



“Servants of All”

October 2009

October 8, 2009

Special Congregational Meeting

Sunday, October 11, 2009

**Following 10:45 a.m. worship
(beginning at approximately 12:00 noon)**

At their September 8 meeting, the First Lutheran Church Council voted to call a special meeting of the congregation to address the following agenda items:

- **Whether to join an affiliation with the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC).** LCMC requires only a simple majority vote to join their affiliation.
- **Whether to withdraw First Lutheran Church’s membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).** This vote requires a 2/3 majority to pass. If passed at this meeting, it requires another vote after a 90-day waiting period. The second vote also requires a 2/3 majority.

To assist the congregation in its discernment with regard to remaining in the ELCA or affiliating with LCMC (Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ), First Lutheran Church Council is seeking to provide opportunities to inform members about the implications of either decision.

- + **Thursday, October 1,** at 7:00 p.m., LCMC Pastor Dave Gran and his wife, Anne, will be here to share their experiences with LCMC and to answer questions. Pastor Dave Gran serves congregations in Garfield and Brandon, Minnesota, Anne Gran serves on the Board of Trustees for LCMC.
- + **Thursday, October 8,** at 7:00 p.m., our ELCA Northeast Minnesota Synod Bishop Tom Aitken will be here to visit with us and answer questions.

Your attendance at these important meetings is strongly encouraged. For more information, please contact a member of the church council. Council contact information is available in the church office.

Pastor Nate’s Article
see page 2

Stewardship Article
see page 3

Worship News
see page 4

Adult Opportunities
see page 5

**“Children First”
Preschool News**
see page 7

Youth News!
see page 8

Fellow Ministers in the Word,

This summer our family took our annual vacation at Mount Carmel in Alexandria. For two hours each morning, I was privileged to listen to one of my former Professors from Seminary, Dr. Walter Sundburg. His sessions were based on a book that he has recently written which examines the history of Lutheran worship practice. In it he writes:

The purpose of liturgical worship is to call Christians to self-examination, to warn them to be under no illusion as to what they are and how far they fall short when they stand before God and holy things, to teach them to worship God in humility, to feed them the Bread of Life, and to make them ready to give testimony to Christ in word and deed.

True worship seeks the heart; its purpose is to change us! That's why we read of the necessity for self-examination in 1 Corinthians 11:27-29 where, in the context of giving us what we call the Words of Institution, Paul instructs us to examine ourselves before participating in communion lest we eat and drink unworthily. We, of course, don't make ourselves worthy to receive the gifts God gives us in the Lord's Supper. But we can make ourselves unworthy if we think such gifts are ours without first taking stock of our sin, our brokenness, and of just how "far short we fall when we stand before God and holy things."

Luther wrote in his Exhortation to Communicants (LW 51:104) that communion's goal is to change you and me. And that no one can come to the Lord's Table without confession.

This brings to mind the words of Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer when he claimed that "**we Lutherans have gathered like eagles around the carcass of cheap grace**, and there we have drunk of the poison that has killed the life of following Christ. We've given away the Word and sacraments wholesale; we baptized, confirmed, and absolved a whole nation without insisting on lives dedicated to faithful service and holy living. We've poured forth unending streams of grace, but the call to follow Jesus is rarely heard."

If nothing is required of faith, why practice faith at all? If the church is simply a reflection of our society and simply affirms our cultural standards, then what relevance does the church have in society? We have witnessed this in Western Europe and we see how deadly it has been to the church there—once life-giving communities of faith reduced to mere museums.

Too often, in our desire to be evangelical and to reach out to others, we scale back the requirements of the faith (ethically, theologically, and spiritually). We think that worship should baptize our agendas without changing us and bringing us under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and His agenda. Jesus died on the cross so that He could take the sin we bring to Him and wash us clean, remove it from us once and for all, and then, through His Spirit, heal us of its devastating effects so that we might be His agents of change in the world. In a world that has lost its taste for God's Word, we are called to be salt. In a world that is entrenched in darkness, we are called to be a light.

But for this change to begin, we first need to examine our hearts. We need to let God's law convict us and judge us. No one likes to be judged! Continuing with Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 11:31-32; "If we judged ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world." Judgment leads to justification. More specifically, judgment leads to repentance which brings the gift of forgiveness received in faith through which we are justified.

Let us never shrink from examining our hearts "when we stand before God and holy things" so that we can receive the gifts God has for us. This will allow worship to be truly transforming and allow us to follow Jesus into the world as He leads the way.

In Christ,

Pastor Nate Bjorge



“Empowered by God—Responding by Grace”

“Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking” (2 Corinthians 8:7).

In our last article as part of this year’s stewardship emphasis, we saw how God is our Source, how all that we have comes from Him, how He empowers and enables us, and how we respond by grace through faith. We also saw that like the Macedonian Christians, we are to first give ourselves to the Lord as good stewards of the grace of God.

Sometimes, when stewardship is mentioned, people wrongly conclude that giving money is all that is involved. Not so. Giving **does** include our financial resources, but it goes far beyond money and actually encompasses three primary resources. These are what might be called “building blocks” in God’s “school of faith” which constitute “lifestyle stewardship” or “total stewardship.”

First, there is the matter of our time. Time is one resource that is given to everyone equally. All of us have twenty-four hours in every day. No more, no less. How we use our time reflects accurately what is a priority in our lives. Some people have made the TV a priority in their lives. They might not admit it, but by totaling the amount of time they spend in front of the set, it would be hard to draw any other conclusion. Others have made sports a priority. How can we tell that’s true? Again, by the amount of time they spend pursuing sports. The key question is this: How much of the 168 hours available to each of us every week is spent in pursuit of God or in service to God’s kingdom, especially here in this ministry?

Then there is the matter of our talents, an area in which all of us have not been gifted equally. Some have been gifted by God to work with their hands, with machines, or with computers. Others excel in their ability to communicate orally or via the printed page. The effective outreach of the Gospel

here at First Lutheran Church is made possible only when God’s people who are part of this fellowship use their combined talents for God’s glory and for the good of this ministry.

Finally, there is the matter of our treasure. Don’t be confused. Money cannot buy salvation. Money cannot buy eternal life. Money can’t even buy security which God alone provides. But how we use money is an indication of our priorities. Think about the process: God owns everything. According to Psalm 24:1, “The earth is the Lord’s.” God has never relinquished His title deed to the world, but God enables us to earn that which rightfully belongs to Him. God then seeks to have us return a portion of what He has entrusted to us through our giving.

Giving is not to help poor God pay His bills. Giving is not because God needs anything from us. Giving is God’s way of growing Christians. Every time we give for God’s glory from hearts that have been redeemed by God’s love and grace, we give away a little of our selfishness. Every time we give of our resources, we grow in grace and in our walk with Christ.

As you consider your life during this time of stewardship emphasis, will you—like the Macedonian Christians—excel in the “grace of giving” by first giving yourself to the Lord? Will you then respond by grace through giving your time, your talents and your treasure to be used by God in this ministry?

As you consider your response to these questions, and as you seek the Lord’s direction concerning your giving in the next few months, please remember these simple yet profound words:

Only one life, ‘twill soon be past;
only what’s done for Christ will last.

© Kenneth L. Williams



Council Highlights

- ✚ Approved a Sunday evening worship service to begin on October 4, at 6:30 p.m.
- ✚ Council and FLC members will do Roadside Cleanup of our stretch of Hwy. 238 on Saturday, October 10, at 10:00 a.m.
- ✚ Called a special congregational meeting on Sunday, October 11, following the 10:45 a.m. worship service, for the purpose of voting on two agenda items. Item 1: Whether FLC should join an affiliation with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC); Item 2: Whether FLC should withdraw membership from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).
- ✚ Voted to withhold benevolence payment to the NE MN Synod ELCA until after the special congregational meeting.
- ✚ Church Council hosts the New Member Fellowship Meal to welcome new members on Sunday, November 1, 2009 following the 10:45 a.m. service.
- ✚ First Lutheran Church hosts Share A Meal on Thursday, December 3, 2009.
- ✚ Approved purchasing two headset microphones and three standing vocal microphones from undesignated memorial funds.
- ✚ Heard that white grape juice is now available at Holy Communion for those who prefer it.
- ✚ Heard that Pat Moller is serving as teacher's aide for "Children First" Christian Preschool.

Financial Update

2009 Mission Plan Budget	
January—September 27:	\$ 311,389
Actual received	
January—September 27:	\$ 270,944

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

New Worship Opportunity:

Evening Praise

Sundays at 6:30 p.m.

Beginning Sunday, October 4, we offer an Evening Praise worship service at 6:30 p.m. This service will be similar to the 9:30 a.m. Sunday Morning Contemporary Worship service. This is an opportunity for those unable to worship on Sunday mornings, those who may prefer an evening service, or those who desire a more suitable time to worship as a family. All are welcome! For more information, contact the church office.

Worship Leadership Opportunity:

Senior Choir

For those who have the gift of song, there is no greater ministry than to lead the assembly in worship and praise. Senior Choir is open to all singers high school age and above. Choir will rehearse Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. beginning on Tuesday, October 6.

This fall we welcome Choir Director, Kathy Pederson. Kathy and her husband, Bruce, both musicians, live in Pierz. Kathy has a degree in K-12 Music Education. She teaches piano lessons and preschool music at St. Francis Music Center. We are pleased to welcome Kathy to this position. For more information about the choir, contact Becky Nelson, Director of Music Ministries, at 749-2336, or rpnelson@brainerd.net.

↔↔↔↔↔↔↔**Adult Opportunities**↔↔↔↔↔↔↔

Women's Circles:

"To God's Beloved:

Paul's Letter to the Romans"

The Obedience of Faith: Romans 4

Martha Circle

The Martha Circle meets Monday, October 19 at 1:30 p.m. Sylvia Thomasson is the hostess and reader.

Ruth Circle

The Ruth Circle will meet Wednesday, October 21 at 2:00 p.m. at the church. Pastor Nate will give the Bible Study.

Mission Circle of Joy

The Circle of Joy meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month, at 9:00 a.m. at church. The next meeting is Tuesday, October 27. Questions? Call Naomi Engel at 632-3167.

Library Corner

Book Recycling for all ages!

Older and duplicate books from the church library will be available on Sundays, October 4 and 11. Come and select items for your personal library. Books are free but your donations are welcome. Donations received will be used to purchase new library materials.

Thank You!

Thank you!

To First Lutheran VBS Staff and Participants,
Thank you so much for the donation of backpacks and school supplies for Lincoln, Lindbergh and S.G. Knight elementary students. Your generosity will ensure our children have what they need for school supplies to start the year off with success. Thanks again,
Michelle Brekken, Laura Delhaine, Anita Larsen
Elementary School Social Workers

Men's Morning Bible Study

Wednesdays, October 7 and 21

6:15 a.m.

All men of the congregation and friends are invited to Men's Bible Study. We meet on the first and third week of each month on Wednesday morning at the church. The 6:15 a.m. study includes breakfast. The study will be completed by 7:40 a.m. to allow time to get to work. For more information, speak with Pastor Dave.

New Member Group

FLC's fall New Member Group begins this month. The group will meet on Sunday evenings; October 11 and 18, at 7:30 p.m. New members will be received in worship on Sunday, November 1. FLC council and commission members will host a new member meal following worship on that day.

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.



The Woodbury Chorus and Orchestra presents

**"From Despair to Hope"
Saturday, October 10, 3:00 p.m.**

At St. Francis Convent

Come for this free concert under the direction of conductor Gerrit Lamain. 100% of a free will offering will benefit the Morrison County Food Shelf. Come and bring a friend.



Lutheran Social Service Rummage Sale

Wednesday, October 14, noon to 6:00 p.m.
Thursday, October 15, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Friday, October 16, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

The Rummage Sale sponsored by the women of Bethel Lutheran and First Lutheran will be held at Bethel, 901 West Broadway. This is always a huge 'recycling' sale, and many hands are needed on set-up days (Monday and Tuesday) and for clean-up on Friday. The fellowship of working together to make this LSS mission a success is great! All proceeds benefit Little Falls area LSS group homes and other local LSS programs. Your donations of good used clothing, toys, books, linens, small appliances, etc. may be brought to Bethel the week prior to the sale. Please, no televisions, computers or computer parts.

For more information, please call Karen Haaland at 632-8828.

Cornerstones
(Seniors age 55 and better)
Potluck Lunch

Tuesday, October 20, 11:30 a.m.

We gather for potluck lunch on Tuesday, October 20 at 11:30 a.m. at church. Please bring a dish of your choosing to share—there's always plenty to go around! Bring a friend and come for food, and fellowship! For more info, talk to Pastor Dave.

World Habitat Day
Monday, October 5

Habitat for Humanity Morrison County urges your prayers on World Habitat Day for the ministry of Habitat and for ways that you might become involved in Habitat's mission to end poverty housing. You can make a difference right here at home by providing financial support, volunteering to help build the current home or on other projects. For more information, call the local Habitat office at 616-2084.



Annual Fall Craft and Bake Sale
at Lutheran Care Center
Saturday, October 17
8:00 a.m. to noon

Plan to attend this annual fundraiser at the Lutheran Care Center. The funds raised are used to purchase Christmas gifts for the residents. There will be baskets to bid on, delicious baked goods and craft items. For information about the craft sale, selling or donating craft items or bake sale items, or helping with the sale, call Donna Hegstrom, 632-3441, Pat Madsen, 218-828-4727, or Jean Petersen, 632-8151.

Roadside Cleanup
Saturday, October 10, 10:00 a.m.

Meet at church on Saturday, October 10 at 10:00 a.m. We'll carpool to our stretch of Hwy. 238 to do our fall cleanup. Dress for the weather and bring workgloves. All are welcome! Many hands make light work. ☺

"Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings from "Children First" Christian Preschool!

It is a new year of Preschool! We welcome new and returning preschoolers and their families. Get to know the families by checking out the family scrapbook pages hanging along the gallery wall next to the kitchen.

September fun included getting to know the people in your family, wearing our favorite colors, and meeting new friends and teachers. The last week of September the children learned about Fire Safety.

October brings fall harvest to the Preschool. We will learn our phone numbers, have a creative time with leaves, scarecrows, and pumpkins, and learn new songs. A Harvest Festival at the end of October will celebrate all that we have experienced. October 7 and 8 will be our first field trip days to Pine Grove Manor, St. Otto's Care Center, and Harmony House.

Thank you to everyone who visited the "Children First" booth at the Little Falls Arts & Crafts Festival. It was a great success. Thank you to those who give generously of their time and talents and to all who provide financial support through

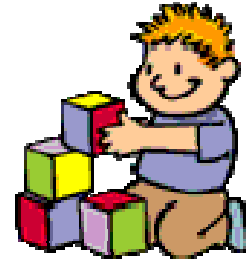
tuition assistance, scholarships, assistance with field trip costs and general contributions. "Children First" appreciates all of you!

We have openings in all classes, especially the Jesus' Gems afternoon class. Registration is open to all who are 33 months of age through Pre-Kindergarten. We accept registrations all year pending class openings. Please contact me if you have questions.

God's blessings and a huge "Children First" **thank you** to Teresa Herzog and Lori Ronning who are "retiring" from the Preschool Advisory Team. Their ministry has been greatly appreciated. God's blessing in their future serving!

Watch for the 2010 God's World Calendar fundraiser beginning October 12, orders will arrive in time for Thanksgiving delivery.

Yours in Christ's Service,
Gail Hittesdorf, Director



Sunday Morning Education Ministry

Thank you to all who have stepped up to share time and talents by choosing to teach, lead, support and help the Sunday School children. Because of you we began on Sunday, September 27.

No matter the circumstances, God does not wait or quit on us, therefore we do not wait or quit on serving God and his people in ministry.

We are seeking two individuals to serve on the Sunday Morning Education Ministry Team, to work alongside Pam Czech and Sarah Olson. Most of the planning is in place, responsibilities include: guiding, assisting teachers and leaders, getting to know children, youth, and teachers, taking morning attendance, and T.R.E.K. preparation. Please contact Pam Czech at 573-4193, Sarah

Olson at 632-1933, or Gail Hittesdorf at 632-2218, if you are interested or for more information.

The second five-week rotation of T.R.E.K. (Teaching, Reaching, Educating Kids about Jesus) begins November 1. Sign up on the gathering space table to teach or lead a station. There are only a couple of spots left...so hurry!

Christmas Program Coordinator: If you or someone you know is interested in serving as team leader for the Children's Christmas Program, please call Gail Hittesdorf as soon as possible. Several individuals are ready to assist with this team project. Thanks!

Confirmation Ministries

Parents: If you have not yet registered your children for confirmation and youth ministry activities, please do so now. Forms are available in the church office. Eleventh and Twelfth grade students must register in order to participate in youth activities.

Third Grade: Parents and youth should be finishing up Family Devotions on the Gospel of Mark. Home visits will be done in October; please call the church office to schedule a visit before the calendar is full!

Fifth Grade: Class on Holy Communion ended on Wednesday, September 23. Thank you to the fifth graders, their parents, and Pat Moller for helping to make the communion bread that we used in worship on Sunday, September 20.

Sixth Grade: Looking ahead – Human Sexuality class for youth and their parents begins Wednesday, November 4.

Ninth Grade: New Testament class with Pastor Nate continues on Wednesdays through October 28 (no class on October 14).

Tenth Grade: Lutheran Identity class begins on October 7 and meets on Wednesdays through November 18 (no class on October 14).

Eleventh Grade: Confirmation Reception for confirmands, parents, and mentors is Sunday, October 4, at 5:00 p.m. Students will present their projects and mentor activities and prepare for Confirmation Sunday. Confirmation practice will be Saturday, October 24, at 9:00 a.m. Confirmation Sunday is October 25, at 10:45 a.m.

Can Care Collection

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



Confirmation Sunday

October 25, 2009, 10:45 a.m.

Congratulations to the following youth who will affirm their Christian faith and become adult disciples (members) of First Lutheran:

Derek Anderson	Samuel Boody
Justin Colombe	Hannah Groves
Lindsay Kapus	Callie Krupke
Zackary Larsen	Tylor Lenz
Libby Marcus	Sean Monnier
Stephanie Ronning	Kirsten Sassen
Logan Weisz	Autumn Wonderlich



Advent Craft Sale
Saturday,
December 5
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

In just two short months the Advent Craft Sale and Luncheon will be here. We trust you are making plans to attend!

As in past years, we welcome your donations of crafts, bake sale items, and assistance with the sale. There will be a delicious soup luncheon, musical entertainment and lots of treats and gift items to buy! This year's sale will benefit youth programs at FLC. Your support is greatly appreciated.

News of the Family

+

Jessica Bird and Jamie Holm were united in marriage on August 29.

Joelle Holtberg and Shannon Gwost were united in marriage on September 25.

Amanda Kroll and Joe Hyatt were united in marriage on September 26.

+

Isaac Giovanni Ramos, Adrian Josiah Ramos and Elijah Brayden Ramos, sons of Armando and Cyrena Ramos, were baptized on August 30.

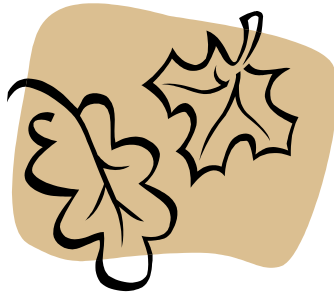
Dawnella Jean Wojahn, daughter of Briana Zyvoloski and Noah Wojahn, was baptized on September 6.

Ian Dennis Meester, son of Aaron and Deb Meester, was baptized on September 13.

+

Gloria Fillah died on August 29. Her funeral service was held on September 3. May God grant comfort and peace to her family and friends.

Sunshine Chairperson is Mary Larson. Please call 632-8203 if you know of someone who is ill, hospitalized, etc., so that she may send them a card.



Items for the **November NEWSLETTER** are due on **October 20, 2009!**

Daylight Savings Time Ends
Remember to set your clocks *back* one
hour on Saturday, October 31!