

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

David J. Sperstad, Pastor
Anthony D. Oltmann, Pastor



“Servants of All”

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May, 2011, Newsletter

June 10, 2011

Eastertime:

Easter is not one day, but fifty!

First, we kept the forty days, with praying, fasting and works of love. Then we celebrated the three days of Christ’s passion, dying and rising. Now we delight in the fifty days of Easter, with rejoicing, feasting and giving witness! The season of Easter is fifty days long. It is a time of unbridled joy, of exuberant rejoicing.



Why is Eastertime fifty days?

The ancient cultures that gave us the Bible had great respect for numbers. They believed that numbers contained hints about God and the meaning of life. The number seven was thought to contain fullness: There are seven days in the week, according to God’s original way of ordering time, creating all that there is and resting. And so if you multiply 7 times 7, you have “fullness times fullness.”

But wait! 7 times 7 is 49! And with God, there is always more—more than we can ever imagine. So our season of Easter is even more than “fullness times fullness.” It’s “fullness times fullness” and then some: 7 times 7 plus 1. That’s what love is like: more than we can ever imagine. That’s what heaven, life with God, is like: more than we can ever imagine.

The fifty days of Easter are days for looking for the risen Lord among us, for hearing in each other’s stories of rising from the big and small deaths, days when we experience something of Christ’s triumphs. That’s why we look to the newly baptized: at Easter, they died and rose with Christ! Now they take their places with us. Together, like the apostles who were so full of the Spirit that people thought they were drunk, we rush about with good and giddy news: Death is not the last word! Life and love are forever!

And slowly, painstakingly, we work together, along side the risen Christ, to change this world into the world to come. Sing Alleluia!

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Pastor Dave's Article

⁴ When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God ⁵ because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. ⁶ I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ.

Philemon 1:4-6

I am so grateful for the blessings that God has provided here at First Lutheran Church, and I am looking forward to even greater things in the year to come. I know that together we will experience what God has in store for us and it promises to be even more marvelous.

Recently, I read in the paper that it was “thanks to the volunteer” month. A couple of months ago, President Obama emphasized the idea of “volunteerism.” He encouraged the people of our nation to respond so that the needs of the less able and less fortunate could be met through our work together as citizens. Regardless of your party affiliation, we can ALL agree that there is a need for more volunteerism!

As Pastor of this church, I want to echo the need for a spirit of “volunteerism,” but not from the same perspective as a government official. The volunteers at First Lutheran are called by God to serve our neighbors. Without servant volunteers the church would be disabled. The Church becomes stronger as each person gets involved, remains faithful, and serves with the same kind of attitude the Lord had when He knelt to wash the feet of His disciples. I believe that it is through God's people, as God's stewards “step up” and respond to the call that ministry happens. When we share our blessings God “shows up” and the needs of the people are met.

Listen to the words of Christ in Matthew 10:42 “And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.” In other words, even the smallest action on our part, with the right motive, at the right time will bring great reward.

I was once told that when facing depression, feeling down about myself, or on the verge of a breakdown: “*To go out and find someone in need and do something for them.*” That's the beauty of

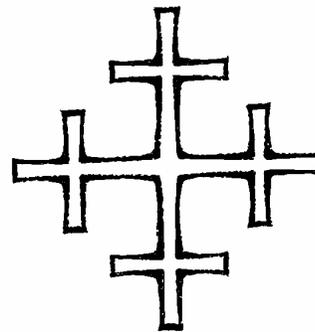
service in God's name—it is through helping others that you yourself are helped in many ways.

Servant ministry is stewardship to The Master and continues to have a positive impact within the community. God has placed Servants to further the Gospel – the Good News of Jesus Christ. You have been a benefactor of someone else's servant ministry, those saints who have gone before us, that Great Cloud of Witnesses. Someone shared their faith with you and shared the Good News of Jesus. They have given you a great legacy.

I encourage you to find a way to become involved in the greatest opportunity on earth—helping others. You can further His Gospel! Whether that be through First Lutheran or beyond the walls, you are called to be a steward, for you have been chosen by God to be First... a Servant of all.

Blessings and we'll see you in service together!

Pastor Dave Sperstad



Council Highlights

- Heard that spring church clean-up is scheduled for Monday, May 2, beginning at 3:30 p.m. *See article on back page.*
- Heard that the offering received from Lenten soup suppers and coin folders will be given to the Morrison County Food Shelf and Food for Kidz. Thank you for your support of these missions at home and around the globe.
- Heard that the Commission for Worship and Congregational Life is beginning to organize for a new pictorial directory for the congregation. Watch for more information.
- Approved offering Preschool Summer Day Camp for two weeks in July. *See article on page 8.*
- Selected Wednesday, May 11 as the date for Roadside Cleanup. Meet at church at 5:00 p.m. and travel together to Hwy. 238 to clean our section of the roadway.
- Reaffirmed the Memorial brochure, which provides suggestions and guidelines for memorials, bequests, and special gifts given to First Lutheran.
- Approved the salary package for the youth and family ministry position.

How is Support to the ELCA used?

61 new congregations were approved in 2010. Support to 250 missionaries in 50 countries, including 49 young adults. Mission projects in over 90 countries. 8 seminaries. 26 ELCA colleges and universities. Over 180 campus ministries. And in many more ways. God's work. Our Hands.

Financial Update

First quarter giving statements have been mailed. Thank you for checking over your statement. Please call the church office if there is any discrepancy.

You are welcome to participate in an electronic funds transfer giving plan, Simply Giving. See Sue or Gloria in the church office to enroll.



Pentecost Sunday Celebration Offering Sunday, June 12

On Pentecost Sunday, June 11, 2000, First Lutheran celebrated the dedication of our "Building to Serve" project. In February of 2001 we closed on a twenty-year mortgage with a principal of \$475,000 and interest rate of 7.25%. After the congregation authorized a re-financing in 2010, our mortgage balance is now approximately \$140,000 with an interest rate of 5.25%. The payoff date for the mortgage is January 2026. Each Pentecost Sunday has been set aside as an opportunity to reduce the principal on our mortgage. The reasoning behind this is simple: we pay down our loan more quickly, pay thousands of dollars less in interest and free up dollars for mission. It's simply a matter of good stewardship. An envelope is available on the greeters' table for this cause. Please give as you are able on Pentecost Sunday, June 12. Thank you for your faithful giving!

Ride a Bike to Church Day Sunday, June 5

“In the beginning God
created the heavens and the earth.”
Genesis 1.1



National Bike to Church Day grew out of an effort to encourage members to practice ways to take care of God’s creation, such as bicycling to church. This is an act of stewardship. But, there is so much more to it—it brings us closer to God, closer to our friends, closer to those who don’t believe—and it is an opportunity to encourage fitness. Here are several things that we can accomplish by biking to church:

- 🚲 we can have fellowship with others.
- 🚲 we can conserve resources and be wise stewards of creation.
- 🚲 we refrain from putting materials into the environment which are harmful.
- 🚲 we are keeping our bodies fit.
- 🚲 gather your family and friends and ride a bike to church on Sunday, June 5!

Easter Thanksgivings

Thank you to all the many people who made our Lent, Holy Week and Easter celebrations so wonderful:

- † Communion ministers and visitation ministers
- † Musicians: instrumentalists, cantors, praise team, vocalists, and choir
- † Scripture readers
- † Greeters and Ushers and Hospitality ministers
- † Housecleaners, maintenance helpers, and custodian
- † Art teams, drape makers and handlers
- † Ministry team and Worship Commission
- † Bakers, soup makers, and breakfast preparers
- † Sacristans and altar guild
- † Child care providers
- † Teachers and educators
- † Plant and flower providers
- † Foot-washers
- † Bulletin folders and office helpers

You are the body of Christ in the world—thanks be to God!

“First Moving Forward”

First Lutheran Church council is pleased to announce that Jonathan “Jay” Kiel has accepted the invitation to serve at First Lutheran full-time in youth and family ministry.

Jay is from Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is engaged to Stephanie Hoffman, the couple will be married in Grand Rapids on July 23. They plan to relocate to Little Falls at the beginning of August. We look forward to becoming acquainted with Jay and Stephanie and to the ministry that God calls us to here at First Lutheran and in the world.

We give thanks to God for calling faithful leaders among His people! We move forward together as “First...Servants of All.”

Adult Opportunities

May Martha Circle
“The People of God:
Unity in the Midst of Diversity”
Wise in What is Good

Romans 16:19

The Martha Circle will meet Monday, May 16.
Sylvia Thomasson is the hostess.

Adult Studies and Events

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. Contact him for more information.

Cornerstones Potluck
(Seniors age 55 and better)

If you enjoy a good meal and fellowship, bring a friend and a food item to share and come for potluck lunch on Tuesday, May 17, at 11:30 a.m. We gather in Stoltz Hall for food, conversation and fun.

Monday Night Study
begins Monday, May 2 at 6:30 p.m.

Beginning Monday, May 2, at 6:30 p.m. we gather to read and study selected books which are the letters of the Apostle Paul. Paul’s letters to Philemon, Colossians, Titus and Jude will be the basis for our discussion. We will meet for four weeks. Pastor Dave leads this study, come and bring a friend!

Higher Ground Music Festival 2011
Friday-Saturday, August 5-6, 2011
Winsted, Minnesota

Plan to attend this weekend of Christian music with artists MercyMe, Jeremy Camp, Kutless, and many more. Tickets available now at www.hgmusicfest.com or by phone at 877-840-0457. Discount pricing until May 20.

Women’s Bible Study
“Uppity Women of the Bible”
Song of Songs
meets Wednesdays thru May

We meet to continue this study by Hebrew Bible professor, Dr. Lisa Wolfe. Sessions continue Wednesdays through May. You may choose either the 9:30 a.m. or 6:30 p.m. study group. Come for lively discussion and bring a friend!

“First...Servants of All”
Worship Serving Opportunities

Each Sunday, many worshipers come to worship at First. Your servant hands are an integral part of providing hospitality to all who enter here. You are asked 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. Choose a time that fits your schedule. Sign-ups are now available for May and June; sign-ups for future months will be posted at church at a later date. Training for each serving ministry is available—please ask! For more information, contact the church office, 632-6667, or the May coordinator, Mary Larson, 632-8203.

Library Corner

Thank you to all who have donated books to the Library. Please include your name with your donation; if donated books are already in our circulation we may contact you. We can return the book to you or with your permission; we will include it in our periodic book sale.

Check out the book sale happening now in the gathering space outside of the library. Books are available for a free-will donation. Selections will be added each week. Happy reading!

**Lutheran Social Service Rummage Sale
Wednesday-Friday, May 11-13**

The spring Lutheran Social Service (LSS) rummage sale co-sponsored by Bethel and First Lutheran Church women will be held at Bethel Lutheran, at 901 West Broadway, on:

Wednesday, May 11, 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 12, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Friday, May 13, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

☞ Dollar Bag Sale Day

Proceeds from the sale are used to benefit residents at the Lutheran Social Services group homes in this area. Set up days are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday morning, clean up begins at noon on Friday. Volunteers are much appreciated, there is lots of ‘stuff’ to organize – come when you can! The sale is a wonderful recycling opportunity for good, usable, clean clothing, books, linens, small appliances, toys, etc. Clean grocery bags, paper or plastic, are also needed. Please, no televisions, computers or computer parts. Sale items can be brought to Bethel in the morning, beginning Monday, May 2, or on the set-up days. For more information, contact Karen Haaland, at 632-8828.

Thank you!

Hello children at “Children First” Preschool! I would like to thank all of you for your wonderful gift of the two hand print quilts you helped make for the family living in the Habitat for Humanity home. The quilts you helped make are for Tristan and Amanda, the kids who live in the house. With your hand prints on the quilts, it will be like you giving them a hug every time they cover up with the quilts. Thank you for helping with the Habitat house by helping on the quilt!

Sincerely,

Kathy Kahlhammer

Habitat for Humanity of Morrison County



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

The Paint-A-Thon committee is recruiting teams to paint a home in Morrison County on August 6. Over the past 16 years, over 150 homeowners have benefited from this program. It takes 10-12 people, 4-5 hours each, to make a big difference in someone’s life!

First Lutheran will again sponsor a painting team. Jerome and Karen Haaland have volunteered once again to coordinate the team. Would you be willing to be a painter? Contact the church office to sign up. Thank you for making a difference in the community we share!



**Lutheran Care Center
Bake, Plant and Craft Sale
Thursday, May 19
8:00 a.m. to noon**

Come to the sale; all proceeds benefit the residents of the Lutheran Care Center. Your donation of plants, craft items or baked goods are welcome. There will also be silent auction items to bid on. For more information, contact Donna Hegstrom, 632-3441.

Coborn's BBQ Cookout Fundraiser
Friday, May 6, 11:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
Saturday, May 7, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Stop by Coborn's Cookout stand for a bite to eat and support First Lutheran youth programs at the same time. 50% of the proceeds from the cookout go to benefit youth ministry here. Thanks, Coborn's! And thank you for your support!

Roadside Cleanup
Wednesday, May 11 at 5:00 p.m.

As a part of our stewardship of creation, First Lutheran is responsible for the cleanup of two miles of Highway 238, just south of the intersection with Highway 27. The church council invites you to assist with cleaning our portion of Hwy. 238. Meet at church at 5:00 p.m., we'll ride together to Hwy. 238 (or you can meet us there). Dress appropriately for the work and the weather and bring work gloves. For safety purposes, MN Dot specifies that volunteers be at least 12 years old. All workers will wear reflective safety vests. For more information, contact Stephanie Adams, at 632-1826.

First Lutheran Church
120th Anniversary Celebration
1891-2011

This year we mark the congregation's 120th year in mission and ministry in Little Falls! That's a lot of years of history. We have much to celebrate and much to be thankful for! Planning is underway for a congregational celebration to take place in the fall. If you are interested in being involved in some aspect of the planning or have a historical tidbit to share, please contact Nancy Ratzloff, 632-9329, or the church office.

Luther Crest Bible Camp
Spring Camp Clean Up
Saturday, May 21

Here is a great way to support your camp as an individual, family or group. Come for the day and help the camp get ready for summer 2011! There will be projects of varying difficulty and skill level such as cabin and facility cleaning, gardening, power-washing, bunk construction, curtain making, painting, and basic maintenance. Snacks and lunch will be provided. Please call the church office to register.

Pastor Parish Relations Committee

Members of the congregation are selected by the leadership team of First Lutheran to serve on the Pastor Parish Relations Committee. This committee serves the congregation and the pastors as a 'sounding board,' and has a communications role between the congregation and its pastors. Members are: Merlin Bruns, Tifanii Dahl, Doug Dahlberg, Stephanie Doty, and Ted Pfohl. If you have feedback about our ministry together, please contact one of the committee members.



Sunday School News

Sunday School is offered each week at 10:30 a.m. through Sunday, May 22. In May TREK (Grades K-5) use a rotation entitled "Easter People." Families are encouraged to use the lesson handouts available from the signup board at home. You can also attend Sunday School with your child and get in on the fun! Thank you to all who have shared Christ's love with the kids at Sunday School. Watch for special summer activities!

"Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings from the "Children First" Christian Preschool!

Butterflies are symbols of the Easter season. They symbolize new life in Christ. Preschoolers are watching the transformation of new life during May as they watch 20 larvae become butterflies in our butterfly sanctuary. We will have sports fun, ocean experiences and learn about friendship. We say goodbye for the summer to our friends at St. Otto's, Pine Grove Manor, and Harmony House. Residents comment that they will miss the children over the summer months. The visitation ministry provided by the Preschoolers has blessed many. Thank you to parents, Andy's Charter and those providing bus donations for the opportunity to make these visits.

Thank you to everyone who donated silent auction items, provided bars, kept us in prayer and volunteered their services for the "Children First" Christian Preschool Fish Fry and Silent Auction.

We appreciate all of you and your service to this ministry. We served over 275 people!

The Dutch Mill Flower Bulb sale is underway with orders due on May 3 for arrival the week of May 16. Orders may be placed with any preschool family or stop by the First Lutheran Church office. Thank you!

"Sports Fun!" is the theme for the Preschool Celebration on Sunday, May 15 beginning at 3:00 p.m. Families will gather on the south lawn of First Lutheran Church to participate in various sports activities! Wear your favorite team jersey or athletic gear! A short program will begin at 3:45 p.m. followed by a picnic supper.

Registration for fall is ongoing, if you or someone you know is interested in enrolling please contact the church office.

Yours in Christ's Service
Gail Hittesdorf, Director

Preschool Summer Day 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.

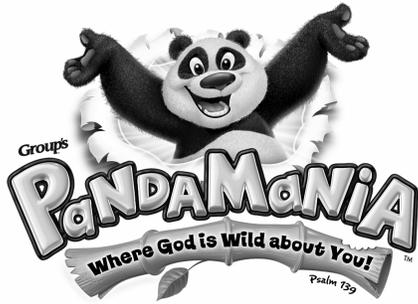
Session 1: Monday-Friday, July 11-15
3-year-olds

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 First website at www.flclittlefalls.org.

Registration deadline is Tuesday, July 5. For more information, contact Gail Hittesdorf, at 632-2218, or the church office.





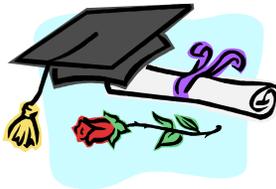
**Vacation Bible School
August 1-5
"Pandamania"
Where God is Wild About You!**

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 come to Vacation Bible School as we learn that God is wild about us! VBS is for children age 3 (by September 1, 2010) through 6th grade. Youth and adults are encouraged to volunteer. Childcare will be provided for young children of volunteering adults. Share your leadership, excitement, and creative ideas by becoming part of the VBS Leadership team. Watch for the signup board soon. If you wish to be part of the planning or have questions contact Gail Hittesdorf, 632-2218 or 632-6667.

Can Care Collection
Keep saving those aluminum cans!
Save a can – Save the earth –
Save our youth budget! Keep those cans coming!

**Cinco de Mayo
Fry bread Taco-Takeout Fundraiser
Thursday, May 5
4:30-6:30 p.m.
at Pine Country Bank Parking Lot**

What is a fry bread taco? It is a 6-8 inch round of deep fried bread topped with your choice of toppings including spicy ground beef (*but not too spicy*), lettuce, onions, cheese, sour cream and jalapenos if you lie. Suggested donation of \$6.50. Funds raised go to youth programs, thank you for your support of youth ministry!



**Graduating Seniors
FLC Baccalaureate Sunday, May 22
10:45 a.m. Worship Service
11:45 a.m. Brunch**

We will honor the graduating seniors at the 10:45 a.m. service on May 22. Following worship, brunch is served to the students and their parents. Coordinators are the junior class parents. Please keep the graduates in your prayers.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Ethan Albrecht</i> | <i>Tylor Lenz</i> |
| <i>Derek Anderson</i> | <i>Sean Monnier</i> |
| <i>Samuel Boody</i> | <i>Stephanie Ronning</i> |
| <i>Justin Colombe</i> | <i>Kirsten Sassen</i> |
| <i>Hannah Groves</i> | <i>Karley Sylvester</i> |
| <i>Lindsay Kapus</i> | <i>Logan Weisz</i> |
| <i>Callie Krupke</i> | <i>Autumn Wonderlich</i> |
| <i>Zackary Larsen</i> | |

**News of the Family
Funeral**

Caroline Hansen died April 7. Her funeral service was April 13 at First Lutheran. May God grant peace and comfort to her family and friends.

Baptism

Nathaniel Albert Zellgert, son of James and Jodie Zellgert was baptized on April 17. Welcome to God's Kingdom!

Items for the **June NEWSLETTER** are due on **May 20, 2011!**



**Spring Clean up Day
Monday, May 2**

The spring clean-up day at church is Monday, May 2. Come at 3:30 p.m. (or when you can). We will wash the exterior windows and take care of other clean-up needs. Bring rakes, gloves and a willing attitude to make our church home sparkle. This is a wonderful service project for mentors and mentees. Keep in mind the old saying: "Many hands make light work." See you at church!