



Lent 2011



begins on Ash Wednesday, March 9, 2011

7:00 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion and Imposition of Ashes

With ash and soot we begin this Lenten season with confession; we begin with Psalm 51. Today this ancient prayer placed on our lips becomes new again: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.” As we confess our unfaithfulness to God, our lackluster love for our neighbors, our neglect of suffering and injustice in the world, we ask God to wash us, to purge us, to create in us clean hearts.

We pray in the words of Martin Luther:

**Behold, Lord, an empty vessel that needs to be filled. My Lord, fill it.
I am weak in the faith; strengthen me. I am cold in love; warm me and
make me fervent, that my love may go out to my neighbor.**

**I do not have a strong and firm faith; at times I doubt and am unable to
trust you altogether. O Lord, help me. Strengthen my faith and trust in
you. In you I have sealed the treasure of all I have. I am poor; you are rich
and came to be merciful to the poor. I am a sinner; you are upright.**

**With me, there is an abundance of sin; in you is the fullness of
righteousness. Therefore I will remain with you, of whom I can receive,
but to whom I may not give. Amen.**

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Pastor Dave’s Article
see page 2

Lenten Opportunities
see page 4

Food Share Month
see page 5

Mission News
see page 6

**“Children First”
Preschool News**
see page 7

Education News
see page 8

Youth Activities!
see page 9

Pastor Dave's Article

But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God; look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. Jude 1:20-21 NRSV

The first weekend of February I had the pleasure of attending a continuing education event and during the week I was filled with a renewed sense of hope. The content was good and the opportunity for personal and professional growth was tremendous. It truly gave me hope – not simply hope for the end of our long winter, but hope for our future together as God's stewards at First Lutheran.

The past few days have been tremendous around here. We have been reminded that Spring is on its way. There are signs of life, talk of rebirth and renewal everywhere. Sometimes, as God's stewards, we feel that stewardship is simply the same old, same old. But, just as spring starts a new cycle of life, so also Easter with its joy and celebration starts a new cycle of life for us as God's stewards. On March 9, we celebrate Ash Wednesday and begin the reflective season of Lent. We will look forward to the joy and celebration of Easter. This is a great reminder for us that we are "Easter people"—that is, people of

hope. Hope is stronger than our memory. Memory sometimes makes us think about past failures, unfulfilled promises, frustrations and disappointments. Hope can and does refresh us with a new start, not just at springtime, but every new day.

Just as the earth comes back to life in springtime, we are renewed day by day to live as God's redeemed stewards. We can freely and joyfully manage all of life and life's resources for God's purposes. This new life is not boring! It is exciting to experience God's power in our lives and look for opportunities in which we can manage our time, talents, relationships and financial resources in a way that honors Him. In turn, this provides many blessings to others and ourselves.

See you in Church...

Pastor Dave Sperstad

First Lutheran Church

Purpose: *(Why are we here?)*

We are here to nurture a joyful, healthy community in the name of Jesus.

Vision: *(Where are we going?)*

To be FIRST...Servants of All.

At First Lutheran we take seriously the servant posture of our Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 10:44). We aspire to be like him: to learn, love, live, and leave a legacy. We believe that serving God through our service to others is a privilege. "We preach Christ crucified with ourselves as Servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5).

Mission: *(How are we going to get there?)*

We are baptized children of God, saved by God's gift of grace through faith in Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit through word and sacrament:

TO PROCLAIM the love of Jesus in bold and creative ways; the forgiveness of sins, and the promise of eternal life.

TO PROVIDE a church home for those without one; a place of welcome and acceptance.

TO PREPARE God's people for Christian living and discipleship in daily life: a faith that works.

Council Highlights

- Welcomed new council members: Stephanie Adams, Mark Hanson, and Gail Olson, each serving a three-year term; and Paula Monahan, serving a second three-year term. Installation of council members was Sunday, February 20 at 8:00 and 9:30 a.m. worship.
- Council members read and signed the 2011 Group Covenant.
- Heard that the re-finance of the church mortgage loan was completed.
- Approved moving forward with the process of contracting with a part-time clergy person as approved at the annual meeting.
- Heard that a Sausage and Sauerkraut Supper is planned for Saturday, February 26, at the Little Falls VFW. This is a fundraiser for summer youth mission trips.

March Women's Circle
"The People of God:
Unity in the Midst of Diversity"
The Renewing of Our Minds
Romans 12:1-2

Martha Circle

The Martha Circle will meet Monday, March 21, at 1:30 p.m. at the church. Hostess is LaVerne Hempeck.

New Steward/Member Group

New members will be received in worship on Sunday, March 13. First's council and commission members host a new member fellowship meal following worship on March 13.

This group is meant to help joining members to find their place in the mission of the congregation, get to know other members, and discuss the foundations of the faith we share. Current members are encouraged to attend and get to know joining members.

For more information, or to sign up, please call the church office at 632-6667.

Church Building Update

Have you noticed some changes and some 'messes' around our facility? Maybe a few ceiling tiles missing? While we all enjoyed the warmer weather during the early days of February, we also experienced some water leaking into the building from the roof. We are all aware of the damage that can occur due to living in the Minnesota climate and the snow and ice that comes with winter. Our church building is not immune from these events.

Thank you for your patience as we work together with our contractors to clean up and to make the needed repairs. We will strive to have things in order as soon as possible. Thank you to anyone who gave additional assistance during this time. And thank you to all who are stewards here at First Lutheran—stewardship of our facility is one of many responsibilities we share as God's people in this place. Your extra efforts are appreciated! Should you have any further questions, please contact the church office.

Library Corner

Arriving soon for children and those who read to them:

The Berenstain Bears go to Sunday School

The Berenstain Bears and the Golden Rule

The Berenstain Bears Say their Prayers

Who is God?

Bible Basics for kids—God loves you!

Watch for these books on display and check them out to read with a little person. There are many interesting and inspirational titles for all ages in the church library – read and grow!



Lent 2011

For this year's Wednesday mid-week worship, on Wednesday, March 16 through Wednesday, April 13, we gather together each week with the congregation of **First United Church**, and their pastor, Damen Heitmann. We will worship with Holden Evening Prayer service here at First Lutheran. Come to church before worship and share fellowship over a simple bowl of soup and slice of bread from 5:30-6:45 p.m., worship is at 7:00 p.m.

Lenten Offering

As a part of our Lenten discipline all are encouraged to consider ways that we can share the love of Christ with others. As we live during anxious times, pray about how we each might share what God has provided. Consider also using the Lenten coin folder – *see article on page 6*. Thank you for your generosity as you serve as Jesus' hands and feet in this part of the kingdom.

Lenten Devotions

You can sign up to receive daily Lenten devotions on-line from Luther Seminary. This year's devotionals "Holy and Glorious" are written by seminary staff and alumni/ae. Go to www.luthersem.edu/lent to sign up for daily devotions delivered to your e-mail mailbox.

Lenten Soup Suppers

Are you wondering how you can be a part of the Lenten Soup Suppers? You can get involved in this fellowship opportunity in the following ways.

- ✝ Come for a bowl of soup before worship each Wednesday in Lent. Soup is served from 5:30-6:45 p.m. Sit at tables with others from First Lutheran and First United and enjoy a warm meal and conversation.
- ✝ Help to serve the meal by setting tables, making coffee, heating soup and buttering bread from 4:30-7:00 p.m.
- ✝ Provide saltine crackers, bread, milk and/or peanut butter.
- ✝ Prepare two gallons of soup.

The signup poster is in the gathering space at church; or you can volunteer by contacting the 'Soup'ervisor, Linda Weiss at 632-1733 or the church office. Thank you!



Adult Opportunities:

Cornerstones (Seniors age 55 and better!)

We continue to share food, conversation and laughter at a monthly potluck lunch, normally on the third Tuesday of each month, March 15 is the next meal. Bring a friend and a dish to share—all are welcome.

Men's Bible Study Breakfast

All are welcome to come for breakfast and Bible study! We meet the first and third Wednesday of each month at 6:15 a.m. Come when you can, leave when you must! Pastor Dave leads this study. For more information, speak to him.



March is Food Share Month

“Make us worthy, Lord, to serve those throughout the world who live and die in poverty or hunger. Give them, through our hands, this day their daily bread; and by our understanding love, give peace and joy. Amen.”

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Hunger Facts:

- ✚ In 2010, there were about 3 million visits to Minnesota’s food shelves. Food Shelves distributed 63 million pounds of food.
 - ✚ From 2008 to 2009, there was a 25 percent increase in food shelf visits in Minnesota—the largest recorded increase in 28 years.
 - ✚ Child visits to food shelves in Minnesota increased from 191,756 in the first quarter of 2008 to 236,652 in the same period in 2009.
 - ✚ In 2010, almost 14 percent of Minnesota households did not have enough money to buy food.
 - ✚ Hunger touches people of every age: 56 percent of food shelf visitors are families with children and 20 percent are seniors.
 - ✚ More than 50 percent of adult food shelf visitors are employed and 65 percent make less than \$1,000 a month, not enough income to cover their basic needs.
 - ✚ From 2000 to 2010, food shelf usage almost tripled—from more than 1 million visits to almost 3 million visits annually.
- ✚ Morrison County Food Shelf hours are Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, 10:00-12:00 noon, and Thursdays, 6:00-8:00 p.m. The Food Shelf is located at 912 1st Ave SW.

Minnesota FoodShare is a program of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches founded in 1982. This interfaith organization provides education and advocacy about hunger issues in Minnesota and coordinates the largest food drive in the state each March. Through it’s efforts the shelves of more than 260 food pantries in the state are filled.

“Incentive allocation” funds received from Minnesota FoodShare are based on the amount raised locally. Food shelves receive a percentage of money from what is donated to Minnesota FoodShare during March. Your generosity at this time increases the buying power of dollars contributed. You may drop off food donations at First Lutheran Church, or Coborn’s. Your financial gift may be given through First Lutheran, please write “Food Shelf” on the memo line of your check. For more information about the Morrison County Food Shelf, contact Gloria Thomes at 632-8304.

“...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me”

Matthew 25:35

Mission News



Fair Trade Products

First Lutheran 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. Try a new blend, we have a dark organic French roast coffee, and several other varieties to choose from. Not a coffee drinker? We also carry tea, (a new organic chai tea is available), and cocoa. Chocolate bars, baking cocoa and dried cranberries are also available. These all make great gifts and support small farmers around the world at the same time!

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

Lenten Coin Folders

This year we provide the opportunity to participate in the Lenten discipline of coin folders. First Lutheran worshippers are encouraged to place coins in the folder for each of the 40 days of Lent. Gifts received through the coin folders will be given to local mission partners such as the Morrison County Food Shelf. We encourage you to use this means or one of your choosing to support the missions and needs of the community and world. Thank you!

Food for Kidz

The organization we have come to know as Kids Against Hunger has changed their name to "Food for Kidz." Food for Kidz is the mobile packing arm of the organization known as Feeding Children of Stewart/FCS. This organization, based right here in Minnesota, has grown from feeding 1 million children in 2003 to over 10 million children in 2010! You can help by packing food on the next Mission Sunday, March 20. We will gather in Stoltz Hall and pack meals beginning at 8:45 a.m. No experience is necessary! Can you take a break in your Sunday morning routine to make a difference in the lives of hungry children?

Thank you!

Thank you for your donation this past year in the amount of \$859.25 to the Morrison County Food Shelf. In 2010, 4,691 families were helped, this is 293 more families from the previous year. Donations enable us to continue helping our neighbors in need.

God's Blessings,
Paula Welle, Treasurer,
Morrison County Food Shelf

Thank you – We appreciated your generosity in letting us use your facility and to those church members who donated books for our used book sale. Thank You!

Morrison County Animal Humane Society

Thank you so much for bringing the hymnals for the residents to use.

Highland Senior Living

"Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings from "Children First" Christian Preschool,

February was filled with fun activities, we learned about transportation, opposites, friendship and experienced the Bible story of Jonah and the Whale. The huge snow hill has also been fun to play on during outside days.

In March the preschoolers will play, create, and learn about stars and planets, dinosaurs, St. Patrick's Day, Dr. Seuss stories and farm animals. Preschool invites anyone who has baby farm animals to share them with the children the last week in March. Please contact the Preschool staff to schedule a time for your baby animal visit!

Parent/Teacher conferences are Monday-Tuesday, March 14-15. Sign up on the parent board beginning Monday, February 28 for a time to visit with Preschool staff.

The Annual Fish Fry and Silent Auction Fundraiser will be held on Friday, April 1, at the Little Falls VFW Clubrooms. Watch for posters, ticket sales and volunteer signup to begin on Sunday, March 6. "Children First" welcomes donations for the Silent Auction. If you have something you would like to contribute, please contact Katie Kaddatz or Gail.



- ☺ Fall 2011/12 registration for current preschool families and First Lutheran Church members begins Monday, March 14. Community registration begins April 1. Register early to hold your spot, registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- ☺ Register by submitting a completed registration form along with a \$50.00 non-refundable registration/activity fee. Forms will be available on March 14.
- ☺ Tuition for 2011/12 remains the same at \$80.00 per month. The "Friday Friends" class is an additional \$35.00 per month.
- ☺ Class offerings are:
 - "Jesus' Gems" (4-5 year olds) meet on Monday and Wednesday mornings (9:00-11:30 a.m.) or afternoons (12:30-3:00 p.m.)
 - "Noah's Animals" (33 months-3 year olds) meet on Tuesday and Thursday mornings (9:00-11:30 a.m.)
 - "Friday Friends" (33 months-5 year olds) meet Friday morning (9:00-11:30 a.m.) Children must be enrolled in one of the other classes to participate in the Friday Friends. This provides families with a three-day-a-week preschool experience.
- ☺ Registration questions may be directed to Gail Hittesdorf, Director, at 632-6667 or 632-2218.

"Children First" Christian Preschool is excited and ready to partner with families to build and strengthen the academic, physical, social, emotional and spiritual growth of children.

Thank you for your continued prayers for the children, families and staff of "Children First" Christian Preschool.

Yours in Christ's Service!

Gail Hittesdorf, Director, and Preschool Staff

Sunday Morning Education Ministry News

The current TREK K-5 rotation theme is the Ten Commandments. You can pick up an info sheet on the Sunday School board at church, and take it home for family study each week. The next rotation, The Lord's Supper, begins March 13. Come and lead a station and share your time with First's kids.

March 20 is Mission Sunday, we will pack food for Kids Against Hunger. Come and make a difference in the lives of the hungry. If you have questions or would like to volunteer, contact Pam Czech, at 573-4193, or Gail Hittesdorf, 632-2218 or 632-6667, or Simon and Beth Storkamp, 632-4747.



Vacation Bible School

August 1-5, 2011

"Pandemia"

"Where God is Wild about You!"

This year kids and adults will explore Psalm 139 and experience God listening to them, watching over them, and loving them, no matter what! Come along to the bamboo forest and help our Vacation Bible School as we learn that God is wild about us!. Share your leadership, excitement, and creative ideas by becoming part of the VBS Leadership team. Planning begins in April with a meeting each month until the Pandemia of Vacation Bible School on Monday-Friday, August 1-5, 2011 from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon. If you want to be part of the planning or have questions contact Gail Hittesdorf, 632-2218 or 632-6667.

Confirmation Ministries

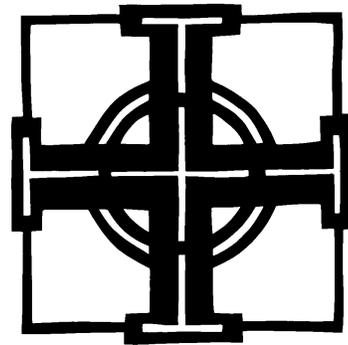
Second Grade: Looking ahead – the sessions on Holy Communion, "The Welcome Table" are Sundays, April 3 and 10, with Pastor Dave. Letters will be sent to all Second Grade students. This class is for second graders and their parents.

Seventh Grade: The seventh grade class on the Apostles' Creed is scheduled at Luther Crest Bible Camp during the week of June 19-24. Registration letters have been mailed to families. If you did not receive a letter, please contact the church office.

Eighth Grade: Students are invited to attend a Seder Meal at Temple Israel in Minneapolis, on Sunday, March 27. This is a special and interesting event – don't miss it!

Tenth Grade: We meet for Means of Grace sessions: Sunday, March 6 and Sunday, March 13. Both sessions meet from 3:00-5:00 p.m. Pastor Dave will teach this class. These sessions are the last formal class times until fall.

Ninth and Tenth Grade: We are invited to Camp Onomia on Saturday, March 26, for an afternoon visit with NE MN Synod Bishop Tom Aitken. We'll have conversation with Bishop Tom about what it means to be Lutheran and life in the church world-wide. Depart First Lutheran at 9:30 a.m. and return at 5:00 p.m. Please call the church office or sign up on the youth table in the gathering space.



**Gospel Gang (Grades 3-5)
Bowling Outing**

Sunday, March 6, 1:30-4:00 p.m.

Bring the family and a friend and come for an afternoon bowling outing. Meet at church at 1:30 p.m., we'll go to the Little Falls Bowling Center, bowl two games and be back at church at 4:00 p.m. Your cost of \$4.00 includes bowling, shoe rental and beverage. Bring spending money if you want to play arcade games. Sign up today!

<p>Can Care Collection Save a can – Save the earth Save our youth budget! Keep those cans coming!</p>
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**(Grades 7-12)
Get Ready! for
Paintball and Pizza
Sunday, May 1
1:30-6:00 p.m.**

We are planning a multi-church event with First Lutheran, Alliance, Grace Covenant and Living Hope for Sunday, May 1. We will travel to Lake Beauty to play on their paintball course. No equipment needed, wear clothes that can get paint on them, camo is good. Bring a friend, cost is only \$20.00. and includes pizza! Sign up and pay by Wednesday, April 27.

**Palm Sunday Lefse Sale
April 17**

Connect with the Scandinavian heritage of First Lutheran by supporting this fundraiser for our youth programs. Make sure to pick up some lefse as you leave worship on Palm Sunday. If you would like to help make lefse on Friday evening, April 15 or Saturday, April 16, call the church office 632-6667. Uff da!

Summer 2011 Mission Trips:

Prepare your hearts to serve and plan on spending a week on a life-changing mission trip. The trips and dates are:

Wild and Crazy Saints to Kansas City with Youthworks. Sunday, June 26 to Friday, July 1.

Senior High Trip to Philadelphia with Youthworks, Saturday, July 2 to Saturday, July 9.

Trips are filling—if you have not made a deposit yet please do this soon. Don't miss out on these awesome weeks!



GoodSearch.com

What if First's youth earned a penny every time you searched the internet? What if a percentage of your online purchases went to support youth ministry at First Lutheran Church? Now we can!

GoodSearch.com is a Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, or about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use it as you would any search engine and enter First Lutheran as the charity you want to support.

You can also go to GoodShop.com for your online shopping. Hundreds of great stores including Target, Gap, Best Buy, ebay, Macy's, and Barnes & Noble will donate up to 37% of each purchase to your favorite cause!

Thanks for the many ways you support youth ministry at FLC!

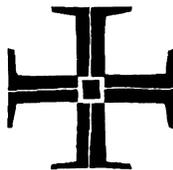
**“Spring Ahead”
Daylight Savings Time
begins on SUNDAY, MARCH 13**

Daylight Savings Time begins earlier than in the past. Remember to set your clocks *ahead* one hour on Saturday evening, March 12 – then you’ll be on time for church on Sunday, March 13! ☺

**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.



Items for the **April NEWSLETTER** are
due on **March 18, 2011!**