

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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“Servants of All”

July, 2009, Newsletter

July 2, 2009



Vacation Bible School

Crocodile Dock!!

**“Where Fearless Kids
Shine God’s Light”
August 3-7, 2009
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon**

VBS is coming! Come on in to the bayou and meet Jacques le Croc and all his friends. Consider bringing a friend or perhaps inviting a family without a church home. VBS is for kids ages 4 through 6th grade. “Crocodile Dock—Where Fearless Kids Shine God’s Light” will assist kids in learning that God is with us...is powerful, does what he says he’ll do, gives us life, and cares for us.

Crocodile Dock has a rotational style where kids move to a variety of bayou locations with their “crew.” Kids and staff will share their VBS experience in worship on Sunday, August 9.

This year’s VBS will be a joint effort of First Lutheran, First United, and Living Hope Churches. To register, your child must be 4 years old (by September 1) through 6th grade. You may pick up a registration form at church or you can find the form on the church web-site, www.flclittlefalls.org. Registration is free; you are encouraged to register your child even if they may not attend every day. Your advance registration helps us have adequate supplies for each child.

If you are interested in helping with VBS, there are many fun ways for you to get involved. You can participate for the full week or for part of the week. Thanks to all who have volunteered to date. See the sign up board in the gathering space or talk to one of the coordinators. More information about VBS decorating is on page 8. Coordinators are Shiloh Hillyer, 320-232-3813, Gail Hittesdorf, 632-2218, and Tracy Wheeler, 749-2440. Come and learn to fearlessly shine God’s light!

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Pastor's Article

“The Lord is on my side to help me; I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.
It's better to take refuge in the Lord than to put confidence in mortals.
It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.” *Psalm 118:7-9*

Aha July! July is center of the summer. July is the month of travel. In July, MIDDLE School Youth will be on Mission Trip to Green Bay. Ten High School youth will attend the ELCA National Youth Gathering in New Orleans. On the way, we will participate in mission and other service activities in Peoria, Illinois, and Memphis, Tennessee. While in New Orleans, we will continue serving by building up the body of Christ through outreach opportunities.

By mid-July there will only be one summer month left. For some, who go back to school toward the end of August, July may be the only month that is free of thinking about school.

There is a frequent commercial on television these days. I bet you have seen it. It's for a credit card company – in the end it says the well-known and well-used tag line of “What's in your wallet?” That got me thinking about faith and the coming month of July. I thought the tag line could be changed to: “What's in your center?”

Perhaps your center is getting your son or daughter to their latest game or sports activity—whatever “club sport” they are in, be it baseball, hockey, or volleyball. Perhaps your center is having the latest technological gadget or the latest phone with all the bells and whistles. Perhaps your center is cooking and making everyone happy through food and the dishes you have prepared. Or maybe your center is being a “better” Christian than others.

It is my hope that what is at your center isn't about sports at all, isn't about dreading going back to school, or that the summer solstice has come and gone and winter is on its way again, that it isn't even about family, or even about being “the best Christian”. It is my hope that what is at your center is the Word of God, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ and what He did for you and what that opens for you. When He is at the center then we are in right

relationship with him. It's not about us! Not about what we do or what we understand. It's simply about Jesus and what HE accomplished through the cross. That is the center. That is what it is all about.

I've been told that Psalm 118 is the center of the Bible – I've been told more specifically that Psalm 118, verse 8, is the very center of the protestant Bible. While I have not counted verses it does seem to fit if one simply opens a Bible and looks at the appearance of the two halves. Look again at that verse – what's in the center? “...*the Lord...*”

While you have your Bible in your hands, open to the center, Psalm 118:8, and look at it from the side view. Martin Luther said this side view made him say that not only was the Bible the word of God with Jesus Christ at it's center, but he also visualized it as the manger, or the cradle, that holds the Word of God made flesh.

It is my prayer that you make God the center of your life. After this all things will fall into place. Your own relationship with God, your relationship with others and even your relationship with yourself will be better, will be more centrally grounded.

It is my prayer that while you enjoy the “center” month of summer. You also take time examine “What's in your center?”

See you in church...

Pastor Dave Sperstad



Welcoming others...

The first time you walked in the door at FLC, did someone welcome you?

Did you receive a handshake and a “Good morning”? Did you enjoy a cup of coffee or a treat? Did someone give you information about worship, or help you find a seat? Did your children find a safe and welcoming place to play? Did you hear God’s Good News spoken in a living way? Did you receive the Lord’s Supper along with the rest of the community?

If the answer to any of these questions is “Yes,” you are encouraged to pass that welcome on – to join the effort to welcome others to worship. And if the answer to any of these questions is “No,” then it is *even more important* that you help to welcome others in Jesus’ name.

What can you do? Through the signup system, *every worshiper at FLC* has the chance to greet, usher, read Scripture, set up coffee, set up or serve Communion, or provide volunteer child care. By serving in an area where you are gifted, you can help every worshiper to feel welcome. And scheduling is easy – because you sign up for one Sunday at a time, you can be sure that you are available for the specific dates you will serve.

Signup sheets for the coming month are always posted on a table in the Gathering Space, and you are invited to sign up at any time. If you’re not able to come to church to sign up, you may call the church office (632-6667) or Lori Ronning (July-August, 616-7009) to sign up. If you need more information or training, please mention it when you sign up and you will be contacted.

On the back of the calendar in this newsletter is the July serving schedule. If you see an empty square, please consider signing up. Many opportunities are still open in August, too!

Signups for September and October will be posted beginning August 1.



Coming this fall:

Koinonia: Dinner for Eight Groups

I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. *Philemon 1:6*

What are Koinonia (coin-a-knee-a) Groups? In New Testament times, the first Christians discovered what the Bible calls *koinonia*, a Greek word variously translated as “fellowship,” “community,” “communion,” “intimacy” and “friendship.” As Christians experienced that koinonia with each other, they also grew into koinonia with God. *1 John 1:3, 6-7; Phil. 1:5; 2:1*

Koinonia Groups will help us experience the same koinonia that energized the early church, the same growing intimacy and deepening fellowship, with each other and with God.

Koinonia Groups will form in September and will meet for four months. Couples and singles gather in groups of six to eight in homes for fellowship and a meal. Together they will determine what, when, and where works best for them. The group can be all ages, some couples, some singles, a nice “mix.” This is a great way to get to know people and grow closer in community with God.

You don’t have to be a gourmet cook to understand the nourishment that comes with gathering over a good meal. Group members will share hosting the group. Each month, the host provides the entrée and beverages. The other participants complete the meal by bringing an appetizer, a salad, a side, and dessert.

The groups are designed for adult fellowship. It is a great way to meet people and enjoy a casual evening together. After all, where “two or more are gathered in His name” around good food, it’s got to be a good thing!

Prayerfully consider your participation in a Koinonia Group and watch for more details. For more information, talk with Pastor Dave.

Council Highlights

- Approved the recommendation from the Executive Committee to re-amortize the existing church mortgage with Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. The monthly payment will be reduced; mortgage terms remain the same.
- Heard that the Fall Stewardship Campaign theme is “Empowered by God, Responding by Grace. Coordinator is Paula Monahan.
- Heard that \$4,485.00 has been received in special offerings for mortgage principal reduction. Thank you!



Sunday Morning Education Ministry Update

The Commission for Education is preparing a Focus Group Survey to assist in receiving feedback regarding FLC’s Sunday Morning Education ministries for children and youth. Members will facilitate a brief focus group of parents on Sundays, July 12 and 19, from 9:15-9:45 a.m. A random group of parents will be selected to participate. Please prayerfully consider attending if you receive a call. Your thoughts are important in building the faith journey of FLC children and youth.

We are excited to plan for Sunday Morning Education Ministry for the fall. A team is being assembled to plan, manage and supervise the coming year. The team will meet a couple of times this summer to prepare. If you or someone you know is interested in serving in this way, please contact a member of the Commission for Education, Gail Hittesdorf, or the church office.

Financial Update

2009 Mission Plan Budget	
January—June:	\$ 206,699
Actual received	
January—June:	\$ 180,386

Thank you to all who faithfully contribute to our shared ministry at FLC!

Watch your mailbox for your second quarter giving statement. We strive to record your giving accurately. Please check your statement and notify the church office if you find discrepancies. Individual family members will receive separate giving statements due to bulk mailing requirements.

Summer finds many of us traveling and vacationing. Mission and ministry continues here at FLC. We especially appreciate your mail-in offerings when you are unable to be in worship.

You are also welcome to participate in an electronic funds transfer giving plan, Simply Giving. Simply Giving® is a program sponsored by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans which allows you to automate your giving. This benefits FLC by ensuring regular giving throughout the year and benefits the giver by saving time. There is no fee to FLC or the giver for using this program. Please see Sue or Gloria in the church office to enroll.

Library Corner

Come in and check out the new books!

- Adult fiction by Beverly Lewis, Karen Kingsbury and Wanda Brunstetter
- Children’s book, Faith by Maya Ajmera
- Devotional, His Princess: Love Letters from Your King

You can enjoy a book in the library or take it home. Please return books within 3-4 weeks so that others may enjoy them. Have a great summer of reading!

FLC Library Team, Katie Kaddatz, Gloria Kofod, Linda Weiss, Nadine Westerberg

**Luther Crest Bible Camp
Annual Quilt Auction
Saturday, July 11**

Held in the *Air-conditioned Gymnasium*

- ☞ 10:00-12:30 p.m. – Quilt Review/Bake Sale
- ☞ 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. – Lunch served
- ☞ 12:30 p.m. – Auction Begins

Proceeds from this year's auction will be used for camper scholarships for people of all ages. Over 100 quilts of all sizes will be sold at the auction, including one made by FLC quilters. There will be something for everyone. Many hands have worked hard to sew the quilts. Let's support our Bible Camp at this event!

**Camp Knutson
23rd Annual Quilt Auction
Saturday, August 8**

Quilt lovers—Unique quilts from throughout Minnesota including a quilt from the FLC quilters will be auctioned to benefit children with heart disease, Down syndrome, severe skin diseases, autism, and HIV or AIDS. Quilt viewing begins at 10:00 a.m. the auction begins at 12 noon. The auction is sponsored by Lutheran Social Service and the LSS Paul Bunyan Regional Auxiliary.

**The Eighth Annual Luther Crest Scramble
A Fun(d) Raising Golf Tournament
Monday, August 10
Geneva Golf Course, Alexandria**

Why not get a foursome together and spend a fun day playing this "Best Ball" tournament on the course at Lake Geneva, Alexandria. Registration begins at 10:00 a.m.; "shotgun start" tee time is at noon. Supper will be served at Geneva Grill at 5:00 p.m. The fee of \$65.00 per person covers green fees, cart rental, and meal. You are encouraged to give a gift in support of Luther Crest at this event.

Past tournaments have made a significant impact on the camp's ministry. To register, call the church office by Wednesday, August 3.

Women's Circles

The Martha and Ruth Circles will not meet in July. Rebecca Circle meets July 15 at 9:30 a.m. at church.

**Green Fair and Peace Concert
at St. Francis Convent**

Wednesday, August 5, 4:00-8:00 p.m.

This outdoor event sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls is an evening of ecological awareness with music, food, exhibits, peace dance, drumming, chair massages, Franciscan storytelling, other activities, and much more. Many local and state businesses and educational groups will be present. From 6-8 p.m., St. Francis Music Center will present a Concert for Peace. Other local musicians in concert will celebrate music as a universal language that crosses all borders. Come gather to enjoy, learn and see many local favorites and use these wonderful opportunities to enhance our care for the planet and make our world a better place for all.

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity of Morrison County is building a home at 210 10th Street SW in Little Falls. There are many ways to be a part of the mission of Habitat. You can volunteer to work at the site or you can support the workers by cooking or making snacks on the work days. See the information available in the gathering space on volunteering and for the work dates that are scheduled. Volunteers must sign up to work, and must be over 16 years of age. To volunteer, call the Habitat office at 616-2084. Thank you for supporting the work of Habitat in the community!

Mission News

Habitat 500 Bike Ride

This fundraising, awareness-raising ride for Habitat for Humanity will take place July 12-18. Cyclists (including FLC member, Jennie Zeitler) will ride 500 miles through southern Minnesota. Each rider pays their own costs and raises funds to support Habitat home building efforts. 97% of funds raised will go to build Habitat homes. Jennie welcomes your support! Checks can be written to First Lutheran Church (note Habitat 500 in memo line). Please keep the housing ministry of Habitat for Humanity, Jennie, and all of the riders and volunteers in your prayers.

Morrison County Relay for Life 2008

Relay for Life is Friday, July 17, to Saturday, July 18 at Flyer Field. This annual event supports the American Cancer Society. Proceeds benefit cancer patients in the area. First Lutheran is hosting a Relay walking team. You can purchase and decorate a luminary bag in honor or in memory of a loved one. Luminary bags are available in the church office. Thank you for your donations in support of the FLC team. Team Captains: Wendy Henagin and Shawn Larsen.

VBS Mission Project – Mission Backpack

During VBS week students and families will collect backpacks and school supplies to distribute to area schools for needy families. Kids will fill the back packs with basic supplies and personalize each one with a picture or message. The goal is to assemble 200 backpacks! Your donations to this project are welcome, a collection box will be available at church for backpacks and basic school supplies. Monetary donations are also welcome. Thank you for your support!



Oasis/Share A Meal Community Paint A Thon Saturday, August 1

Can you spend a Saturday morning helping to paint a home for a local resident? This annual event is a great time to assist our brothers and sisters in Christ right here in our own community. Confirmation students—perhaps you and your mentor will want to use this for your service project. This is a BYOB (Bring Your Own Brush!) event. For more information, call coordinators Jerome and Karen Haaland at 632-8828, or the church office, 632-6667.

Morrison County Food Shelf

Your contributions and food donations to the Morrison County Food Shelf are encouraged and needed year round. You can bring your non-perishable food items to FLC and place them in the wood cabinet in the Gathering Space.

Don't forget the Food Shelf when you have excess produce from your garden. Please make arrangements directly with the Food Shelf for these items. The Food Shelf is located near Bethel Lutheran Church at 912 First Avenue SW, Little Falls. Food Shelf hours are Tuesday and Wednesday, 10:00 a.m. to noon, Thursday 6:00-8:00 p.m. For more information call 632-8304.

“Children First” Christian Preschool

Greetings from “Children First” Christian Preschool,

Preparations for fall classes are in progress. Registrations are being received. Register early to ensure placement in the class time of your choice. Registration forms are available online at www.flclittlefalls.org or in the gathering space at church.

Preschoolers who are currently registered will be receiving their enrollment and medical forms by July 10. You are encouraged to make any required medical appointments as soon as possible.

“Children First” is seeking financial support for families who wish to enroll their children. We would like to assist families in need with registration fees and monthly tuition if at all possible. We ask you as FLC members and preschool families to prayerfully consider supporting a family with monthly tuition or partial tuition if your budget allows. For more information, call Gail at church, 632-6667, or at home, 320-632-2218.

Teacher Sarah is looking for ten pairs of old teen-size jeans. She would like to use the back pockets for a fall classroom project. If you have a pair or two of jeans to donate, please bring to the church office, or contact Sarah Olson, at 632-1933.

Thank you to Nornberg Trailers, and Shawn Neu at Brandl Motors for their support in providing the trailer and pulling the “Kids Color The World” float in the Dam Festival parade.

“Children First” Christian Preschool will have a booth at the Morrison County Fair again this year. Look for the booth on July 30, 31 and August 1 from 10:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. See you at the fair!

Yours in Christ’s Service,

Gail Hittesdorf, Director

Preschool Summer 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 13-17
3-year-olds

Session 2: Monday-Friday, July 20-24
4-5-year-olds

Sessions will meet from 9:00-11:30 a.m. at FLC. 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 FLC website at www.flclittlefalls.org. Registration deadline is Monday, July 6. For more information, contact Gail Hittesdorf, 632-2218 or the church office.

Confirmation Ministries

Third Grade: Watch for a letter about the third grade class orientation meeting which will take place in August. Third graders will receive a Bible in worship during August. Students and parents will complete a month of family devotions in September.

Sixth Grade: During the week of Vacation Bible School (August 3-7), youth entering seventh grade in the fall will be studying the Lord’s Prayer with the pastors. Watch for a letter containing more information about this class.

Seventh Grade: Ten youth completed a class on the Apostles’ Creed at Luther Crest Bible Camp during June with Pastor Dave.

Youth Ministry

**Registration for
Sunday Morning Ministry, age 3-grade 12
Confirmation, grades 2-11
Youth Groups, grades 3-12**

Parents of children ages 3 years – 12th grade: Watch your mail this month for a mailing on Education & Youth Ministry for the coming year. Registration and health forms for kids, and list of opportunities for adults to work with youth, will be included. Please note that registration is required each year for participation in Education and Youth Activities. Additional forms will be available in the church office or on the church web-site at www.flclittlefalls.org. Forms should be returned to FLC by Sunday, August 2. See the mailing for more details!

VBS Decorating

The church will be decorated for VBS on Sunday, August 2, at 1:00 p.m. Come and stay as long as you are able—it's always fun! We are looking for 'bayou' items such as: old fishing gear, bamboo poles, old bait containers, flat bottom duck boat, nets, plastic vines, lanterns, large round cardboard tubes, log ends, and etc. If you are able to loan or donate any of these items for the week, please bring to the church office, they will be labeled for return to you. Some decorating projects can be done at home in advance. Contact Shiloh Hillyer, 320-232-3813, Gail Hittesdorf, 632-2218 for more information.

New this fall!

F.O.C.U.S.

+ Fixed On Christ Until Sunday + Senior High Youth Group

Beginning Monday, September 14, at 6:50 a.m., we'll meet at Burger King with breakfast and a FOCUS (Fixed On Christ Until Sunday) devotional – Walk With Jesus Daily. We will have an Every Day God Experience and we want you to have it as well. A life-changing experience awaits us as we pursue God every day. Come, and draw closer to him! Questions? Need a ride? Call Pastor Dave at church, 632-6667, or at home, 632-5930, or via email at dsperstad@flclittlefalls.org. See you for breakfast!

Teen Girls Book Club

Girls middle school age and up are invited to meet on Mondays at 6:00 p.m. for summer reading and friendship building. Books are reserved at the Carnegie Library so there are no books to purchase. You can come anytime, we'll catch you up on where we are in the book! For more information, contact Shilo Hillyer at 320-232-3813, or the church office, 632-6667.

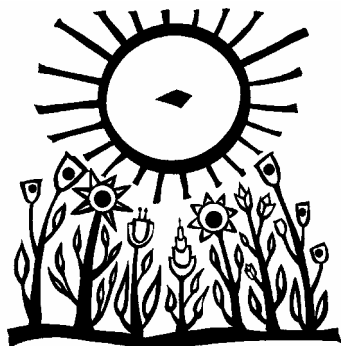
Can Care Collection

Recycling is one way to save the earth. Bring your empty cans to the church secured in a plastic bag—you can leave them next to the garage door. This on-going fundraiser provides money for youth activities. Keep saving those aluminum cans! Thanks!

News of the Family

Cole Kludt, son of Amber Schuett and Shad Kludt, was baptized on June 7.

Sophia Renee Christensen, daughter of Kyle and Lisa Christensen, was baptized on June 21.



Summer Worship Schedule June through August

Sunday Worship at 8:00 and 10:00 a.m.

Summer Worship at 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. continues through July and August. Stay after the 8:00 a.m. service, or come early for the 10:00 service, for coffee (leaded and unleaded!), beverages, treats and fellowship in the Gathering Space. Everyone is welcome! Enjoy your vacation but don't take a vacation from church! Aren't you glad God doesn't take the summer off?

Items for the **August NEWSLETTER** are due on **July 20, 2009!**