

**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

Jake Dyrhaug, Pastor



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February 2018, Newsletter

January 30, 2018



**A Season of Hope:  
Baskets of Promise  
for Lutheran World Relief**

As we walk through the season of Lent together, you can announce to the world that the Hope of Christ makes a new season possible. We announce this hope in several ways: **We Give**—to brothers and sisters in poverty around the world; **We Make**—by assembling Personal Care Kits to offer hope for people coping with war, poverty and disaster; **We Worship**—all of the Sundays and Wednesdays in Lent and by waving Eco-Palms on Palm Sunday; **We Pray**—we read and share daily devotionals and pray for all brothers and sisters living in poverty that they may find increased stability and dignity.

This Lent we will again participate in Lutheran World Relief's Baskets of Promise appeal. Each week, we'll collect a different item that we will use to assemble Personal Care Kits that give people around the world tools to stay healthy in life's most challenging situations. In 2017 we collected supplies to assemble 82 Personal Care Kits—Thank you! How many can we assemble in 2018? Watch for a date to assemble the kits later in the spring.

Here is the collection schedule so that you can watch for these items:

February 18	Bars of soap, 4-5 ounce, any brand in original wrapping
February 25	Bath towels, lightweight, 52"X27" max, dark color is best
March 4	Toothbrushes, adult size, in original packaging
March 11	Combs
March 18	Nail clippers, metal, attached file optional
March 25	Bars of soap, as above

You can bring items to church at any time, watch for the growing collection in the gathering space. Thank you for sharing the hope of Christ with all our brothers and sisters.

**Pastor Jake's Article**  
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**Lenten News**  
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*“I press on toward the goal to win the prize...”*  
*Philippians 3:14*

In our house we really look forward to the Winter Olympics, with all the amazing dedication and excellence on the part of the athletes. The strength, the speed, the grace all combine with the colors and celebration, making for an awe-inspiring event, this year to be held in PyeongChang, South Korea. It seems sort of ironic to have all the family gather around to watch from the perspective of the comfort of the cushioned couch and chairs—here the skiers, skaters, sledgers and players are giving it every ounce of their being on the television while we rest on such cushy pillows. But your blood still surges when the race is won, when the beautiful jump is made, when the puck flies into the net to win the prize of a bronze, silver or gold medal!

The Apostle Paul writes in Philippians, “I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Jesus Christ.” He was referring to the dedication people in his day and culture knew well, as they celebrated some of the original Olympians in Greece. Does this mean we go to heaven by pressing on? Winning? Is that what we must do? That doesn’t sound like Paul, who continually states that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ—it’s not our pressing on that does that. Jesus won our salvation for us. Rather, it’s about responding to God’s saving grace by offering our lives in discipleship after salvation is assured. It’s about claiming the victory Jesus won over sin and death and “living into” God’s call for us in our baptism. As those baptized into Christ, we strive to serve God to win the prize of a faithful life, knowing that it is God who calls us to do so—it’s not “our own thing.” Once in awhile you’ll hear an Olympic champion on the t.v. or radio thanking God for giving them their ability. Vikings football players did that too after the playoff game with the New Orleans Saints—did you catch that? It’s not just their own thing, but giving the glory to God. In that same spirit, let

us press on to live the lives to which God has called us, knowing that our selves, our church, our world are God’s—and we are following God’s call, seeking the calling and vision God gives us for the Kingdom.

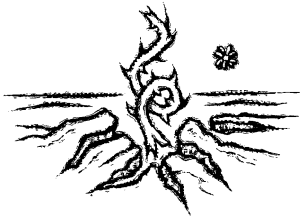
**Ash Wednesday and Lenten Services:** Ash Wednesday this year is February 14, we will share a soup supper each week at 5:30 p.m. Lenten services are at 7:00 p.m. The Lenten series this year will be entitled, “The Seven Last Words of Christ”, with a focus on the seven last words of Jesus from the cross. Jesus’ goal was to fulfill the mission his Father gave him, to take the form of a servant, even to the point of death on a cross for us so our sins could be forgiven, and heaven could be ours. He met cheering crowds Palm Sunday and pressed on to Jerusalem, although later the crowds stopped cheering, and it was not a victorious finish when he gave his last breath on the cross for us. The victory was still to come on Easter Sunday.

Your Servant in Christ,

Pastor Jake Dyrhaug

### 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. Pray about how we each might share what God has provided. Thank you for your generosity as you serve as Jesus’ hands and feet in this part of the kingdom.



## Lent 2018

**begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14  
at First Lutheran Church**

**Soup Supper served at 5:30 p.m.  
7:00 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion  
and Imposition of Ashes**

With ash and soot we begin the 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

**Lord, make us instruments of your peace.**

**Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.**

**Amen.**

*Adapted from Evangelical Lutheran Worship, pg. 87,  
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## Devotions for Lent 2018

### you are the way

As a part of your Lenten journey, we have available a small daily devotional book, you are the way. In the Gospel of John, Jesus describes himself with a series of "I AM" statements. You are the way explores the following:

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life"

*February 14-17*

"I am the gate"; "I am the good shepherd"

*February 18-24*

"I am the light of the world"

*February 25-March 3*

"I am the true vine";

"I am the vine, you are the branches"

*March 4-10*

"I AM" *March 11-17*

"I am the bread of life"; "I am the living bread that came down from heaven"

*March 18-24*

"I am the resurrection and the life"

*March 25-31*

For each of the days of Lent, this small book contains a colorful photo, scripture text, quote to ponder, and daily reflection. You may pick up a copy in the church office. Please let us know if you would like to receive a copy in the mail.



## Council Highlights

- ✦ Council and staff will participate in a leadership retreat on Friday-Saturday, February 9-10 at Luther Crest Bible Camp.
- ✦ Council expressed thanks to outgoing members Peter Eckstrom, Cindi Habas, and Robert Johnson for their service.
- ✦ Heard that the new church web-site is coming soon.
- ✦ Heard that the First Lutheran Quilting Group received the Touchstone Energy Commitment to Community award.

## Worship Serving Opportunities Signup for 2018

Each Sunday, many worshipers come to worship at First Lutheran. Your servant hands are an integral part of providing hospitality to all who enter here. Stop at the table in the Gathering Space to offer your gifts in service to Christ's body at First Lutheran. Serving areas are greeters, ushers, scripture readers, communion ministry, child care, coffee hospitality. You can sign up for a time that fits your schedule. Sign up now for February. Training for each serving ministry is available—please ask in the church office!

We will devote space in the newsletter in the coming months with information about the various serving ministries. You may want to try something new!

Signup sheets are posted now. Thanks for being *First...Servants of All*.

### Child Care

We are continually grateful for the little ones in our midst! As we are currently without a staff Child Care Attendant, we welcome persons 18 or older to serve as a child care volunteer. This opportunity is primarily during Sunday worship. If this serving interests you, please contact the church office.

## Adult Opportunities

### Ministry Team Opportunities

The community of faith at First Lutheran has many opportunities for folks in the congregation to be involved. Leadership roles were recently filled by election at the congregational annual meeting (*see the abbreviated annual report on pages 5 and 6*). Adult members are also encouraged to be involved with the seven ministry teams that keep mission and ministry strong and vibrant here. The seven teams areas are: Worship and Music, Education, Youth, Mission, Congregational Life, Facilities and Property, and Health. Consider whether you can share time and talent by serving on one of the teams. Please pray for the teams and the work of ministry and mission that God has called us to do in this place. Contact the church office or Pastor Jake for more information.

### Women's Martha Circle:

The Martha Circle meets Monday, February 12, at 9:30 a.m. at the church.

### 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—February 14 and 28—at 7:00 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 Jake.

### Book Club

The February selection is Deadliest Enemy: Our War Against Killer Germs by Michael T. Osterholm. The group meets Tuesday, February 27 at 7:00 p.m. in the church library. For more information, call Tifanii Dahl, 632-8207.

### Published Devotional

Congratulations to Erin Makela, daughter of Ron and Monica Makela for her published poem "Grace and Gravity" printed in The Lutheran Message devotional, pages 16-17. You can pick up a copy in the gathering space. Keep writing and speaking your faith, Erin!

## Mini Annual Report First Lutheran Church

The Annual Meeting of First Lutheran Church was held on Sunday, January 28, 2018. 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 gathering space.

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

#### *Serving together in mission:*

- ✠ Provided in-kind giving through personal care kits, school backpacks, and Christmas gifts
- ✠ Support of local agencies: Morrison County Food Shelf, Habitat for Humanity, Oasis Central Minnesota
- ✠ Increased financial support to the wider church through the ELCA

#### *Serving together in worship and praise:*

- ✠ Vibrant worship using a variety of services and weekly holy communion
- ✠ Midweek worship during Lent and Advent
- ✠ Planned and participated in a Service of Commemoration of the Reformation

#### *Serving together in faith formation:*

- ✠ Supported “Children First” Christian Preschool in their 17<sup>th</sup> year of operation
- ✠ Held Vacation Bible School cooperatively with local congregations
- ✠ Sponsored mission trip for middle school youth, registered 9 youth for ELCA National Youth Gathering
- ✠ 28 Students affirmed their faith on Reformation Sunday

#### *Serving together thru our building and grounds:*

- ✠ Provided meeting space to over 25 non-profit community organizations
- ✠ Maintaining the building and grounds with needed replacements/upgrades

### **Statistical Reports**

Baptized Membership (January 1, 2018)	1,074	Baptisms	16
Confirmed Membership (January 1, 2018)	786	Affirmation of Baptism/Confirmation	28
New Members Received	25	Marriages	1
Transferred Out	11	Funerals	5
Average Worship Attendance	2017 – 203		

### **Summary Notes from Congregational Annual Meeting**

#### *Not Official Minutes*

President David Buker, declared a Quorum and called the meeting to order.

Elected to the Church Council were: Tifanii Dahl, Cindi Habas, and Barb Stumpf each to a 3-year term.

Matt Dahl, Mary Larson and Tracy Moe were elected as the congregational representatives for the Nominating Committee.

The Heartland Conference Gathering is Sunday, February 11 at Camp Onomia, Onamia; the NE MN Synod Assembly is May 4-6, 2018 at Cragun’s Resort. Voting members are: David Buker and Sue Salvog, alternates are Ruth Jeremiason-Jensen and Jim Salvog.

The Luther Crest Bible Camp annual meeting is October 6, 2018. Voting members are Jeff Bigalke, and Dale Gohl.

Debra Yliniemi-Ahlin was elected as First Lutheran’s representative for the “His Hands and Feet” Stumpf Memorial Scholarship Committee.

The 2018 Mission Plan was approved as presented.

The new Council met briefly, officers were elected, they are: President, David Buker, Vice-President, Bob O’Neill, Secretary, Sue Salvog, Treasurer, Jennifer Schott.

## Excerpts from the Treasurer's Report

Thank you for your faithful support throughout the year! It was another exciting year in ministry with lots of activity in the building, and planning for future years of mission.

On the 2017 Mission Plan, receipts toward operations were \$394,726, Thank you! Operating expenses were \$399,164. We ended the year with a deficit of \$4,438. These amounts are exclusive of "Children First" Christian Preschool.

We are entering the fifth year of our mortgage loan with ELCA Mission Investment Fund (MIF). The original mortgage principal of \$569,303 has been reduced to \$456,562 by your faithful gifts. We anticipate that the variable interest rate of 3.875% will not change dramatically, if at all.

The Mission Plan proposal for 2018 projects expenses at \$402,889 and income at about the same amount. Mission Plan expenses are covered solely by the generosity of the congregation. These amounts are exclusive of the preschool.

Thank you for your many additional gifts, both in-kind for various ministries and projects around our church home, and \$2,698 received from special offerings which included these missions and projects and many more:

Oasis Central Minnesota	500.00
Flyer Pride backpack food program	500.00
ELCA Global Barnyard	387.00
Local Assistance gifts	890.00

You provided supplies for 82 personal care kits during Lent. Vacation Bible School children filled over 50 backpacks with school supplies for schools. You gave dollars and in-kind gifts to over 100 area families in need through the Angel Tree. Thank you for the countless unseen support for brothers and sisters around the world. You are a blessing!

Thank you for the privilege of serving as treasurer at First Lutheran Church this past year.

God's blessings, Peter Eckstrom, Treasurer

### 2017 Income and Expense Report and 2018 Proposed Mission Plan

	<u>2017</u>			<u>2018</u>
	<u>Mission Plan</u>	<u>2017 Actual</u>	<u>Plan Variance</u>	<u>Mission Plan</u>
Total Giving	428,038	394,726	33,312	402,300
Preschool	<u>25,590</u>	<u>22,218</u>	<u>3,372</u>	<u>25,590</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>453,628</b>	<b>416,944</b>	<b>36,684</b>	<b>427,890</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Pastoral Ministry	116,457	115,333	1,124	121,556
Lay Staff	166,407	144,622	21,785	149,796
Administrative Expense	22,751	21,603	1,148	22,851
Worship and Music	4,850	4,299	551	3,850
Congregational Life	4,720	2,095	2,625	4,720
Facilities and Property	42,573	50,002	(7,429)	36,485
Debt Service	35,590	38,556	(2,966)	35,590
Health	600	122	478	300
Education	10,300	3,053	7,247	3,900
Youth	5,010	1,525	3,485	5,010
Mission and Stewardship	<u>18,780</u>	<u>17,954</u>	<u>826</u>	<u>18,830</u>
<b>Total Expense before Preschool</b>	<b>428,038</b>	<b>399,164</b>	<b>28,874</b>	<b>402,888</b>
Preschool	<u>25,590</u>	<u>24,736</u>	<u>854</u>	<u>25,590</u>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>453,628</b>	<b>423,900</b>	<b>29,728</b>	<b>428,478</b>
<b>Deficit/Surplus</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(6,956)</b>	<b>6,956</b>	<b>(588)</b>

February is American Heart Month and the American Heart Association wants to help everyone live longer, healthier lives. Heart disease is the number one cause of death for both men and women in the United States. It is an equal opportunity killer which claims approximately 1 million lives annually. Here is one tip that can help prevent heart disease: Select whole grains when choosing foods to eat. Stay tuned this month for more information in our Sunday bulletins for simple tips to keep our hearts healthy.

Whole grains are good sources of fiber and other nutrients that play a role in regulating blood pressure and heart health. You can increase the amount of whole grains in a heart-healthy diet by making simple substitutions for refined grain products. Or try a new whole grain, such as whole-grain farro, quinoa or barley.

#### **Grains to choose:**

- Whole-wheat flour
- Whole-grain bread, preferably 100% whole-wheat or 100% whole-grain
- High-fiber cereal with 5 grams or more of fiber per serving
- Whole grains such as brown rice, barley and buckwheat (kasha)
- Whole-grain pasta
- Oatmeal – steel-cut or regular

#### **Grains to limit or avoid:**

- White, refined flour
- White bread
- Muffins
- Frozen waffles
- Corn bread
- Doughnuts
- Biscuits
- Quick breads
- Cakes
- Pies
- Egg noodles
- Buttered popcorn
- High-fat snack crackers

*Adapted from mayoclinic.org*

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#### **Library News:**

A new resource is available on-line for families from the publishing arm of the ELCA, Augsburg Fortress. The Values Project is a year-long initiative designed to equip families to raise children who thrive emotionally, socially and spiritually. Get inspiration, practical ideas, family activities and parenting tips from a network of seasoned parents and faith leaders, because it takes a village to raise a good human. Each month explores a different value, honesty, loyalty, creativity, kindness and more.

To access this resource, go online to [blog.beamingbooks.com](http://blog.beamingbooks.com), and find blog posts for the month. You can also sign up to receive the monthly installment via email. Other helpful resource materials can also be found at the site.

Families can also help themselves to the Spark magazine for young children available quarterly at church. The library also has a new set of Berenstain Bears books for children to enjoy.



## "Children First" Christian Preschool Update

We are one month into a new year with only four months left of Preschool. Wow, does time fly quickly! January classroom themes included: Snow and Polar Animals, A, B, C's/1,2,3's, Ocean Fun and Dinosaurs. Please check out our artwork hanging in the education wing hallways. February fun is planned with Dental Health, Valentine's/Friends, and "I Love to Read" weeks. We are looking for volunteers to come into the classrooms and read to the preschoolers. Contact teachers, April Erpelding or Jessica Gustafson, if you are interested in volunteering your time and talents!

Thank you to everyone contributing to the 2017-18 Gifting Campaign. This campaign is our main source of fundraising for "Children First." Contributions support our outreach ministry partnership with Little Falls Health Services/Bridgeway Estates. We use the contributions to pay for bussing along with shared materials and art supplies. The residents look forward each month to our arrival. They enjoy the relationship-building and time they spend with the preschoolers. Thrivent Action Team® opportunities along with a small amount of online homework have also provided "Children First" with funds this past year. If you are a Thrivent member who would like to support "Children First" with an Action Team opportunity please contact Gail.

"Children First" Christian Preschool continues to collect Coborn's/Cashwise points/dollars. These points are electronically collected if you are a "MORE Rewards" member at Coborn's/Cashwise. Points are gathered when you purchase Food Club brand or other Coborn's branded products and Coborn's then totals these points and distributes cash to support our Preschool. Sign up for "MORE Rewards" at any Coborn's or Cashwise store or <https://www.coborns.com/>. Once you sign up or if you are already a member, login and choose "Manage My Membership." Search "Children

First" Christian Preschool, move the toggle switch to green and select "done."

Planning for the 2018-19 Preschool year is underway. Current preschool families and First Lutheran Church members should watch for registration forms in late February early March with Community Registration to begin the middle of March. Visitors are always welcome. Please contact Gail or the church office if you are interested or would like more information. Registration for the current 2017-18 Preschool year continues as well. Families interested in the "Children First" program may register and begin attending anytime throughout the preschool year. Families choosing to add "Friday Friends" class should contact staff and may begin anytime. Registration forms are available on the counter in the First Lutheran Church gathering space or by calling the church office (320) 632-6667.

Each new day brings the gift of life and learning from God who created us. Each new day brings smiles and laughter from the some of the youngest in our midst. Thank you, Preschool families, for sharing your children with us. Our hope is that the gifts we share with them will be a lifetime of learning and God's love. Blessings!

Yours in Christ's Service,

Gail Hittesdorf, Director

*"Teach a child how he should live, and he will remember it all his life" Proverbs 22:6*







## News of the Family



Benson Patrick Peine and Lenna Carrie Peine, son and daughter of Alex and Stephanie Peine were baptized on January 14.

Welcome to the family of God!



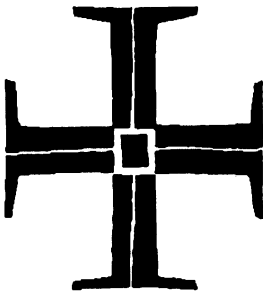
Fern Post died on January 23. Her funeral service was January 27 at St. Otto's Chapel. May God grant peace and comfort to her family and friends.



### Worship Schedule

- 8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship using a variety of liturgical settings.
- 9:35 a.m. Sunday School
- 10:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship led by a Praise Band

Holy Communion at all Sunday services.



Items for the **March NEWSLETTER** are due on **February 20, 2018!**