

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

David J. Sperstad, Pastor

FIRST



“Servants of All”

2100 Riverview Drive
Little Falls, MN 56345
(320) 632-6667
(320) 632-1050 Fax
firstserv@charterinternet.com
www.flclittlefalls.org

May, 2010, Newsletter

May 3, 2010



Pentecost Sunday, May 23

**Celebration Potluck Meal
Following 10:45 a.m. worship**

Let's gather together on the Day of Pentecost as Spirit-filled believers and celebrate the great, unfailing promises of God. Following morning worship, we'll share a potluck meal in Stoltz Hall. Plan to attend as we give thanks for all the ways that God is faithful and dream together for God's plan for the future as we continue to serve him as 'First...Servants of All.'

Pentecost

*Alleluia!
Come, Holy Spirit,
Fill the hearts of your faithful,
and kindle in us
the fire of your love.
Alleluia!*

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Grads!
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Pastor Dave's Article:

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,

Philippians 2:1-5

This was our text for the Northeastern Minnesota ELCA Synod Assembly. We dealt with how this Text – this Word of God worked *on us, in us, in spite* of us and *through* us. We heard from the perspective of four different individuals; a scholar, a teen, a pastor, and a mother. We also heard it in a sermon and from our keynote speaker. Each time, while all were based on the same text, we heard a different perspective.

This was a great reminder that the Word of God is alive. The Word of God is still able to transform us into something beautiful, meaningful and make us new each time we hear it call us and claim us. The Word of God is alive in the life of our church and is calling us to not simply sit and dwell but to move and to serve. Sometimes this will cause us to move out of our comfort zone and do some work on ourselves.

As we heard at Synod Assembly, we can hear many different messages from this text. For me, as Pastor at First Lutheran, the most important is that we have encouragement from Christ Jesus.

Yes, we, as the people of First Lutheran, have been through some pretty rough times recently. Jesus—the Word of God—does not always bring peace and comfort. “For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three.” *Luke 12:52* Life as a believer and a Christian can be hard. God, throughout scripture, never says that life as one of His children will be easy. We can see this throughout the Bible. Cain killed his brother Abel, Jacob and Esau were fighting between themselves from their birth. The disciples who walked with Jesus argued about who

would be the greatest. Yet, most were killed on behalf of their faith in Jesus. Life as a Christian is not easy. Life in the church is not easy either. The church has been fighting within itself since the beginning.

Back to our Philippians’ text: “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”

As we look forward, we may feel as if there is something to fear, we may tremble at what lies ahead. But as this text reminds us – God is at work within us and is moving us in a direction that gives him pleasure.

Over the next few months, we will look to see how the future will unfold. We will do our best to determine what we will look like in worship, in service, in Sunday School, in staffing and in many other ways. I am always happy and available to hear your thoughts, dreams, and visions for the ministry of and through First Lutheran. Please share your thoughts with me. It is important that we hear what God is saying to you.

I close with a few more verses from Philippians.

“¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or questioning, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.”

We don’t work in vain – we are not left alone to fear the future. For the God of Israel and the God who raised Jesus from the dead is with us as we move ahead. Please plan on attending a congregational potluck meeting on Pentecost Sunday, May 23. There will be great food and we’ll share conversation and information about how First Lutheran is moving into the future and the mission that God has for us.

Thanks be to God for each and every one of you!
See you in Church!

Pastor Dave Sperstad

Council Highlights

- Heard that spring church clean-up is scheduled for Monday, May 3, beginning at 3:30 p.m. *see back page*
- Heard that the offering received from Lenten soup suppers will be used for needed repairs at The Dream Center, St. Cloud.
- Donations for the ELW hymnals have exceeded expectations – thank you! Additional ELW worship resources will be purchased.
- Celebrated that more than 1,200 people visited First Lutheran for events and worship services over Easter weekend!

Financial Update

First quarter giving statements have been mailed. Thank you for checking over your statement. Please call the church office if there is any discrepancy.

You are welcome to participate in an electronic funds transfer giving plan, Simply Giving. See Sue or Gloria in the church office to enroll.

Pentecost Sunday Celebration Offering Sunday, May 23

On Pentecost Sunday, June 11, 2000, First Lutheran celebrated the dedication of our “Building to Serve” project. In February of 2001 we closed on a twenty-year mortgage with a principal of \$475,000 and interest rate of 7.25%. Presently our mortgage is \$162,989 with an interest rate of 5.3%. The payoff date for the mortgage is November 2015. Each Pentecost Sunday has been set aside as an opportunity to reduce the principal on our mortgage. The reasoning behind this is simple: we pay down our loan more quickly, pay thousands of dollars less in interest and free up dollars for mission. It’s simply a matter of good stewardship. An envelope is available on the greeters’ table for this cause. Please give as you are able on Pentecost Sunday, May 23. Thank you for your faithful giving!



Pentecost

*Alleluia!
Come, Holy Spirit,
Fill the hearts of your faithful,
and kindle in us
the fire of your love.
Alleluia!*

The festival of Pentecost derives its name from the Jewish festival of Pentecost, observed fifty days after Passover. On the fiftieth day of Easter (May 23, 2010) we celebrate the Holy Spirit, as the power of God among us that heals, forgives, inspires, and unites. The Spirit through whom and in whom the people of God are created and re-created. Pentecost is sometimes called the church’s birthday, but might more appropriately be called its baptism day, since the gift of the Spirit is the fullness of baptism. In the one Spirit we were baptized into one body, and at the Lord’s table the Spirit unites us for witness in the world. Come, Holy Spirit!

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NE MN Synod Assembly 2010 Recap

The Northeastern Minnesota Synod gathered in Assembly on April 23-25 around the theme: “The Working Word” and Philippians 2:1-13. This was the focus of both worship services and four “Dwelling in the Word” meditations. “Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil” was sung throughout the Assembly both in worship and in gathering for “Dwelling in the Word.”

Each Plenary Session opened with a *Dwelling in the Word*. This was a time of song, prayer, and meditation on Philippians 2:1-13. Friday night the Rev. Dr. Richard Nysse, Professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary, spoke to: *The Word Working On Us*; Saturday morning, LYO Board member, Trevor Esson from Elim Lutheran Church, Duluth, talked about *The Word Working In Us*; Saturday night the Rev. Dr. Carol Worthing, Duluth, shared her insights on *The Word Working In Spite of Us*; and Sunday morning Mrs. Erin Karlgaard, a stay-at-home mom from Lutheran Church of the Cross, Nisswa, spoke on *The Word Working Through Us*. See Pastor Dave’s article on page two for more on this text.

Assembly business included:

Adoption of 2011 synod budget of \$1,353,200

Resolutions:

10-1: Advocate to Stop Usury – Adopted

10-2: Creation Care in Congregations – Adopted

10-3: Synod Poll – Defeated

10-4: Synod Assembly Cost Control replaced with Substitute Resolution – Adopted

A copy of these resolutions is available in the church office or online at:

www.nemnsynod.org/2010assembly

Synod Elections:

Mrs. Brenda Wagner, member of St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids, was elected to a four-year term as vice president of the synod on the second ballot.

Voting Members to the 2011 Churchwide Assembly: elected to attend the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in August of 2011 were:

From the Heartland Conference (First Lutheran is a member congregation of this conference):

Voting Members: Mr. Mel Nefstead, and Pastor Heather Culuris. Alternates: Mr. Steve Saari, and Pastor Christie Manisto.

Young Adult: Jackie Wicklund. Alternate: Erin Makela, member at First Lutheran!

Fundraisers for ELCA World Hunger:

This year more than 100 quilts were donated to the silent quilt auction. \$13,000 was raised from the quilts. Items donated to The Marketplace brought in \$3,482.47. At the end of the Assembly, \$26,181.42 in quarters had been contributed to the quarter ingathering. \$152.75 was given in votes for the youth hunger poster contest won by Elim Lutheran church in Duluth. Proceeds from these events goes to ELCA World Hunger, the total received for this cause is over \$42,816.64!

ELCA World Hunger supports relief and development work both in the USA and in other countries. Here are examples of the difference a donation can make.

- \$200 can start a community garden for people who have been displaced from their homes.
- \$30 provides a weekly backpack of food for a US child who otherwise has little to eat.
- \$10 provides a pair of shoes for a child who walks a mile or more to school each day.
- \$10 provides a mosquito bed net to help a family avoid malaria.

Thank you for your support for ELCA World Hunger!

Adult Opportunities

May Women's Circles

"To God's Beloved"

Paul's Letter to the Romans:
Wisdom: Wise in What is Good

Romans 16:19

Martha Circle

The Martha Circle will meet Monday, May 17.
Sylvia Thomasson is the hostess.

Ruth Circle

The Ruth Circle will meet Wednesday, May 19,
at 2:00 p.m. at the church.

Summer Women's Bible Study

"A Woman's Heart:
God's Dwelling Place"

begins Wednesday, June 16

This 10-week video study by Beth Moore will explore why God chose to dwell in a wilderness tabernacle and what that means to your life today. Why not invite a friend to attend the study with you? This study begins Wednesday, June 16. Naomi Engel facilitates the study. Sign up in the gathering space at church or contact the church office. Workbooks are helpful but not required, cost \$16.00. You may contact Naomi Engel at 632-3167, for more information.

Adult Studies and Events

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. Contact him for more information.

Cornerstones Potluck (Seniors age 55 and better)

If you enjoy a good meal and fellowship, bring a friend and a food item to share and come for potluck lunch on Tuesday, May 18, at 11:30 a.m. We gather in Stoltz Hall for food, conversation and fun.

Library Corner

Happy Spring! Come and see our newly donated books on display on the table outside of the library. Please return materials in a timely manner so that others may enjoy them. Thank you!

"First...Servants of All"

Worship Serving Opportunities

Each Sunday, many worshipers come to worship at First. Your servant hands are an integral part of providing hospitality to all who enter here. You are asked to offer your gifts in service to Christ's body at First Lutheran. Serving areas are greeters, ushers, scripture readers, communion ministry, child care, coffee hospitality. Choose a time that fits your schedule. Sign-ups are now available for May and June; sign-ups for future months will be posted at church at a later date. Check the back side of the calendar page in this newsletter for opportunities to serve in May. Training for each serving ministry is available—please ask! For more information, contact the church office, 632-6667, or the May/June coordinator, Mary Larson, 632-8203.

**Lutheran Social Service Rummage Sale
Wednesday-Friday, May 12-14**

The spring Lutheran Social Service (LSS) rummage sale co-sponsored by Bethel and First Lutheran Church women will be held at Bethel Lutheran, at 901 West Broadway, on:

Wednesday, May 12, 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 13, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Friday, May 14, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

☞ Dollar Bag Sale Day

Proceeds from the sale are used to benefit residents at the Lutheran Social Services group homes in this area. Set up days are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday morning, clean up begins at noon on Friday. Volunteers are much appreciated, there is lots of 'stuff' to organize – come when you can! The sale is a wonderful recycling opportunity for good, usable, clean clothing, books, linens, small appliances, toys, etc. Clean grocery bags, paper or plastic, are also needed. Please, no televisions, computers or computer parts. Sale items can be brought to Bethel in the morning, beginning Monday, May 3, or on the set-up days. For more information, contact Karen Haaland, at 632-8828.

**Relay for Life
Friday-Saturday, July 16-17
Flyer Field**

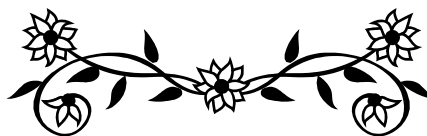
Relay for Life is Friday, July 16. This annual event supports the American Cancer Society and cancer patients in the area. First members, Ted and Mary Pfohl, are this year's co-chairs. First Lutheran would like to sponsor a team; if you or someone you know can serve as team captain, please contact the church office.



**Annual Community Paint-A-Thon
Oasis/Share A Meal
Saturday, August 7**

The Paint-A-Thon committee is recruiting teams to paint a home in Morrison County on August 7. Over the past 16 years, over 150 homeowners have benefited from this program. It takes 10-12 people, 4-5 hours each, to make a big difference in someone's life!

First Lutheran will again sponsor a painting team. Jerome and Karen Haaland have volunteered once again to coordinate the team. Would you be willing to be a painter? Contact the church office to sign up. Thank you for making a difference in the community we share!



**Lutheran Care Center
Bake, Plant and Craft Sale
Thursday, May 20
8:00 a.m. to noon**

Come to the sale; all proceeds benefit the residents of the Lutheran Care Center. Your donation of plants, craft items or baked goods are welcome. There will also be silent auction items to bid on. For more information, contact Donna Hegstrom, 632-3441, or Jean Petersen, 632-8151.

Child Care Space Request

The child care room at First is one of the best-loved and used rooms in the facility. Many of our 'little people' and their friends enjoy playing together and learning about Jesus in this bright and sunny space. Just like at home, toys and other items break or wear out from use. If you have new or used in good condition toys or books for babies or toddlers that you are willing to share, please bring to the church office. For more information, please contact the office, or child care attendant, Katie Boody. Thank you!

Science Museum of Minnesota Trip "The Dead Sea Scrolls"

You won't want to miss this opportunity to explore the greatest archaeological find of the 20th century—the Dead Sea Scrolls, which include the earliest known texts of the Bible. These 2,000-year-old, authentic text fragments are steeped in scientific, religious, and cultural significance. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. You can find more information about the exhibit at www.smm.org. Watch for information and details about a bus trip to see this exhibit. We'll partner with First United and Bethel Lutheran congregations. All are welcome! Thanks to Lynn Duxbury, 468-2819, for coordinating this event.

Lutheran Social Service Auxiliary 2010 Spring Rally Tuesday, May 18, 1:00 p.m.

This year's spring rally will be held here at First on Tuesday, May 18, at 1:00 p.m. All are welcome to attend this event; dessert will be served. Janelle Hansen, Director of Boys and Girls Club of Morrison County will give a presentation. In-kind offering of personal hygiene items (soap, deodorant, combs, brushes, toothbrushes/paste, body wash, etc.) will be received for the Boys and Girls Club. Please call the church office to register. For more information, call Marlene Williams at 632-4290.

Luther Crest Bible Camp Camp Clean Up Saturday, May 22

Here is a great way to support your camp as an individual, family or group. Come for the day and help the camp get ready for summer 2010! There will be projects of varying difficulty and skill level such as cabin and facility cleaning, gardening, painting, and basic maintenance. We will work from 9:00 a.m. and finish with supper and a sending worship service. Please call the church office to register.

Pastor Parish Relations Committee

Members of the congregation are selected by the leadership team of First Lutheran to serve on the Pastor Parish Relations Committee. This committee serves the congregation and the pastors as a 'sounding board,' and has a communications role between the congregation and its pastor. Members are: Merlin Bruns, Tifanii Dahl, Doug Dahlberg, Stephanie Doty, and Ted Pfohl. If you have feedback about our ministry together, please contact one of the committee members.

Confirmation Ministries

Sixth Grade: Students completing sixth grade this spring will continue their confirmation journey with a course on Prayer during VBS week, Monday-Friday, August 2-6, 9:00 a.m. to noon.

Seventh Grade: The seventh grade class on the Apostles' Creed is scheduled at Luther Crest Bible Camp during the week of June 20-25. Thirteen kids are registered – yay! Pastor Dave leads this class. Watch your mail for final details.

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

"Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings from the "Children First" Christian Preschool!

May is here! The last class days for Preschool are Wednesday and Thursday, May 19 and 20. May themes include ice cream, fish, whales, sea life and a celebration of summer fun.

May is Lead Teacher, Sarah Olson's last month at "Children First." We appreciate Sarah's three years of service to Christian education ministry at "Children First" and wish her God's continued blessings as she opens a home daycare.

Thank you to "Children First" staff, Pat Moller, Becky Nelson, Erin Makela, and April Kiffmeyer for their dedication to the children in the preschool. You are the best!

All are welcome to attend the Preschool Year-End Program and Ice Cream Social on Sunday, May 16, at 3:00 p.m. at First Lutheran Church.

We are excited to announce that the Jesus' Gems (4/5 year old) morning class is full! This is the first time in the school's nine year history that we have filled a class. We thank God for this tremendous blessing! Preschool enrollment for the 2010/2011 year continues for the remaining classes. Please contact the church office, or Gail if you have questions or are interested in visiting the classroom.

We had a fun and event-filled year. God has blessed us with wonderful children, caring families, many volunteers, and great friends. We watched the preschoolers grow in God's love and learning. It is a bittersweet time for staff as we see children move on to Kindergarten in the fall. We look forward to another year of learning with returning children and are anxious to meet new students and families.

God's Blessings to all!

Yours in Christ's Service,
Gail Hittesdorf, Director

Preschool Summer Day Camp

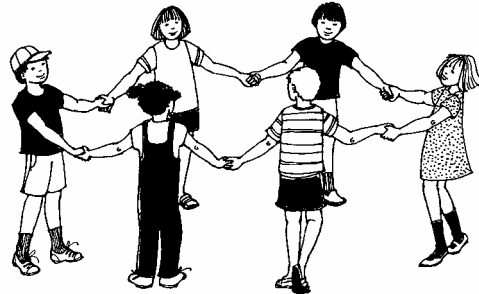
First Lutheran Church is offering two sessions of preschool summer camp for 3, 4, and 5-year-olds who have not yet experienced Kindergarten.

Session 1: Monday-Friday, July 12-16
3-year-olds

Session 2: Monday-Friday, July 19-23
4-5-year-olds

Sessions will meet from 9:00-11:30 a.m. at First Lutheran. 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 First website at www.flclittlefalls.org.

Registration deadline is Monday, July 5. For more information, contact Gail Hittesdorf, at 632-2218, or the church office.





**Vacation Bible School
August 2-6
High Seas Expedition!
Exploring the Mighty Love of God**

Ahoy thar mateys! We are headed for a High Seas Expedition where we will explore the mighty love of God! Vacation Bible School is Monday, August 2 through Friday, August 6, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. VBS is for kids age 3 (by September 1, 2009) through fifth grade. Kids will have fun with *Ship Rec Games*, enjoy a movie at *Sail Away Cinema*, hear a Bible story at *Bible Voyage*, make a project at *Clipper Ship Crafts*, and have a hearty snack at *Galley Goodies*. Registration begins Sunday, May 2. Pick up a form at church, or download it from First's website, www.flclittlefalls.org. Early registration makes planning easier. VBS is a collaboration of Bethel Lutheran, First Lutheran and First United congregations.

All hands on deck! Seventh Grade through Adult volunteer participation is crucial to its success. You can find the signup board in the gathering space at church. We are recruiting for crew leaders, station leaders, preschool leaders and helpers for all areas. Please prayerfully consider how you can share your time and talents during this fun week.

Graduating Seniors

**FLC Baccalaureate Sunday, May 16
10:45 a.m. Worship Service
11:45 a.m. Brunch**

We will honor the graduating seniors at the 10:45 a.m. service on May 16. Following worship, brunch is served to the students and their parents. Coordinators are the junior class parents. Please keep the graduates in your prayers.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Cody Boody</i> | <i>Jessica Martinson</i> |
| <i>Katlyn Boody</i> | <i>Ally Nagel</i> |
| <i>Rachael Dukowitz</i> | <i>Matt Nelson</i> |
| <i>T.J. Gregory</i> | <i>Paige Saulter</i> |
| <i>Odin Guerard</i> | <i>Nathan Schultz</i> |
| <i>Whitney Habas</i> | <i>Jamison Stanek</i> |
| <i>Eric Hegna</i> | <i>Noelle Joy Stumpf</i> |
| <i>Katelyn Henagin</i> | <i>Aisha Thompson</i> |
| <i>Sully Keehr</i> | <i>Samantha Wheeler</i> |
| <i>Ryan Kliber</i> | <i>Leah Wiczek</i> |
| <i>Bethany Marlette</i> | |

Sunday School

The final TREK session for the year, "Jonah" is underway. Ask one of the kids about being in the belly of the whale!

☺ Sunday, May 16, Last Day of Sunday School for all classes – don't miss the celebration!

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. Thank you to all who have helped in any way with Sunday Morning Education during the year!

News of the Family
Funeral

Carol J. Hewitt died April 15. Her funeral service was April 19 at First Lutheran. May God grant peace and comfort to her family and friends.

Baptism

Adella Rose Ambuehl, daughter of Jessica Waddell and Kris Ambuehl, was baptized on April 11.

Khloe Ann Reese, daughter of Ashley Adams and Travis Reese, was baptized on April 25.

Welcome to God's Kingdom!

Items for the **June NEWSLETTER** are due on **May 20, 2010!**



Spring Clean up Day
Monday, May 3

The spring clean-up day at church is Monday, May 3. Come at 3:30 p.m. (or when you can). We will wash the exterior windows and take care of other clean-up needs. Bring rakes, gloves and a willing attitude to make our church home sparkle. This is a wonderful service project for mentors and mentees. Keep in mind the old saying: "Many hands make light work." See you at church!