIP**
6. **GIVE**

They are laid out in detail in the book *Power Surge*, by Michael W. Foss; if you want a shorter version, you can also do an internet search on the “six marks of discipleship”, and you will get a plethora of information.

I'm not sure why I have been so drawn to these marks of discipleship. I think it's because we, as the world-wide church, do not share with members just exactly how to grow as a disciple; I know it's not something I learned growing up.

We are told that we need to grow our spiritual life, but how does one go about growing their spiritual life? Here's where I think the church falls short. We have spent a lot of time, energy, and money defining what each denomination believes and making sure “we” are not “them”; we have not spent a lot of time, energy, or money helping one another know how to grow spiritually. By “grow spiritually” I mean deepening our relationship with God or enriching our relationship with God or ways to help your relationship with God become better.



Often times, we treat spiritual growth like physical growth: it just happens. We show up to life, eat well (or even not so well), drink water, drink milk, exercise, and we grow. In fact it's difficult to not grow! Try not growing sometime. It just happens. We show up to life and we grow. Many times this is how we, as the world-wide church, treat spiritual growth: show up and you will grow spiritually. This is not necessarily the case. Spiritual growth requires something more than just showing up as we do with life.

Think about it like this: we work at our relationship with our loved friends and family. We don't ignore the people we are in a relationship with and think things will be ok. No, we work at our relationships. The “six marks of discipleship” are ways that we can spend time with God and strengthen our relationship with him. These “marks” are not a legalistic approach; an approach that says “you need to do these things or else you are not a Christian”. The “marks” are ways we, as God's children, can learn more about God, strengthen our relationships with him, and develop a more robust faith.

Another reason I think I have been drawn to them is because I need them. I need to be reminded of how my relationship with God can grow; what I should be doing. I need to be challenged and the “marks of discipleship” certainly challenge.

Here they are again, this time with brief explanations from Michael Foss:

1. **PRAY** daily
2. **WORSHIP** weekly
3. **READ** the Bible
4. **SERVE** at and beyond the church
5. be in **RELATIONSHIP** to encourage spiritual growth in others
6. **GIVE** of my time, talents, and resources

Growing together,

Pastor Tony

Council Highlights

- Heard that \$3,614 has been received to date for the Pentecost Sunday Celebration Offering for mortgage principal reduction. Thank you for your faithful giving!
- Plans are underway for First Lutheran's 120th Anniversary Celebration Sunday on Sunday, September 25. The Blue Grass Band from Green Lake Bible Camp will be a part of the celebration.
- The congregation is reminded to schedule a photo appointment time for the new pictorial directory.

Thrivent Choice

If all 260 of the qualifying Thrivent members in the Morrison County area who have 2011 Thrivent Choice Dollars, designated those dollars, they would be able to direct **\$32,000** to Lutheran Churches, Lutheran Bible Camps, Lutheran Schools, and other Lutheran organizations. Unfortunately, only 115 members had designated by the first of June. If you are a Thrivent member, please watch for a letter and designation form. You can direct your Choice dollars to First Lutheran and/or "Children First" Christian Preschool. Let's not miss out on putting these dollars into use in mission! For more information, contact the church office.

Financial Update

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

Summer finds many of us traveling and vacationing. Mission and ministry continue here at First Lutheran. We appreciate your mail-in offerings when you are unable to be in worship.

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.

Welcoming others...

The first time you walked in the door at First Lutheran Church, did someone welcome you?

Did you receive a handshake and a "Good morning"? Did you enjoy a cup of coffee or a treat? Did someone give you information about worship, or help you find a seat? Did your children find a safe and welcoming place to play? Did you hear God's Good News spoken in a living way? Did you receive the Lord's Supper along with the rest of the community?

If the answer to any of these questions is "Yes," you are encouraged to pass that welcome on – to join the effort to welcome others to worship. And if the answer to any of these questions is "No," then it is *even more important* that you help to welcome others in Jesus' name.

What can you do? Through the signup system, *every worshiper at First* has the chance to greet, usher, read Scripture, set up coffee/refreshments, set up or serve Communion, or provide volunteer child care. By serving in an area where you are gifted, you can help every worshiper to feel welcome. And scheduling is easy – because you sign up for one Sunday at a time, you can be sure that you are available for the specific dates you will serve.

Signup sheets for the coming month are always posted on a table in the Gathering Space, and you are invited to sign up at any time. If you're not able to come to church to sign up, you may call the church office (632-6667) or Lola Faufau 632-4662 (July coordinator) to sign up. If you need more information or training, please mention it when you sign up and you will be contacted.

Thank you for the welcome you provide to others in the name of Christ.

**Is your passion or your hobby quilting or golf?
Here are some ways to enjoy your pastime and benefit others at the same time:**

**Luther Crest Bible Camp
22nd Annual Quilt Auction
Saturday, July 9**

Held in the *Air-conditioned Gymnasium*

- ☞ 9:30-12:30 p.m. – Quilt Review
- ☞ 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. – Lunch served
- ☞ 12:30 p.m. – Auction Begins

Proceeds from this year's auction will be used for camper scholarships for people of all ages. Over 100 quilts of all sizes will be sold at the auction, including several made by First Lutheran quilters. There will be something for everyone. Many hands have worked hard to sew the quilts. Let's support our Bible Camp at this event!

**Camp Knutson
25th Annual Quilt Auction
Saturday, August 13**

Quilt lovers—Unique quilts from throughout Minnesota including a quilt from the First's quilters will be auctioned to benefit children with heart disease, Down syndrome, severe skin diseases, autism, and HIV or AIDS. Quilt viewing begins at 10:00 a.m. the auction begins at 12 noon. The auction is sponsored by Lutheran Social Service and the LSS Paul Bunyan Regional Auxiliary.

**The Tenth Annual Golf Scramble
To benefit the ministry at
Luther Crest Bible Camp
Monday, August 15**

Why not get a foursome together and spend a fun day playing this "Best Ball" tournament on the course at Lake Miltona Golf Course, Alexandria. Registration begins at 10:00 a.m.; "shotgun start" tee time is at noon. Supper will be served at Lake Miltona at 5:00 p.m. The fee of \$75.00 per person covers green fees, cart rental, and meal. Supper is available for spouses or other guests at \$10.00. You are encouraged to give a gift in support of Luther Crest at this event.

Past tournaments have made a significant impact on the camp's ministry. To register, call the church office, 632-6667.

**Camp Onomia Golf Scramble
Saturday, July 30**

This scramble to support Camp Onomia Bible Camp on Lake Shakopee near Onamia is Saturday, July 30. Registration at Stone's Throw Golf Course is at 12:00 noon, shotgun start at 1:00 p.m. Your cost of \$60 covers 18 holes of golf, cart and meal. Limited to 72 golfers. For more information, contact Pastor Stephen Blenkush, Zion Lutheran, Milaca at 320-983-3368

******* Minnesota Twins Baseball *******

**Lutheran Night at the Twins
Tuesday, August 23**

Sponsored by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. Your ticket to the game at Target Field, and coach bus transportation is only \$34.00 per person; fun with lots of other Lutheran fans is priceless! For more information or to reserve your ticket, contact coordinator, Kayla Sobiech, of Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Upsala at 632-6942.

**First Lutheran Twins Trip
Wednesday, September 28**

First Lutheran is planning a Twins trip on Wednesday, September 28, mark your calendars and watch for more information. Go Twins!



Mission News

Morrison County Relay for Life 2011

Relay for Life is Friday, July 15, to Saturday, July 16 at Flyer Field. This annual event supports the American Cancer Society. Proceeds benefit cancer patients in the area. You can purchase and decorate a luminary bag in honor or in memory of a loved one. Several First Lutheran members are walking in the relay. Luminary bags are available from Laura Hansen at Bookin' It, downtown Little Falls.



Green Fair and Peace Concert at St. Francis Convent

Wednesday, August 3, 4:00-8:00 p.m.

This outdoor event sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls is an evening of ecological awareness with music, food, exhibits, earth friendly products, activities for kids, and much more. Many local and state businesses and educational groups will be present. From 6-8 p.m. First Lutheran will again have a space at the fair—Pastor Dave is recruiting a few people (young and old) to learn to make balloon animals—they're always a big hit! Bike or walk to the fair if you can and gather to enjoy, learn and see many local favorites and use these wonderful opportunities to enhance our care for the planet and make our world a better place for all. For more information, check the web at www.fslf.org/pages/GreenFair.



Oasis/Share A Meal Community Paint A Thon Saturday, August 6

Can you spend a Saturday morning helping to paint a home for a local resident? This annual event is a great time to assist our brothers and sisters in Christ right here in our own community. Confirmation students—perhaps you and your mentor will want to use this for your service project. This is a BYOB (Bring Your Own Brush!) event. For more information, call coordinators Jerome and Karen Haaland at 632-8828, or the church office, 632-6667.

Morrison County Food Shelf

Your contributions and food donations to the Morrison County Food Shelf are encouraged and needed year round. You can bring your non-perishable food items to church and place them in the wood cabinet in the Gathering Space.

Don't forget the Food Shelf when you have excess produce from your garden. Please make arrangements directly with the Food Shelf for these items. The Food Shelf is located near Bethel Lutheran Church at 912 First Avenue SW, Little Falls. Food Shelf hours are Tuesday and Wednesday, 10:00 a.m. to noon, Thursday 6:00-8:00 p.m. For more information call 632-8304.

“Children First” Christian Preschool

First Lutheran Church is offering fun, learning experiences; Preschool Summer Camp for 3, 4 and 5 year olds who have not yet experienced Kindergarten. See the article on page 8 of this newsletter for more information. And Vacation Bible School during the week of August 1-5. See the article on page one. Don't miss out on the fun!

Preschool enrollment for the 2011/2012 school year continues. Registration forms are available in the gathering space at First Lutheran or on the web at www.flclittlefalls.org. A \$50.00 non-refundable registration/activity fee is required at the time of registration. For more information, call the church office or Gail.

Enjoy the summer and God's Blessing!

Yours in Christ's Service,
Gail Hittesdorf, Director

Library News

There are several newly purchased and donated books in the church library. We hope you can take some time to choose a book, put your feet up and read this summer.

Teen girls and their parents may enjoy The Divine Dance. Pre and Early Readers might enjoy Noah and the Ark. For adults, try Kathleen Norris' The Cloister Walk. These newer titles and more are on display in the library.



Zeb Pike Triathlon Saturday, August 27

Start training now or continue your training for the Zeb Pike Tri! We'll start at Lindbergh Park at 8:00 a.m. and pedal a 20 mile bike loop around Zebulon Pike Lake, a 2 mile paddle on the Mississippi River and a 3 mile run on Lindbergh Drive. Race it alone or gather up a team; your \$15.00 entry fee also provides you with a Zeb Pike t-shirt! Call organizers Scott or Amber Sobiech at 616-9626 for more information.

Pictorial Directory

In celebration of First Lutheran's 120th anniversary year, we are beginning to produce a new congregational photo directory. Pictorial directories help to create a stronger sense of community among us, help to tell about God's ministries here, and celebrate our life together. Lifetouch Photography sessions will be during the months of July, September and October. There is no cost to the church and no sitting fee for your family. You will receive a complimentary 8x10 portrait and a directory for participating. In just one trip, you will be photographed, choose your photo, and have the opportunity to purchase studio quality portraits and greeting cards. Please plan to participate; the directory won't be complete without you! You may sign up for a photo session on-line, go to First's website at flclittlefalls.org and click on the link found on the home page or on the 'coming up' page; you will be guided through the signup process. For more information, contact Mary Larson, 632-8203, or the church office.

Youth Ministry

Confirmation Ministries

Third Grade: Watch for a letter about the third grade class orientation meeting which will take place in August. Third graders will receive a Bible in worship during August. Students and parents will complete a month of family devotions in September.

Sixth Grade: During the week of Vacation Bible School (August 1-5), youth entering seventh grade in the fall will be studying the Lord's Prayer with the pastors. Watch for a letter containing more information about this class.

Can Care Collection

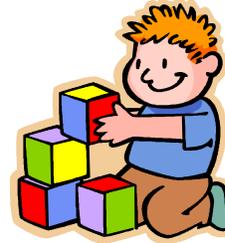
Recycling is one way to save the earth. Bring your empty cans to the church secured in a plastic bag—you can leave them next to the garage door. This on-going fundraiser provides money for youth activities.

Keep saving those aluminum cans! Thanks!

Camp Onomia Pioneer Camp

Sunday-Tuesday, August 7-9

This camp is for children who have completed grades 1-3 and would like a taste of an away camp experience. You will get a sampling of all the fun things camp has to offer, worship, Bible stories, swimming and lots of games and activities. Your cost is just \$180. Please call the church office for more information.



Preschool Summer Camp

First Lutheran Church is offering two sessions of preschool summer camp for 3, 4, and 5-year-olds who have not yet experienced Kindergarten.

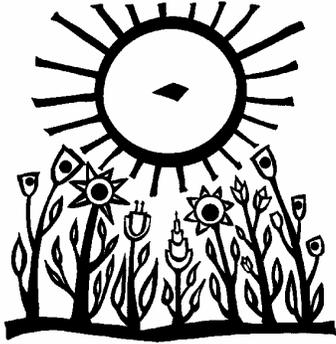
Session 1: Monday-Friday, July 11-15
3-year-olds

Session 2: Monday-Friday, July 18-22
4-5-year-olds

Sessions will meet from 9:00-11:30 a.m. at First Lutheran. Children will read, sing, dance, play music and games, do arts and crafts and have outdoor fun. Children will experience the love of Jesus through Bible stories and songs. Your child will enhance their social, emotional, physical and educational skills in preparation for preschool and kindergarten. Cost is \$25.00 per week. Registration forms are available at church or on the church website at www.flclittlefalls.org. For more information, contact Gail Hittesdorf, 632-2218 or the church office.

News of the Family

Ashley Waddell and Brent Walkoviak were united in marriage on June 25. God's blessings for their life together!



Summer Worship Schedule June through August

Sunday Worship at 8:00 and 10:00 a.m.

Summer Worship at 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. continues through July and August. Stay after the 8:00 a.m. service, or come early for the 10:00 service, for coffee (leaded and unleaded!), beverages, treats and fellowship in the Gathering Space. Everyone is welcome! Enjoy your vacation but don't take a vacation from church! Aren't you glad God doesn't take the summer off?

Items for the **August NEWSLETTER** are due on **July 20, 2011!**