

Holy Week and Easter Worship and Activities

March 28—Palm Sunday

Hosanna!

8:00 a.m. Holy Communion

9:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship
and Holy Communion

10:45 a.m. Holy Communion

April 1—Maundy Thursday

The service of Christ: footwashing and meal

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

April 2—Good Friday

The passion and death of Christ according to John

1:00 p.m. – Good Friday Worship

7:00 p.m. – Tenebrae Service

April 3—Saturday

9:30-11:30 a.m. – Easter Eggstravaganza
special event for kids age 3 thru second grade
see page 9 for more information

April 4—The Resurrection of our Lord

The resurrection of Jesus is announced

7:00 a.m. – Sunrise Holy Communion

8:00-9:30 a.m. – Easter Breakfast

10:00 a.m. – Holy Communion

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Pastor Dave's Article

The name April probably derives from the Latin word "*aperire*" which means "*to open*," a possible reference to the many plants that bud and are opening at this time of year. But there can be another reference to our God, who is "open" to us and to hearing our prayers.

April is typically the month that Easter falls in! At Easter, we celebrate the open tomb and that Jesus is no longer dead, but alive!

Psalm 40 says: "*Sacrifice and offering you do not desire, but you have given me an open ear.*" We can call upon our Lord God at anytime day or night and he will hear us and listen. At times, we may not think that God answers our prayers. However, He always does. While he may not answer them they way we desire, He still answers the way that is best for us and for the world.

Some people I know pray for everything in their lives – even to find a convenient parking spot. Yes, our Lord does tell us to come to Him for all our needs and desires. I, for one, do not pray for parking spots. Or for things that might seem to be minor or just plain silly. But the one thing I do pray for constantly is you!

In our Office Staff team meetings each week, we offer prayers for you individually and collectively as a congregation as a part of the Body of Christ. We are following the example from 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, "*We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father.*" And I myself follow Paul's example from Romans 1:9 "*For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers.*" Yes, I do pray for each of you by name on a daily basis. In addition, we have a small group of individuals who gather together on Monday mornings in our prayer room and offer prayers on behalf of many.

Please let us know of any specific things we can lift up in prayer for you.

Finally I invite you to be open to offering of prayers and join in praying for one another! 2 Corinthians 1 invites you also "*By your prayers, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.*"

Blessing, Peace and Prayers!
See you in Church,

Pastor Dave



Council Highlights

- Three blue directional signs have been purchased and placed along the highway.
- Commission for Mission hosts this year's Easter breakfast.
- Rev. Scott Jacob, Assistant to the Bishop, NE MN Synod, leads worship at First on Sunday, April 18.
- Commission for Worship and Congregational Life and First's Via de Cristo group will lead worship on Sunday, April 25.
- Planning is underway for a Special Congregational Meeting and potluck meal on Sunday, May 23.

2010

First Lutheran Church Leadership Retreat

On Saturday, February 27, 36 members and friends of First gathered at First Lutheran Church in Brainerd for a day of fellowship and conversation. Rev. Todd Nelson of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in New Ulm facilitated the discussion of our foundation as a congregation, and where God is leading us.

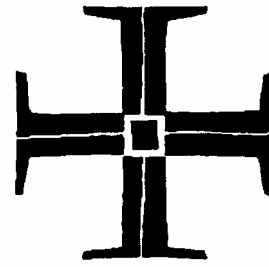
Throughout our discussion we reflected on the congregation's existing purpose, vision, and mission statements (see the box on this page) and how these statements are foundational for the ministry God has for us through this place called First Lutheran.

You are invited to add your thoughts to the conversation by checking out the bulletin board in the gathering space. Some questions to consider are:

- + What servant gifts does First provide to the community?
- + What servant gifts are offered by individuals at First?
- + Who or what are the people, events, times, or things in which we rejoice?
- + How are you a "servant of all" at First, in the community, and beyond?
- + What strengths can you identify at First that provide a foundation and help us to proclaim, provide and prepare?

As we move forward in ministry as a congregation, may we be focused on God's purpose, vision, and mission. Watch for First Lutheran's mission statements that remind us of why we are here and where God is leading us. If you have suggestions regarding our ministry together, please contact Council President, Paula Monahan, or Pastor Parish Relations Team chair, Doug Dahlberg.

Serving together as "First...Servants of All."



First Lutheran Church

PURPOSE: *(Why are we 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" (II 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.



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 29.



Easter Breakfast

Come and enjoy the fellowship of Easter Breakfast on Sunday, April 4, from 8:00-9:30 a.m. A free-will offering will be received for mission causes. We are serving a hot breakfast of eggs, meat, fruit, pancakes, juice, milk and coffee. Thanks for your support! For more information, contact coordinator, Andrea Lauer, at 584-8290.

Lenten Worship and Soup Suppers

This year during Lent we gathered together with the congregation at First United Church to worship and lift our voices in "One Song." Our thanks to Pastor Jobeth Marshall and the congregation at First United for graciously welcoming us to their facility and journeying with us through the Lenten season.

Thank you to all who shared in the fellowship of Lenten soup suppers. Whether you provided soup or food items, worked in the kitchen, or came to share a simple meal, all is appreciated. Thanks to this year's coordinator, Sarah Gustner. The freewill offering received at each supper supports mission causes.

If you have feedback about this shared worship and fellowship time, please contact Pastor Dave Sperstad. Thank you!

Thank You! Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) Hymnals

Thank you to all who have provided the gift of a hymnal, we have had a tremendous response! We have been able to purchase a few more hymnals than planned because of your enthusiasm. This hymnal replaces the green LBW and the blue WOV hymnals. The congregation began using the new hymnals and learning a new worship setting during Lent. You will find that some of our well-loved service settings remain in the new hymnal as well as many hymn favorites, both old and new. Persons wishing to provide a \$20 donation toward the purchase of a hymnal are still welcome to do so. If desired, you may designate your gift in honor or remembrance of a loved one or event. Your donation will be acknowledged on a bookplate inside the front cover of the hymnal. Envelopes are available in the church office for this purpose. Please write 'ELW' in the memo line of your check. Let's worship together!

2010 NE MN Synod Assembly
"The Working Word"
April 23-25

Learning and Sharing Day
Saturday, April 24

10:00 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.

Cragun's Conference Center, Brainerd

First Lutheran Church voting members and Pastor Dave will attend the Northeast Minnesota Synod Assembly Friday-Sunday, April 23-25. All are welcome to attend the Learning and Sharing Day on Saturday. This year's focus will be on "The Working Word."

You will enjoy hearing keynote speaker, Dr. Rolf Jacobson, an articulate, engaging, and popular speaker who will flesh out how God works the Word in us for God's good pleasure.

This working of the Word through us finds its shape in regular prayer, weekly worship, daily Bible reading, in our serving, in our relationships, and in our giving. Learning and Sharing Day workshop leaders include: Dr. Rolf Jacobson, Associate Professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary, Dr. Richard Nysse, Professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary, NE MN Synod Bishop Tom Aitken, Dr. Walter May, Executive Assistant to ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, and more.

First's quilters are donating a quilt to the silent auction. Available again this year is The Marketplace, a Silent Auction of new items and services, if you have an item or service to donate, please contact the church office. All proceeds from both auctions will benefit ELCA World Hunger Appeal.

Those wishing to attend the Saturday event only please register in the church office; First Lutheran will cover the cost of registration. Registration includes lunch and materials. Plan to attend and see the many ways the Word is at work in our synod.

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Lutheran Disaster Response: Haiti

On January 12, a magnitude 7.0 earthquake rocked the island country of Haiti. About 3 million lives are directly affected by this disaster. ELCA Disaster Response continues working through long-standing partnerships on the ground to provide food, water, shelter and medical supplies. As of February 24, the ELCA received \$5.8 million in financial gifts for Haiti disaster relief. First Lutheran members generously contributed over \$1,000 to this cause. Designated gifts to LDR are given 100% for immediate and long-term recovery. Thank you for your faithful response to this great need!

Fair Trade

Thank you for your ongoing support of the fair trade products in use at First (coffee) and purchased for your own home use (coffee, tea, chocolate, cocoa, nuts, cranberries). Products available for purchase in the church office provide needed income to those who labor to produce them. Thank you!

Oasis/Share A Meal

First Lutheran Church has provided the meal site to O/SAM as part of our mission for 14 years. Commissions take turns hosting one meal per quarter with the help of congregation members. First has also sponsored a Paint A Thon team for many years. If you would like to get involved in this valuable, ongoing community ministry please contact the church office at 632-6667.

Thank You

Thank you for the way you helped our family touch the lives of people during our mission trip to Jamaica. Together alongside thirteen other teammates, our mission was to bring the Lord to the hearts of our brothers and sisters in Jamaica. Again thank you, and we will celebrate this experience until we are able to return again.

God's blessing,
Adam, Heather and Makyla Klever

**40th Anniversary
Earth Day:
Caring for Creation
Tuesday, April 22,
2010**



Earth Day, officially April 22, is celebrated globally by thousands of communities as a collective expression of our hopes and dreams for a better world. The “Green Generation” campaign began in 2009 and culminates on the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, April 22, 2010.

In all the stories of Jesus feeding a hungry crowd of 5000, God’s abundance is demonstrated when just a small quantity of food becomes a feast shared by many. Again and again, our faith teaches us that God’s abundance is given for all to share, yet in our stewardship of creation we often fail to consider how our use of resources will affect other people in our world and the generations who will come after us.

Earth Day is a day to reflect on how we all can be effective stewards of God’s creation and what role we as individuals and as a spiritual group can play in addressing this worldwide problem.

Here are a few ways you can make a difference:

- *Don’t drink bottled water!* Fill a re-usable container with tap water.
- *Plant a tree!* Trees increase levels of oxygen in the air and filter out some of the pollutants.
- *Bring your own bag!* Use a cloth bag or reuse a bag when shopping. Local stores have re-usable bags available for about \$1.00.
- *Read to a child!* Help educate future care givers of the earth.
Read an environmentally focused book such as [The Lorax](#).
- *Speak to your elected leaders!* Call, visit, write, or e-mail your leaders and let them know you’re concerned about stewardship of creation.

- *Start a compost pile!* Composting organic wastes reduces the amount of garbage produced by your household by as much as a third.
- *Don’t drive!* Walk, bike, run, skate, or carpool. First Lutheran will host “Ride a Bike to Church” day on Sunday, June 6.
- *Get a recycling bin!* Reduce, reuse and recycle materials used both at home, at work and at church.
- *Replace a light bulb!* Exchange an incandescent bulb with a compact fluorescent bulb. They last ten times longer and use only one-fourth of the energy.
- *Use your own mug!* When you buy coffee, bring your own mug. Each year Americans throw away 23 billion Styrofoam cups. 500 years from now, the foam cup you used this morning will be sitting in a landfill!
- *Visit the Farmer’s Market!* Buy locally produced foods instead of goods that are trucked in.

Check out the Earth Day web-site at www.earthday.net for more information. Take the Ecological Footprint Quiz and find out how many planets would be needed to sustain life if everyone on earth lived as you do!

Consider this...

Abundant Living: As you welcome Christ into your life, is your shout of “Hosanna!” a message that carries Jesus’ hope for a cleansed and forgiven Earth? Americans consume 32 times more than people in the developing world. That means more greenhouse gases, more waste and greater economic inequalities.

Over the last 30 years, U.S. material consumption increased 57 percent. In 1992-2000, raw material usage increased by more than one third. In 2002, the United States used a total of 22.7 metric tons of stuff per person, 50 percent more than Europe.

Identify stuff in your life that is unnecessary or can be reused or borrowed from within your community.

Reprinted from Living Earth, ELCA web devotions, 2008.

Adult Opportunities

April Women's Circles "To God's Beloved"

**Paul's Letter to the Romans
Hospitality: Holy Hospitality
Romans 12:1-2**

Martha Circle

The Martha Circle will meet Monday, April 19, at 1:30 p.m. Hostess is Betty Bengtson.

Ruth Circle

The Ruth Circle will meet Wednesday, April 21, at 2:00 p.m. at the church.

Mission Circle of Joy

The Circle of Joy will meet Tuesday, April 27, at 9:00 a.m.



Adult Studies and Events

Cornerstones Potluck (Seniors age 55 and better)

Are you interested in participating in senior fellowship? Bring a friend and a food item to share and come for potluck lunch on Tuesday, April 20, at 11:30 a.m. We'll gather in Stoltz Hall to share food and conversation.

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.

Conversation with NE MN Synod Staff

Rev. Scott Jacob, Assistant to the Bishop, NE MN Synod, leads worship at First on Sunday, April 18. Pastor Jacob plans to be in Little Falls on Saturday evening, April 17. The church council invites anyone interested to a "dutch treat" dinner and informal conversation with Pastor Jacob on Saturday evening. Please call the church office to RSVP if you would like to attend so that reservations may be made. All are welcome!

Lutheran Marriage Encounter: A New Beginning

Give your marriage a new life with a Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekend. A weekend includes two nights and five meals in a comfortable hotel, from Friday at 7:00 p.m. to Sunday at 5:00 p.m. Four presenting couples, including a Lutheran clergy couple, give a series of presentations followed by questions you and your spouse discuss in the privacy of your hotel room. There is no open sharing. The next LME weekends are April 16-18 in Duluth or April 30-May 2 in Alexandria. For more information, contact Dick and Judy Dehnel at 952-432-3105, or Pete and Phyllis McMahan at 763-561-1575, or visit www.godlovesmarriage.org.



Spring New Member Group

First Lutheran Church's spring New Member Group begins soon. The group will meet on Sunday evenings; April 11 and 18, at 6:30 p.m. New members will be received in worship on Sunday, May 2. First's council and commission members host a new member fellowship meal following worship on May 2.

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.

"Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings from the "Children First" Christian Preschool!

God has blessed "Children First" with awesome experiences throughout the year. Did you see the "Recycled City" that was built in the gathering space at church? What creative children and families!

Thanks to all who volunteered in and out of the classroom this month. If you can assist with projects, read to or spend time with the preschoolers, please let the staff know. All are welcome to share time and talents.

Spring Flower Bulb orders will be taken March 28 –April 13. Speak to a preschool family or a staff member to place your order. Bulbs should arrive in time for Mother's Day. We thank God for each of you and for your support!

We welcome Erin Makela to the preschool staff as a Teacher's Aide. The Noah's Animals (3 yr olds) class has grown to include 17 children, calling for additional staff. Wow, 17 kids, what a blessing God has bestowed on us!

2010/11 enrollment for the community begins April 1.

Class offerings are:

- ☺ Noah's Animals (33 mos-3 year olds) Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00-11:30 a.m.
- ☺ Jesus' Gems (4-5 year olds) meets Monday and Wednesday, 9:00-11:30 a.m. or 12:30-3:00 p.m.
- ☺ Friday Friends (33 mos-5 year olds) for those families wanting a three-day experience for their preschooler.
- ☺ Registration fee is \$50.00 and is non-refundable. Monthly tuition is \$80.00 per month. Friday Friends class will be an additional \$35.00 per month. Brochures and registration forms are available in the First Lutheran Church office or by contacting Gail.

Thank you to all who keep us in prayer and support us in so many ways. Your on-going encouragement is so much appreciated! God's blessings to you all.

Yours in Christ's Service,
Gail Hittesdorf, Director

Confirmation Ministries

Second Grade: The second grade confirmation sessions on First Communion are underway. At their first class students and parents made clay chalices and patens. Students and parents will experience a Christian Seder Meal on Sunday, March 28. Second graders will have their feet washed and receive Holy Communion together on Maundy Thursday.

Seventh Grade: Thirteen seventh grade students are registered for class on the Apostles' Creed at Luther Crest Bible Camp during the week of June 20-25. Pastor Dave leads this class.

Tenth Grade: Mark your calendar for the Means of Grace sessions on Sunday, April 18 and Sunday, April 25. Both sessions meet from 4:00-7:00 p.m. Pastor Dave will teach this class.

Tenth grade students and their mentors are reminded to stay in touch with one another through conversation and prayer.

Sunday School News

- ☺ Easter Sunday, April 4, Family Worship Sunday, all youth worship with their families
- ☺ Sunday, April 18, K-Fifth Grade begin the rotation theme "Jonah." Will you share your time and talent? Sign up to teach a station or just come and get in on the fun!
- ☺ Sunday, May 16, Last Day of Sunday School

The next few weeks are the perfect time to talk with the Sunday morning staff about their teaching experience and prayerfully consider joining our Sunday School Staff for the coming year.



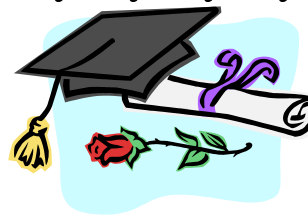
**Vacation Bible School
August 2-6
High Seas Expedition**

Exploring the Mighty Love of God

“Let’s go on a High Seas Expedition!” Explore the Mighty Love of God! Be a “Captain” and help pilot our Vacation Bible School ship as we learn that God’s Word is true. God’s Word is comforting. God’s Word is surprising! God’s Word is life-changing, and God’s Word is for everyone. Share your leadership, excitement, and creative ideas by becoming part of the VBS Leadership team. Planning will begin in April with a meeting each month until we set sail for Vacation Bible School Monday-Friday, August 2-6, 2010 from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon. If you wish to be part of the planning or have questions contact Gail Hittesdorf, 632-2218 or 632-6667.

**Palm Sunday Lefse Sale
March 28, 2010**

Connect with the Scandinavian heritage of FLC by supporting this fundraiser for our youth programs. Thanks to Nan Brossoit for coordinating the lefse making. Make sure to pick up some lefse as you leave worship on Palm Sunday. If you would like to help make lefse on Saturday, March 27, call Nan at 632-6792. Uff da!

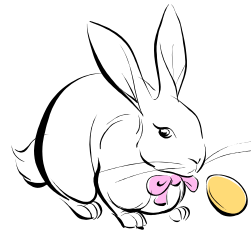


**Graduating
Seniors**

Mark Sunday, May 16 in your planners. We’d like to honor you and your parents at a special service of worship (10:45 a.m.) and brunch (11:45 a.m.)
Watch your mail for more information and an invitation.

Can Care Collection

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



**Easter Eggstravaganza Scramble!
Saturday, April 3, 9:30-11:30 a.m.**

Kids! age 3 through second grade, please come with an adult for this **free** event here at First Lutheran. Experience the Easter story through sight, sound, taste, touch and smell as families work together to complete the Easter Story Challenge. We’ll have games, crafts, lunch, an Easter egg hunt, and hear the Easter story from a special guest. Don’t miss this *egg*citing time!

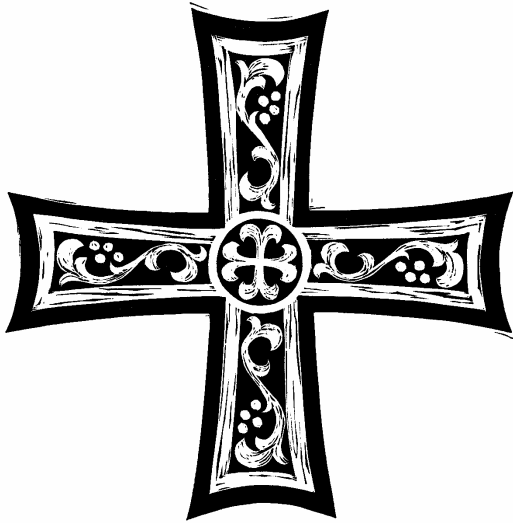
News of the Family:

Baptism

Caley Rose Rakow, daughter of Corey and Heidi Rakow, was baptized on March 21.

Wedding

Tammy Chase and Charles Zwilling were united in marriage on March 6. Congratulations and prayers of blessing as they join their lives together.



Thank you to all who faithfully support Christ's mission at FLC with their mail-in offerings!