

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Ministers: All God's People at FLC

Jake Dyrhaug, Pastor

FIRST



“Servants of All”

2100 Riverview Drive

Little Falls, MN 56345

(320) 632-6667

(320) 632-1050 Fax

firstserv@flclittlefalls.org

www.flclittlefalls.org

March 2018, Newsletter

March 5, 2018

Holy Week and Easter Worship and Activities

March 25—Palm Sunday

Hosanna!

8:30 a.m. Worship and Holy Communion

9:35 a.m. Sunday School

10:30 a.m. Worship and Holy Communion

March 29—Maundy Thursday

The service of Christ: footwashing and meal

7:00 p.m. – Holy Communion with footwashing
and second grade students receive
communion

March 30—Good Friday

The passion and death of Christ

1:00 p.m. – Good Friday Tenebrae Worship

7:00 p.m. – Good Friday Tenebrae Worship

March 31—Saturday

9:30-11:30 a.m. – Easter Eggstravaganza!

*special event for youth age 3 thru second grade
see page 9 for more information*

April 1—The Resurrection of our Lord

The resurrection of Jesus is announced

7:30 a.m. – Sunrise Holy Communion

8:30-10:00 a.m. – Easter Breakfast

10:30 a.m. – Festival Holy Communion

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So who was St. Patrick? Every year on March 17th most in America honor St. Patrick's Day. That is the day said to be the date of his death, most likely in 461 A.D. Lutherans don't pray to the saints, but they have always honored them as people who have lived out their faith in awesome ways, amazing people who lived courageously as followers of Christ. St. Patrick is one of them. I've been recently reading the bestseller, How the Irish Saved Civilization, by Thomas Cahill—a kind American-Irishman lent it to me to read. My Irish sister-in-law, Eileen, loves the fact that through a couple of those DNA kits, we Norwegian-American Dyrhaugs figured out that we're actually part Irish.

St. Patrick was born in Roman Britain, and his father was a deacon, his grandfather a priest (Roman Catholic priests were able to marry up until the 11th century). At the age of 16 Patrick was captured by a group of Irish pirates. The raiders brought him back to Ireland where he was held captive for six years. Fleeing his master, he travelled to a port 200 miles away and persuaded the captain to take him. He ended up becoming a priest himself back in Britain and would return to Ireland as a Christian missionary to continue preaching the gospel and growing the church among the rough crowd of pagans there. He was eventually appointed bishop. His life served to see thousands of people baptized. This was not always a safe place to be, as you can imagine. Many are the priests and bishops, including a bishop of Sweden, who were cut down with a sword. Not all the people were so open to the Christian message. In the year of his death, likely in 461 A.D., the Roman Empire was falling apart in chaos as hordes of barbarians poured in. It is said that Ireland was one of the only places where the books and the arts were not destroyed, and eventually learning and culture went out from there as Europe began its long period of the "Dark Ages" until the Middle Ages. That's why it's said the Irish saved civilization. My own Scandinavian ancestors would likely had never become Christians were it not for the Irish monks who were taken back to

Norway and Sweden. I tell that to my sister-in-law all the time.

One of my favorite prayers is attributed to St. Patrick of St. Patrick's Day—written by this man I'd heard about for years but didn't know much about until the last few...

Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,

Christ when I arise. Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth

Of everyone who speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that

Hears me. I arise today.

Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity, through belief in the Threeness,

Through confession of the oneness,

Of the Creator of Creation.

(How the Irish Saved Civilization, Anchor Books, New York, p. 1190)

As Christ-followers have done for centuries, we will gather in worship and prayer for Holy Week. Maundy Thursday service will be at 7:00 p.m., and Good Friday services will be 1:00 and 7:00 p.m. As we will celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ of the Triune God, we will have services Easter Morning at 7:30 and 10:30 a.m., with an Easter breakfast served in between.

Joy and Peace!

Pastor Jake Dyrhaug



A word from Diana:

Can you believe that it's already Lent? Lent is often a time of fasting and prayer, and I'm sure some of you have chosen to give things up for the time of lent (I always used to give up candy as a child/teenager).

However, when I was a child, I had no idea why we were giving things up. In my mind, it just happened, and Lent seemed like a sorrowful time. To me, it was almost like a short diet that we went on, somehow having to do with Jesus, but the connection was not quite made. Only when I grew older did I realize that I was giving something up, not to simply diet or try to be healthier for a short amount of time, but to sacrifice something because Jesus did that same thing for us. I realized that Lent is not necessarily supposed to be a time of sorrow and sadness, but a time of thanksgiving and awe for all that Christ did for us.

If you choose to give something up for lent this year, all the power to you, it is a fantastic way to reflect on our Christian journeys. However, if you haven't decided to give something up, I challenge you to add something on. Go online to <http://www.loveyourstreets.org.uk/do1nicething-lent.html>, you will find a different activity you can do each day in Lent, to spread the joy and message of Christ to people who least expect it. One of the things that caught my eye was simply smiling at people in other cars when you're driving, to create a more peaceful road that people often expect to be filled with angry drivers. Or, maybe instead of giving up something physical, you give up something emotional, such as bitterness or anger, and instead add forgiveness and peace into your life. This way, you can practice these things and continue to have them in your life after Lent ends.

Whatever you do, remember the reason for the season. I know, I'm starting to sound Christmassy here. But so often do we go through life in a haze, just from muscle memory and habit. Let's remember to give a reason for why we fast, praise, and share the love of God with others. Let's tell our children about Christ's journey and relate it to our own. Let's grow with one another in faith, whether it's through Sunday services or

Wednesday soup suppers or fundraisers. Get involved, smile at others, and praise God, for Lent is about bringing the joy of Christ's resurrection to others and spreading His light on the path we walk.

1 Corinthians 3:11 says "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." Together, let's build a foundation in Christ and support others the way God supports us and lifts us up. Amen!

Diana Kempenich
Youth & Family Ministry

New Member Group

If you or someone you know would like to become a member of First Lutheran, we are preparing for the next new member group. We have set aside a time for the group to meet; we ask that you attend this session. The group will meet on Tuesday evening; April 17 at 6:30 p.m. New members will be received in worship on Sunday, April 22.

The group session is meant to help new members to find their place in the mission of the congregation, get to know others in the congregation, and discuss the foundations of the faith we share. Current members are encouraged to attend and make a new friend.

If God is calling you to membership at First Lutheran, this session is for you. For more information, or to sign up for the group, please call the church office at 632-6667.



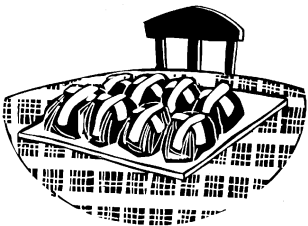


Eco-Palms for Palm Sunday Worship March 25

One small way that First Lutheran practices stewardship is through the purchase of Eco-Palms. Traditional harvesting of palms in Mexico and Guatemala has contributed to destruction of the forest and harm to the indigenous communities. Eco-Palms are harvested in a way that preserves the trees and also gives the workers a fair wage. May God bless the hands that do this work.

Easter Flowers

Share in the Spirit of Easter by sharing your Easter flowers (for example: lilies, tulips, etc.) with your First Lutheran family. The flowers may be given in remembrance of a loved one or in celebration of a special event or person. Flowers may be dropped off in the Library on Holy Saturday. Please label your flowers. If you would like a remembrance noted in the bulletin regarding your flowers, please call the church office by Monday, March 26.



Easter Breakfast

Come and enjoy the fellowship of Easter Breakfast on Sunday, April 1, from 8:30-10:00 a.m. A free-will offering will be received. Thanks for your support! Watch for more information and ways that you can assist with this traditional event. To offer your assistance, contact the church office.

Lent 2018

For this year's mid-week worship services, we gather for soup and worship using Holden Evening Prayer. Come between 5:30-6:45 p.m. to share fellowship over a simple bowl of soup and slice of bread, worship is at 7:00 p.m. Freewill offerings received at the suppers support Oasis Central Minnesota and First's youth who are attending the ELCA National Youth Gathering in Houston this summer. Thank you to all who have already volunteered to provide soup or help with serving and cleanup. If you would like to lend a hand, please see the weekly board in the gathering space or contact Gail Hittesdorf, 320-291-4698 or the church office.

Who is My Neighbor? Opportunity Baskets of Promise for Lutheran World Relief

This Lent we will 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 assembled 80+ Personal Care Kits during Lent. Let's increase that number this year! Each kit contains:

Two Bars of soap, 4-5 ounce, any brand in original wrapping

One Bath towel, lightweight, 52"X27" max, dark color is best

One Toothbrush, adult size, in original packaging

Comb

Nail clippers, metal, attached file optional

When you are at church you will see the contributions growing in the basket in the gathering space. Lutheran World Relief will distribute the assembled kits to people around the world who lack even the most basic needs. Thank you for providing a means to preserve dignity and give hope to others.

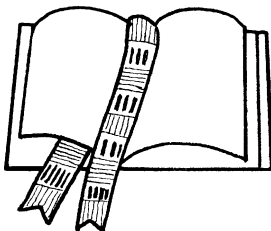
Adult Opportunities:

Men's Bible Study Breakfast

All are welcome to come for breakfast and Bible study! We meet Wednesdays, March 14 and 28 at 7:00 a.m. Come when you can, leave when you must!

Martha Circle

The Martha Circle will meet Monday, March 12, at 9:30 a.m. at the church.



World Day of Prayer

Friday, March 2, 1:00 p.m.

“All God’s Creation is Very Good!”

First Lutheran Church hosts the World Day of Prayer service in Little Falls on Friday, March 2 at 1:00 p.m. All men, women in the community are welcome.

This year’s service is prepared by the women of Suriname and based on Genesis 1, the creation story.

World Day of Prayer is a worldwide ecumenical movement of Christians from many traditions who come together to observe a common day of prayer each year on the first Friday in March. World Day of Prayer services begin at sunrise in the Pacific and follow the sun across the globe on this day of celebration. Bring a friend or two and come for worship. For more info, contact the church office.

Book Club

All adult readers are welcome to read with this group. The March selection is Lilac Girls by Martha Hall Kelly. Readers, please secure your own copy of the book. The group meets on Tuesday, March 27 at 7:00 p.m. in the church library to discuss the book.

Thank you!

Thank you to all who have designated their Thrivent Choice dollars to First Lutheran Church and to “Children First” Christian Preschool. We have seen an increase in the number of Thrivent members who are eligible to donate these funds, and an increase in the amount. **Reminder:** March 31 is the last date to designate Thrivent Choice @ dollars from 2017. Please call the church office if you need assistance with this or have questions. Thank you for putting your Thrivent Choice dollars to work in mission and ministry at First Lutheran!

Council Highlights

- Welcomed new council members: Tifanii Dahl and Barb Stumpf, each serving a three-year term, and Cindi Habas who is serving a second three-year term.
- Council members read and signed the 2018 Group Covenant.
- Committed to a gift of support of \$1,000 to Oasis Central Minnesota for an initiative to address homeless in Morrison County. The council agreed to raise these funds in addition to the 2018 Mission Plan.
- Heard that three goals were identified at the recent Leadership Retreat held at Luther Crest Bible Camp:
 - a. Generous giving, sharing time, treasure and talent
 - b. To infuse the vibrant sense of calling with space enhancement
 - c. Grow discipleship and significant relational groups



February was Heart Month, we were encouraged to do activities that help our hearts in a physical way. This month I encourage you to look at the spiritual condition of your heart, treat

your heart in a spiritual way, and lose what weighs you down. This devotion was a nice reminder of how to keep our hearts healthy for God.

What is the Condition of Your Heart?

I'm outside on a cool, beautiful day enjoying the almost Fall-like weather. Two devotionals I read this earlier morning had to do with the condition of our heart.

Proverbs 4:23 tells us "Above all else guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." And Jesus tells us in Matthew 22:36-40 that the greatest commandment is 'to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul mind and strength.'

As I meditated on these biblical truths this morning, here's what came to mind – I can only love God fully if my heart is in really great condition. If it's bruised or I'm carrying a spirit of unforgiveness or if there is some other issue of my heart that is weighing me down, it's going to be hard for me to pour out my heart and soul to God, in love.

So, it's important for me to regularly search my heart to see if there are any negative emotions lurking there. If there are, I do my best to address them, with God's help. I ask Him to help me deal with them... and to eventually take them from me so that I can have a pure heart, a heart full of love. Then, I'm best able to love God and to love others.

I encourage you to continually evaluate your heart. Ask God to give you courage and to help you do this with honesty. And ask him to give you the grace to deal with any negative emotions you find. Then, what comes out of your heart – to God, and to others – will be love.

Adapted from a devotion by Dale Fletcher at Faithandhealthconnection.org September 23, 2017



Welcome!

First Lutheran is blessed with many young families and children—a gift from God! We are thankful for the presence of children and seek to provide a place of nurture, safety and caring for people of all ages and especially the little ones among us.

As a church family, we want to provide safe, quality care for these precious little ones in the Child Care Space on Sunday mornings and at other events. We are seeking candidates to serve as Child Care Attendant. The qualified person must be 18 years of age or older, have previous child care experience, and possess excellent interpersonal and communication skills. If you or someone you know is interested in serving in this position, please submit your resumé to the church office. For a complete ministry description, please ask in the church office, 632-6667.

Game Night
Sunday, March 25, 4:30-6:30 p.m.
at Great River Arts

Bring a friend and your favorite board game (or play one that is provided) and come to GRA for games and fellowship. The Congregational Life Team will provide the snacks, coffee, water, lemonade and juice. Adults may purchase beer or wine. For more information, contact Cassie Neumann at 218-831-0554.



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:

- ✦ One in 10 Minnesotans or more than 500,000 state residents, experience food insecurity on a regular basis.
- ✦ More than 49 million Americans, including more than 16 million children, live in households that do not have consistent access to nutritious food. That is the equivalent of the populations of California and Ohio going hungry.
- ✦ In 2011, 900,000 veterans (not including homeless vets) relied on the SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) to provide food for their families.
- ✦ Of the families with children suffering from food insecurity and hunger in the US in 2012, 68 percent contained at least one adult working full-time, 10 percent had at least one adult working part-time, 7 percent had an unemployed adult actively looking for work, and 7 percent were headed by an adult with a disability.
- ✦ There were more than 3 million visits to Minnesota food shelves each year from 2011 to 2016, visits in 2017 were on pace to meet or exceed this number
- ✦ In 2016, 10% of all Minnesotans and almost 12.7% of Minnesota kids lived below the poverty level.
- ✦ During the 2013 Legislative session, a group of Minnesota lawmakers challenged one another to try to eat for a week on the average SNAP budget of \$1.29 per meal. Not one of them could do it.
- ✦ Morrison County Food Shelf serves an average of 1160 individuals or 406 families each month.
- ✦ 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.

“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, call 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*

"Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings from "Children First,"

Spring is right around the corner. February learning experiences and themes included: Color Fun, Dental Health, Valentines and Friends, America and "I Love to Read". Thank you to Heather and friends for our new toothbrushes! We were busy creating artwork and experimenting in science/math. Be sure to check out Preschool artwork/experiments hanging in the Education wing hallways. "Children First" has a Facebook page! "Like" us at Children First Christian Preschool. We use Facebook as a communication tool to share classroom activities with family and friends. The topics for March learning experiences will be Zoo, Weather, Holy Week and Easter. "Children First" Christian Preschool will not have school on March 30 and April 2 for Easter break.

Please remind Bridge Way and Little Falls Health Services residents and friends of our visit on Thursday, March 8. The children look forward to our visits and hope everyone will come see us! Thank you again to Andy's Charter Service for bussing our children!

Registration for the 2018/19 Preschool year (Sept.-May) begins March 11 for current preschool families and First Lutheran Church members. Community registration begins March 25. A \$60.00 nonrefundable registration fee and the yellow registration form is required to hold your place. Registration forms will be sent home in cubbies March 8 to all current Preschool families and will be available on March 11, in the First Lutheran Church Gathering Space for First members. A link to the registration form will also be available on the First Lutheran Church website www.flclittlefalls.org on the Preschool page. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis.

NEW this year, all returning Preschoolers and First Lutheran Church members who register their child *and* recommend a new preschooler, who also registers and attends preschool for the 2018/19 preschool year will receive free tuition for the month of December!

Class offerings (mornings) are:

"Jesus' Gems" (4 year old's-PreKindergarten) meet on Monday/ Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday

"Noah's Animals" (33 months-3 year old's) meet on Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday

"Friday Friends" (33 months-5 year old's) meet Friday morning - Friday Friends class is an additional class to the Jesus' Gems and Noah's Animals to create a three-day Preschool week.

All classes meet from 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. We are pleased to announce that our tuition remains the same as the past year! Tuition is \$85.00 per month with an additional \$35.00 per month to add Friday Friends. You may register throughout the year (Sept.-May) pending class openings.

"Children First" is ready to partner with families to build and strengthen academic, physical, social emotional and spiritual growth of children. Drop-in classroom visits are welcomed. Planned visits are preferred so we can include your Preschooler in class projects and activities. Planned visits or registration questions may be directed to Gail Hittesdorf, Director, at 632-6667 or 320-291-4698, or by email childrenfirst@flclittlefalls.org.

Thank you to First Lutheran Church members and Preschool families for your generous monetary donations to our Gifting Campaign. We also appreciate all who take time to volunteer in/out of our classrooms. Time is a wonderful gift. Please keep us in your prayers for the continued success in the Preschool ministry and education. We appreciate everyone's support!

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*

Confirmation Ministries

Second Grade: the second session on Holy Communion, “The Welcome Table” is Sunday, March 4 at 2:00 p.m. This class is for second graders and their parents. Students who wish to receive communion as a class can plan to do this at Maundy Thursday worship on March 29 at 7:00 p.m. Please call the church office for more information.

Grades Seven and Eight: Classes will not meet during Lent. Class sessions resume on Wednesday, April 4.

Mentor Program: Students in grades eight are beginning their mentor relationships. Please keep the students and mentors in your prayers.

Vacation Bible School 2018 August 6-10

It’s time to begin planning for VBS! This year we will experience “Shipwrecked—Rescued by Jesus” where kids will discover that Jesus carries them through life’s storms. Please give prayerful consideration to your call to this ministry opportunity. Many adult hands are necessary to have a fun-filled week of caring, sharing, and personal spiritual growth. To learn more, contact the church office.

Sunday School News

Preschool Sunday School (Ages 3-PreK) continues to meet in the Ruth/Naomi room (south education wing) from 9:35-10:20 a.m. each Sunday. Thank you to all who assist with this class, you are appreciated!

TREK Rotation (Kindergarten-5th Grade) Students began a new rotation “The Lord’s Supper” on Sunday, March 11. For more information about TREK Rotation, or to volunteer to lead a station, contact the church office.

Youth in Grades 6-8 and 9-12 meet separately each Sunday for lessons, and fun!

If you have questions or would like to volunteer, contact 632-6667.

Home Delivered Meals

First Lutheran participates with other congregations and organizations in Little Falls to deliver meals to homebound people each weekday. The rotation has First delivering meals about five weeks each year. Our next scheduled delivery is Monday-Wednesday-Friday, March 26-28-30. If you or someone you know can give an hour or so to deliver meals, please contact the church office. Thank you!

Pizza Ranch Tip Night Fundraiser Monday, March 5

Tip Night at Pizza Ranch is Monday, March 5 from 4:30-7:30 p.m. You can enjoy a meal at Pizza Ranch and raise funds for youth ministry at First Lutheran at the same time. You eat the pizza, we’ll supply workers, and Pizza Ranch donates a percentage of the night’s receipts to First Lutheran Church youth ministry—what a great deal! Thanks for your support.



Spring Picnic Lunch and Auction Sunday, April 8, 11:45 a.m.

Plan to attend this fun event in support of the nine youth and two adults who will attend the 2018 ELCA National Youth Gathering in Houston this summer. You can enjoy a lunch served by the youth and stay for the auction of donated items while you have dessert. There will be both live and silent auction items that will go to the highest bidder. Some of the items available are: donated hours of yard work or housework, dinner for four, mystery dinner, horse and buggy ride and pie at Jordie’s Café, pontoon dinner cruise, handyman for a day, homemade pies, and much more.

If you have an item or service to donate, please contact Debra Yliniemi-Ahlin, 632-3951, or the church office.

News of the Family



Henry William Barton, son of Dustin and Becky Barton was baptized on February 25.

Hailey Rae Reese, daughter of Ashley and Travis Reese was baptized on February 25.

Welcome to the kingdom!



“Spring Ahead”

***Daylight Savings Time
begins on SUNDAY, MARCH 11***

Daylight Savings Time begins earlier than in the past. Remember to set your clocks *ahead* one hour on Saturday evening, March 10 – then you’ll be on time for church on Sunday, March 11! 😊

Sunday Worship Schedule

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

Holy Communion is served at all services.

Come and See!

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