

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

Nathan J. Bjorge, Lead Pastor  
David J. Sperstad, Associate Pastor

**FIRST**



**“Servants of All”**

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March, 2009, Newsletter

March 1, 2009

## Lenten Worship 2009

Each week on Wednesday evening we gather to share fellowship around a simple bowl of soup and slice of bread. Worship using Holden Evening Prayer follows at 7:00 p.m. In worship, we will continue to draw upon the imagery and metaphor of stones. Our journey through scripture will lead us from hearts of stone to the Living Stone. *See article on page three*

### Additional Lenten Wednesday Opportunities:

- + Kids' Praise: Children Pre-K (age 4) through Sixth Grade are welcome to sing with a children's group. Practice is Wednesdays during Lent from 6:10-6:30 p.m. Kids will sing at one Lenten mid-week service and on Palm Sunday, April 5. Contact: Becky Nelson, 749-2336.
- + Senior Choir: meets following Wednesday worship during Lent (7:50 p.m., and at 7:00 p.m. other months) for rehearsal. If you enjoy singing God's praises, and are high-school age and up, please come for singing and fellowship. Contact: Jennie Zeitler, 584-8205.
- + Adult Study: "Freed-Up Financial Living" meets Wednesdays from 6:00-6:50 p.m. beginning March 4. *see article on page five*

### Wednesday Evening Schedule:

5:30-6:55 p.m. – Soup supper  
6:00-6:50 p.m. – Adult Study: Freed-Up Financial Living  
6:10-6:30 p.m. – Kids' Praise  
7:00 p.m. – Holden Evening Prayer  
7:50 p.m. – Senior Choir

**Come and be grounded in God's word!**



**Pastor Dave's Article**  
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**Stones: A Lenten Walk**  
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**Youth Activities!**  
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## Pastor Dave's Article

Seconds Anyone? You've probably heard the question more than once in your life. I know I have, and I have answered yes.

Another kind of "seconds" comes to mind for me today. I decided to look at the second chapters of several books of the Bible. The second chapter of Genesis tells us of the creation of humans out of the dust of the ground, and God's desire for all of humanity.

The second chapter of Luke tells the story of Jesus' birth, a reminder that God would not give up on humanity, but was determined to save us from our own sinful bent toward destruction. The second chapter of Acts tells of the coming of the Holy Spirit who breathes life into us, creates our faith out of nothing, enables us to trust God's power, believe His promises, and empowers us to live for Jesus. It tells of the birth of the Church, God's tool for spreading his reconciling Word to the hurting world.

Speaking of a hurting world, one has to wonder where the turbulent events are leading us—a continued war in Iraq, resurgence of the Taliban and a need for an escalated presence in Afghanistan, a shaky economy in the USA, riots, civil war and continued genocide in Africa. These came to mind as I looked at the second Psalm, and read these hope-giving words: *"Why do the nations rage? Why do the people waste their time with futile plans? The kings of the earth prepare for battle; the rulers plot together against the Lord and against his anointed one... But the one who rules in heaven laughs. The Lord scoffs at them. Then in anger he rebukes them, terrifying them with his fierce fury."*

We trust his word, but we may well wonder *will* the Lord really "rebuke" the nations with his "fierce fury"? The prophet Habakkuk asked the same question. In the second chapter of his book, we read God's answer: *"I will climb up into my watchtower now and wait to see what the Lord will say to me and how he will answer my complaint. Then the Lord said to me, "Write my answer in*

*large, clear letters on a tablet, so that a runner can read it and tell everyone else. But these things I plan won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed."*

In the meantime, as we wait, the second chapter of 1 Peter reminds us of our royal identity and the high calling of each one of us:

*"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy... Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge."*

There are many more "seconds" in the Bible. I share these with you to whet your appetite for the high-protein, low-calorie "seconds" of God's Word.

*"You must crave pure spiritual milk so that you can grow into the fullness of your salvation. Cry out for this nourishment as a baby cries for milk."*

In Christ,

Pastor Dave



### Lenten Soup Suppers

Soup suppers are served from 5:30-6:55 p.m. on Wednesdays through April 1. The freewill offering received at each supper will support youth ministry at FLC. This year's "Soup"ervisor is Linda Weiss. If you would like to donate soup, crackers, milk, or peanut butter for the suppers, please check the poster in the gathering space. Please call Linda (632-1733) if you want to get in on the fun!



### 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, April 6.

### Stones: A Lenten Walk

During the season of Lent, we will draw upon the imagery and metaphor of stones. Our journey through scripture will lead us from hearts of stone to the Living Stone. You may wish to reflect on the scripture text for each week prior to mid-week worship on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. The texts for each week are:

March 4	Casting Stones John 8:1-11
March 11	Stumbling Stones Romans 9:30-10:4
March 18	Hearts of Stone Ezekiel 36:22-28
March 25	Rejected Stone Acts 4:1-12
April 1	Living Stones 1 Peter 2:4-10



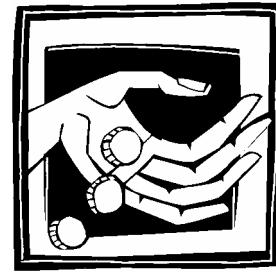
## Mission Life

### March is Food Share Month

#### Hunger Facts:

- ✚ In 2008, there were more than 2 million visits to Minnesota's food shelves. Food Shelves distributed 50 million pounds of food.
- ✚ Food shelf usage in the state has not declined since 1999. It is estimated that Minnesota food shelves are serving double the number of people they served in 1999.
- ✚ Twenty percent of food shelf clients are seniors.
- ✚ 56 percent of food shelf visitors are families with children.
- ✚ More than 50 percent of adult food shelf clients work.
- ✚ People using food shelves do not make enough income to cover their basic needs; 2/3 of food shelf clients make less than \$1,000 a month.
- ✚ 992,750 Minnesotans live in households struggling to put food on the table.
- ✚ 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 1<sup>st</sup> Ave SW.
- ✚ Thank you for your support of the recent Souper Bowl fundraiser. \$228.67 was given to the Morrison County Food Shelf from this event. Thanks again to the 'potholders!'

"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 FLC, or Coborn's. Pastor Nate currently serves on the Morrison County Food Shelf Board. For more information about the Morrison County Food Shelf, contact Gloria Thomes at 632-8304.



#### Lenten Coin Folders

During the season of Lent, you are encouraged to participate in the Lenten discipline of using a coin folder for mission giving. The small act of self-denial involved with putting a coin into the folder each day is another sign of our desire to learn to walk the way of the Cross with Jesus, who gave his whole life for us. Gifts received through the coin folders will support hunger causes. March is a very important month for the Food Shelf; the amount raised locally in March is the basis for the 'incentive allocation' funds received from Minnesota FoodShare. Lenten coin folders will be collected during Holy Week, April 5-12. You may also bring a non-perishable food item to church each week as a gift in support of the Food Shelf. Thank you for your generous support of these local and world missions.

#### Thank You!

Dear members of First Lutheran Church,

On behalf of our staff, volunteers, and the women, men and children we serve who have been victimized by the crimes of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse and/or general crime, I thank you for your donation of \$500.00! We will put this money to good use for those who need it most. We greatly appreciate your support!

Sincerely,

Stephenie Och, Executive Director  
Hands of Hope Resource Center

## Adult Opportunities



### **Adult Study: Discipleship Mondays, March 16-April 20 7:00-8:00 p.m.**

What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? Let's gather to study this question based on the way Jesus interacted with his first disciples as revealed by the physician, Luke, in the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. We will look at the way the first disciples came to follow Jesus, and how they grew in their relationship with him.

We will look at our own discipleship in light of Jesus' ministry with his earliest followers. We will discover how our relationship too can grow in depth and practice as we follow Jesus. This is an invitation to live with Jesus.

During this six-session study we affirm the work of the Holy Spirit who delights us by inviting people into the journey along the way. You will be invited to open yourself to the power of the Spirit, working through the Word, to move you on your journey toward maturity in discipleship.

As we move through this life, we may sometimes lose our balance, or take steps that are less than perfect, we may even fall along the way. But together we can grow by the Spirit's power to become what Jesus calls us to be—disciples.

Pastor Dave leads this study. Registration is helpful but not necessary. Please call the church office to register or speak to Pastor Dave.

### **New Member Group**

FLC's spring New Member Group begins this month. The group will meet on Sunday evenings; March 15 and 22, at 7:00 p.m. New members will be received in worship on Sunday, March 29. FLC council and commission members will host a new member meal following worship on Sunday, March 29.

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 for the class, please call the church office at 632-6667.

### **Adult Study**

#### **"Freed-Up Financial Living, how to get there with biblical principles."**

Many people experience financial stress even in the best of times, and long for financial freedom. True hope, joy and financial freedom only come through an understanding of God's principles and a healthy spiritual relationship with money. We offer this six-week video study beginning Wednesday, March 4, from 6:00-6:50 p.m. You can participate in the study and enjoy soup supper and Lenten worship. Pastor Nate will facilitate the study. A limited number of participant books are available for \$10.00. Registration is appreciated; please call the church office, 632-6667.

## Adult Opportunities

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### **Cornerstones (Seniors age 55 and better!)**

Are you interested in participating in senior fellowship? We continue to share food, conversation and laughter at a monthly potluck lunch, normally on the third Tuesday of each month. Bring a friend and a dish to share—all are welcome. For more information, contact the church office or Pastor Dave.

### **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.

### **Library Corner**

Why not spend some special time during Lent with a child? The library has received several new children's books and DVD's by author Max Lucado. These stories involve Wemmicks—little wooden people who share special messages of contentment, self-worth, and giving.

Your ideas and suggestions are always welcome; you can place them in the box in the library. Thank you to all who donated materials to the library recently, it is greatly appreciated. And thank you to all who have visited the library and checked out materials to use at home!

### **March Women's Circles "The Hidden Hand of God"**

**Hidden Power: Esther – Two Queens in Persia  
Esther 2:17a**

#### **Martha Circle**

The Martha Circle will meet Monday, March 16, at 1:30 p.m. at the church. Hostess is LaVerne Hempeck.

#### **Ruth Circle**

The Ruth Circle will meet Wednesday, March 18 at 2:00 p.m. at the church.

#### **Mission Circle of Joy**

The Circle of Joy will meet Tuesday, March 24, at 9:00 a.m. at the church.



### **Women's Retreat A Fresh Brewed Life Friday-Sunday, March 6-8 Luther Crest Bible Camp**

Are you longing to know the truth about who you are in Christ? Has your life turned out to be harder than you ever could have imagined at times? The retreat theme and Bible study is based on the book Fresh Brewed Life: A Stirring Invitation to Wake Up Your Soul written by Nicole Johnson, a Women of Faith dramatist and author. Housing is in the Adult Retreat Center, cost is \$115.00 per person (double occupancy). Come together in community with other women for a weekend of awakening faith! For more information, or to register, contact the church office.

## "Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings from "Children First" Christian Preschool,

We had a fun February learning about Dental Health, Valentine's Day, God's love and loving one another. We welcomed a new student to the Noah's Animals class! Thanks to Dr. Steve Olson who taught us how to take care of our teeth, and to the parents who shared stories during "I Love to Read" week.

Our Third Annual Fish Fry and Silent Auction is Friday, March 20, from 4:30-7:00 p.m. at the Little Falls VFW. Watch for more information and advance ticket sales. If you are interested in donating an auction item or serving at the Fish Fry, please contact Gail Hittesdorf, 632-6667 (church) or 632-2218 (home). All proceeds support the preschool. Matching funds have been applied for with Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. We appreciate your support of "Children First!"

☺ Parent/Teacher conferences are Wednesday, March 11 and Thursday, March 12.

☺ Fall 2009/10 registration for current preschool families and FLC members begins Wednesday, March 11. Community registration begins April 1. Register early to hold your spot, registration is on a first-come basis.

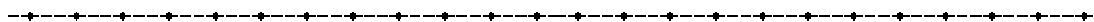
☺ Class offerings are:  
Jesus' Gems (4-5 year olds) meet on Monday and Wednesday mornings (9:00-11:30 a.m.) or afternoons (12:30-3:00 p.m.)

Noah's Animals (33 months-3 year olds) meet on Tuesday and Thursday mornings (9:00-11:30 a.m.)

Friday Friends (33 months-5 year olds) meet Friday morning (9:00-11:30 a.m.)

Thank you for your continued prayers for the children, families and staff of "Children First" Christian Preschool.

Yours in Christ's Service!  
Gail Hittesdorf, Director, and Staff



### Confirmation Ministries

**Second Grade:** Looking ahead – the sessions on Holy Communion, "The Welcome Table" are Sundays, March 15 and 22, with Pastor Nate. Letters will be sent to all Second Grade students. This class is for second graders and their parents.

**Seventh Grade:** The seventh grade class on the Apostles' Creed is scheduled at Luther Crest Bible Camp during the week of June 21-26. Ten students are registered for a week at camp.

**Eighth Grade:** Students will attend a Seder Meal at Temple Israel on Sunday, March 22 with Pastor Dave. Letters have been sent to families.

**Tenth Grade:** Looking ahead—Mark your calendars for our Means of Grace sessions: Sunday, April 19 and Sunday, April 26. Both sessions meet from 4:00-7:00 p.m. Pastor Dave will teach this class.

## Sunday Morning Education Ministry News

**Infant/Parent Class** meets the first Sunday of each month at 10:40-11:00 a.m. in the Moses Room. Come and meet other parents, have fun with the babies and learn how to introduce them to God's love.

**Toddler/Parent Class** meets the second Sunday of each month at 10:40-11:00 a.m. in the Moses Room. Come and learn about God, read stories and play games.

**Kindergarten through Grade 5:** TREK – "Journey to the Cross" begins Sunday, March 15, for four weeks. Sign up to be a Station Leader. A description of the lesson and the activities you can choose to do is on the signup table in the gathering space. Prepare one lesson and teach it to four different groups on four consecutive Sundays! It's easy! Please prayerfully consider sharing your faith with our children. They are our future.

**Grades 6-8:** We continue to meet in the youth room. We are discussing discipleship. We are looking for volunteers to be a part of our classroom and share ways that you volunteer in the congregation. Contact Gail Hittesdorf if you are willing to share 15 minutes of your time.

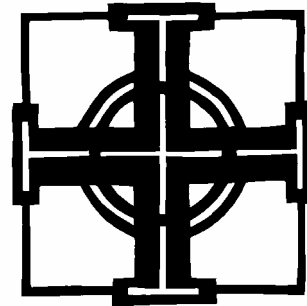
**Grades 9-12:** We meet in the Zacchaeus Room. Our class size is growing! All are welcome! Food, fun, discussions and an occasional off-site visit to Burger King are just a portion of what is happening here.

## Vacation Bible School

Crocodile Dock "Where fearless kids shine God's light" is coming August 3-7, 2009. We are looking for some 'fearless' coordinators to lead kids to God's light! If you are interested in working on a team to organize this year's Vacation Bible School or are interested in leading a station such as Dockside Drive-In; Snack Shack; Crawfish Crafts, or Gator Games, please call Gail Hittesdorf or the church office. Come see what God is doing all around us!

## Council Highlights

- Welcomed new council members, Michelle Dahlberg and Nancy Ratzloff, each serving a three-year term, and Howard Larsen and Chad Shelstad each serving a second three-year term. Installation of council members was Sunday, February 8 at 8:00 and 9:30 a.m. worship.
- Council members read and signed the 2009 Group Covenant.
- Discussed term lengths for commission members. Moved that commission members serve a three-year term.
- Discussed and created a list of potential members to be asked to serve on the Pastor Parish Relations Team.
- Discussed the formation of a task force to review the FLC constitution.



## Financial Update

2009 Mission Plan Budget	
January – February:	\$ 69,795
Actual received	
January – February:	\$ 57,120
Thank you to all who faithfully contribute to our shared ministry at FLC.	

**Wild and Crazy Saints (Grades 6-8)  
Friday Fun Night  
Friday, March 13, 7:00-9:00 p.m.**

Bring a friend and come to the Youth Room for fun, food, faith, pop, friends, pizza, games and fellowship. Your cost is only \$3.00. Sign up in the Gathering Space. For more info, contact Pastor Dave. See you there!

Sobiech. For more information, pick up a brochure at church or call the church office.

**Youth Dinner Theater  
Sunday, April 5  
6:00 p.m.**

The whole community is invited to an evening of fun and fellowship at FLC. Come, enjoy a delicious evening meal and live theater on Sunday, April 5. The drama and meal will be presented by the students attending the summer 2009 ELCA National Youth Gathering in New Orleans and the youth mission trip to Green Bay.

Watch for roving actors selling tickets after Sunday worship services.

**Senior League (Grades 9-12)  
Crow Wing River Canoe Trip  
Wednesday-Saturday, June 10-13, 2009**

Canoe trips are an incredible journey, an opportunity to learn and reflect on God's creation, strengthen faith, build teamwork and confidence, and come away with a better understanding of how precious this creation is and our impact on it.

Each day on the river we will participate in Alpha and Omega Word. Morning devotions set the tone for the day, each evening we'll reflect on the activities of the day. The days will include: paddling, fishing, swimming, Bible study, food preparation, reading, rock climbing and solitude.

Trip cost is \$125.00 per person (scholarships are available, ask in the church office). Pastor Dave leads this trip with skilled outdoorsman, Scott

### **Can Care Collection**

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

### **GoodSearch.com**

What if FLC youth earned a penny every time you searched the internet? What if a percentage of your online purchases went to support youth ministry at FLC? Now we can!

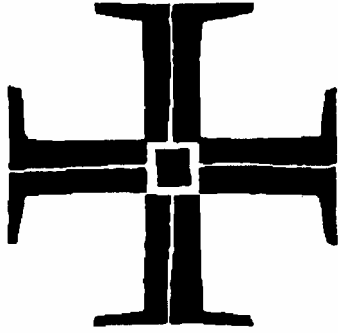
GoodSearch.com is a Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, or about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use it as you would any search engine and enter FLC as the charity you want to support.

You can also go to GoodShop.com for your online shopping. Hundreds of great stores including Target, Gap, Best Buy, ebay, Macy's, and Barnes & Noble will donate up to 37% of each purchase to your favorite cause!

Our first donation from GoodSearch was \$132.56! Thanks for the many ways you support youth ministry at FLC!

### **Godchild Update**

For an update on FLC's "godchild," Francisco Hernández, see the poster board in Stoltz Hall for a new letter and picture from Francisco! To help with support for Francisco, you can donate in the 'spare change' jar in the office. Thank you!



Items for the **April NEWSLETTER** are  
due on **March 20, 2009!**

**“Spring Ahead”  
Daylight Savings Time  
begins on SUNDAY, MARCH 8**

Daylight Savings Time begins earlier than in the past. Remember to set your clocks *ahead* one hour on Saturday evening, March 7 – then you’ll be on time for church on Sunday, March 8! ☺

