

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Beth Pottratz, Pastor

FIRST



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

“Servants of All”

August 2021, Newsletter



Pastor Beth's
Reflections
see *page 2*

Creation Care
Opportunities
see *page 4*

Mission Life
see *page 5*

Youth &
Education
see *page 6*

“Children First”
Christian
Preschool
see *page 6*

Youth News/
Vacation Bible
School
see *page 7*

This week around our house we are spending our time getting ready for a vacation. For weeks we’ve been making packing lists and planning out what we are going to take with us on vacation. And now as vacation gets closer, we are packing our bags and getting ready to go: picking out outfits, collecting personal care items, entertainment for the road, packing snacks...everything that we’re going to need as we leave our house for a week of travel.

Over the summer, in the cycle of our church life together, we are getting ready for the next school year to kick off. We are packing our school bags and getting ready for the year. We are getting our bags packed with curriculums, class plans, supplies, leaders, teachers, mentors, and students. For Sunday School, for Confirmation Classes, for Youth Group, for Bible Study, all as we live out our baptismal promises to grow on our own faith journey and to support and encourage the faith growth of our young people.

There has been some worry and anxiety in our congregation around our youth and making sure that our youth are well taken care of, continue to have the opportunity to grow in their faith, and feel like they belong and have a place at our church. This worry comes especially because during this pandemic, pastoral vacancy last year, and lack of a youth director, there has been less for our youth-focused activities in the church, just as there has been less for everybody all around. We have recently put out a job posting for a youth director position but at this point there have been no applicants.

Before Jesus send the disciples out onto a mission, Jesus instructs his disciples to **“take nothing for the journey, no staff, no bag, no bread, no money.”** The disciples were sent out to do ministry with exactly and only themselves—who they were and the gifts given to them by the Holy Spirit. Jesus instructed them that there was nothing additional they needed to take with them in order to do the

ministry that Jesus had called them to do. (Mt. 10, Mk. 6, Lk. 9, Lk. 10)

The same is true for us today as we look at how we raise our young people to be faith-filled adults. We need nothing more than what we already have, the people we have, the community we have, the gifts from the Spirit that we have present among us already. What is it that passes on faith to our young people?

The Four Keys of Faith Formation are CARING, CONVERSATION, RITUALS & TRADITIONS, DEVOTIONS and SERVICE when practice in home or congregation create an environment for “catching” faith. Congregations of “Catching” Faith integrate children and young people into all aspects of their life together, so that faith of older generations can “rub off” onto younger persons, provide children and youth with “clouds of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1), real life models of faith as they grow into their baptismal identity, and support families. (Hill & Anderson, “Frogs without Legs Can’t Hear”)

Take nothing for the journey. No staff, no bag, no bread, no money. We most certainly do not need to worry about not having all the “right” programs and a youth director. Because at the core of passing on faith is having a faith-filled community of adults share their faith and build relationships with young people. The Holy Spirit has already gifted us with what we need to raise faith-filled young people. We just need to be intentional, it’s up to each and every one of us, to continue to surround our young people as faith-filled adults—sharing our faith and build stronger relationships with our young people.

~ Pastor Beth Pottratz

Council Highlights

Congregation council did not meet in July.

Adult Opportunities

Worship Serving Opportunities

Each Sunday, many worshipers come to worship at First Lutheran Church, every week someone is here for the first time. **Your servant hands** are an integral part of providing hospitality to all who enter here. Stop by the sign-up board in the Gathering Space to offer your gifts in service to Christ's body at First Lutheran. Serving areas are greeters, ushers, scripture readers, communion ministry, and coffee hospitality. You can sign up for a time that fits your schedule. **Sign up now for August and September.** Training for each serving ministry is available—please ask! For more information, contact the church office.

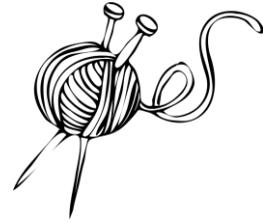
Funeral Hospitality

Providing gracious hospitality in the form of a meal and a welcome to grieving families and friends is one way that we serve together in ministry as First...Servants of All. If you would like to be involved in being a Funeral Luncheon Coordinator, providing meals or serving for funerals, please contact the church office, 632-6667



Caregiver Group Wednesday, August 4 12:00 p.m. (noon)

This support group is for those who are providing primary caregiving for a family member. This gives caregivers a safe and supportive environment to share thoughts, ideas, tears, and laughter. The next caregiver meeting will be at Zoomski's on Wednesday, August 4, 12:00 p.m. (noon). If you are a caregiver, please come for lunch and a little social time away. For more info, contact Parish Nurse, Tracy Moe at 320-282-5928.



Prayer Shawl Group

Do you enjoy knitting or crocheting? Come for fun and fellowship—bring a friend and your helping hands! We are making prayer shawls and baptismal shawls. We meet the second Monday of every month at 1:00 p.m. at the church – our next time is Monday, August 9. If someone you know could use the comforting hug of a prayer shawl, please contact the church office.



ELCA 2021 Churchwide Assembly

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will gather in Churchwide Assembly in Columbus, Ohio from **August 8-12, 2022**. There will be many important discussions and decisions made during this time. Voting members will Hear reports and review the work of churchwide officers, leaders and units; receive and consider proposals from synod assemblies, elect officers, board members and other leaders as specified by the constitution or bylaws, establish ELCA churchwide policy, worship together, adopt a budget, and more. You can follow along with the churchwide assembly by checking out the ELCA's website and Facebook page. Many of the deliberations will be live-streamed. The NEMN Synod's Voting Members and/or Bishop Amy will be attending the assembly. Congregations are asked to uphold the Churchwide Assembly in their regular prayers.

Creation Care Tips

You may have heard of the environmental idea of trying to live while producing no or very little waste. The idea of going Zero Waste can be overwhelming, but here are three things you can do to reduce the amount of waste you contribute and to begin moving in the direction of zero waste:

1) Carry a refillable water bottle or cup – you will save money, be more hydrated and it will make a real impact.

2) Recycle plastic film – expand your recycling habits by hanging a bag to collect plastic film such as shopping bags and overwrap on things like paper towels, etc. Most grocery stores have bins for accepting these items, which must be clean and dry to be recycled.

3) Compost food waste – food waste releases methane gas as it decomposes, and even a head of lettuce can take decades to decompose from lack of oxygen in traditional garbage facilities. If you can't compost at home, check to see if your community offers curbside composting, or drop-off sites and free composting bags for you to collect waste in. Store the bags in your freezer to eliminate smells, and when full take them to the compost drop. Check with your county to learn more about options in your area, and if none exist, you can be an advocate for instigating action in the community.

Your assistance with recycling in our church home is also appreciated. We recycle paper, newspaper, plastic, plastic bags and film, cardboard, batteries, glass, cans, aluminum cans, and anything else that we can avoid sending to the landfill. Thank you!



Thank you!

Thank you to those who have devoted time from their schedule to help with keeping the church grounds looking great. Many hands work behind the scenes to pull weeds, mow, plant, spread dirt and keep plants watered and fed. Your willingness to do these necessary summertime chores is very much appreciated!

Lutheran Social Service Rummage Sale Update

Wednesday, August 25, 11:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Thursday, August 26, 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Thursday is bag day - fill a bag for just \$2.00

This sale is now being held annually instead of bi-annually and is sponsored by Bethel Lutheran and First Lutheran, and will be held at Bethel, 901 West Broadway, Little Falls.

All proceeds benefit the Little Falls area, Lutheran Social Services group homes and other local LSS programs. Your donations of clean usable clothing, household items, small working appliances, books, craft magazines (only), and toys are appreciated (please, no furniture, textbooks, reference books, or encyclopedias) Please do not donate any electronics, televisions, or computer parts that are not working. Items may be dropped off at Bethel Lutheran Church starting on Tuesday, August 17 Their church office is open, Tuesday mornings and Wednesday afternoons. If you are unable to deliver your items during this time, please contact Lynn Worlie at 320-333-9332 to make other arrangements. Please note that set up starts on Tuesday, August 24th, so it would be greatly appreciated if you have your items to donate to the church by Tuesday morning. Thank you for all your donations and help; it is greatly appreciated.

Help with setup on Tuesday, August 24th starting at 8:30 a.m. is welcome. Volunteers are needed to work during the sale and clean-up of the church after the sale (we will need help for about 2 hours after the sale). Please bring a dish to share for potluck lunch during the days of the sale. Bethel is not serving lunch but will have bars for sale.

We really wish to thank all those who have so faithfully worked and contributed items for this sale. The LSS group homes really appreciate all that we have done. If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information, contact Karen Haaland at 320-632-8828.

Mission Life

Catholic Charities Foster Grandparent Program

Share Today. Shape Tomorrow. – The Foster Grandparent Program needs mentors for youth in our community! Currently there are openings here in Little Falls. Foster Grandparent volunteers traditionally provide one-on-one mentoring a few hours a week to at-risk youth to help them boost their self-esteem and overall success. In this role, you can positively impact the lives of children and youth and find a meaningful way to give back. Adults aged 55 and over can receive an hourly tax free stipend for volunteering as little as 8 hours per week (or more if they wish) assisting children with activities, reinforcing learning, helping with art projects and more. This is a great opportunity if you have time to spare, love to be with children, and could use some extra non-taxable income. For more info, please call Jon at Catholic Charities at 320-229-4593 or 866-895-7992.

Luther Crest Scramble A Fun(d) Raising Golf Tournament Monday, August 9

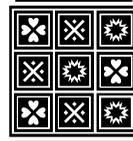
Get a 'foursome' together and spend a fun day playing this "Best Ball" tournament on the course at Lake Milona Golf Course, Alexandria. Registration begins at 11:30 a.m.; "shotgun start" tee time is at 1:00 p.m. Your registration fee of \$100.00 includes green fees, cart, driving range, balls, and meals. You can register a team at www.luthercrest.org. For more information, contact the church office.

Youth Volunteer Opportunity "Media Co-Pilots"

We are seeking junior and senior high youth that would like to help assist with media/video ministry for Sunday morning worship services. "Media Co-Pilots" would sit in the choir loft and assist the Sunday morning media volunteer. Training will be provided. For more info or to volunteer, contact the church office, 632-6667

Camp Knutson Annual Quilt Auction Saturday, August 14

Camp Knutson, at Crosslake nurtures the well-being of persons with special needs in a setting which celebrates God's love for community and creation. In 2010, over 1,000 campers with heart disease, HIV or AIDS, Down syndrome, severe skin diseases, autism or other diseases were served. Two quilts from the First Lutheran quilters along with many others will be auctioned. First Lutheran provides assistance on the day of the sale. Your support of the auction is greatly appreciated. If you would like to help with food concessions, attend or share a ride, contact Karen Haaland , 632-8828.



Luther Crest Annual Online Auction Begins Wednesday, August 18

God is actively at work at Luther Crest Bible Camp in Alexandria. Two beautiful quilts from the First Lutheran quilters will be auctioned off to benefit the camp at Luther Crest. Bidding opens Wednesday, August 18 at 10:00 a.m. and closes Friday, August 20 at 5:00 p.m. Winning bidders can pick up their items on Saturday, August 21, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., or contact camp for alternative pickup options. For more info visit, www.luthercrest.org/2021-online-auction.html or questions, contact Jody Johnson at 320-846-2431, or e-mail jodyj@luthercrest.org

Do you or someone you know have difficulty rising from a bed, sofa, or chair? We have a gently used 'couch cane and bed cane' available to help you stand from a bed, couch, chair or lift chair. Please ask the church office.

**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 summer 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 website at www.flclittlefalls.org

**Confirmation Ministries
2021-2022 planning is underway!**

Sixth Grade: During the week of Vacation Bible School (August 2-6), youth entering seventh grade in the fall study Prayer with Pastor Beth. Letters have been mailed to families.

Seventh Grade: Due to Covid, the Seventh graders missed out on this in-person confirmation opportunity on prayer. You are invited to participate in a combined grade-level class during the week of Vacation Bible School (August 2-6). Letters have been mailed to families.

Confirmants and Mentors: Mentor Gathering at First Lutheran on Wednesday, August 11 at 7:00 p.m., in Stolz Hall.

**Greetings from “Children First”
Christian Preschool**

We are excited to begin a new Preschool year! “Children First” Christian Preschool is in its 21st year. “Children First” offers children in our care, an opportunity to grow and develop daily through play, literacy, math, science, technology, and creative arts. Christian faith and learning are weaved into each day. Each child within our program benefits from on-on-one teacher time, small group learning catering to the groups’ development level along with combined large group experience. We communicate with our parents throughout the preschool year working to

ensure that preschoolers are ready for their future Kindergarten experiences.

“Children First” Christian Preschool is a non-denominational preschool serving children ages 33 months though Pre-Kindergarten. Classes meet Monday/Wednesday, Tuesday/Thursday, or Monday-Thursday. Class offerings are flexible to meet the needs of preschoolers and their families. You can begin with a two-day class and add days anytime throughout the preschool year pending classroom openings. Classes meet each day from 8:30am-11:30am. Registration/Enrollment forms are located in the Gathering Space within First Lutheran Church or on our preschool website: flclittlefalls.org/children-first-christian-preschool.html - There is a non-refundable registration fee of \$50.00. Monthly/Yearly registration fees are located on the registration form and vary according to classes chosen.

“Children First” registers students throughout the preschool year pending class openings allowing parents to choose preschool when children are developmentally ready for a preschool opportunity. If you are interested in preschool or would like to visit, please contact Gail.

Please mark your calendar for upcoming dates:

“Come and Go” Preschool Open House: Monday, August 30, from 5:00pm – 6:30pm. This will be a time for interested, registered new and registered returning families to experience our classroom and visit with preschool staff. Come and go as your schedule allows. We are excited to visit with you!

“Children First” will host a booth at the Little Falls Arts and Crafts Fair on Saturday and Sunday, September 10 and 11. Our booth will be located on the corner of Broadway and Second Street (Courthouse corner). We will be serving coffee, hot chocolate, pop and water. We look forward to seeing you at our booth and at the fair!

Thank you for keeping “Children First” families, children, and staff in your prayers!

In Christ’s service,
Gail Hittesdorf, Director
320-632-6667
childrenfirst@flclittlefalls.org

VBS Mission Project

We are supporting “Operation Backpack” once again. We are collecting backpacks (new or gently used) and the school supplies needed to fill them. Backpacks will be distributed to nine local schools for area kids in need. In 2019, over 90 backpacks filled with supplies were donated to local schools! Supply lists are available on the gathering space bulletin board. Donations of supplies may be brought to the collection box in the gathering space.



Vacation Bible School “TREASURED” Discovering You’re Priceless to God August 2-6

Vacation Bible School is here! Youth and adults will explore the Bible and learn that God knows you, God hears you, God comforts you, God forgives you, and God chooses you... *You are treasured!* We will start the day at Sing and Play Rock, then have fun with Jungle Gym Games, enjoy a movie and conversation at KidVid Cinema, have a Bible Adventure, make a project at the Imagination Station and have a snack at Vine Dining. Everyone welcomed to come wrap up each day at the Closing Quest!

This year’s VBS is a joint effort of First Lutheran, Bethel Lutheran, and First United Churches. To register, your child must be 3 years old (by September 1, 2020) through 5th grade (completed spring of 2021). Registration is free and underway. Advance registration is preferred but all welcome to register anytime during the VBS week. You are encouraged to register even if you are unable to attend every day. Registration forms are available at www.flittlefalls.org/vbs.html or you can fill out a registration form when you arrive for VBS. There are many fun ways for you to get involved. Youth and Adults are welcome to volunteer during the week. For more information, contact the church office at 320-632-6667.



Watch for it:
“Just Pray”

See You at the Pole
Wednesday, September 22, 7:00 a.m.

See you at the Pole™ is all about prayer. It’s about you coming together and laying aside all the labels and groups for one day, to simply connect with God in prayer and connect with fellow Christians in unity around the flag pole. Come and pray for your school, friends, families, and the world.

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. If you can assist with taking cans to be recycled, please contact the church office. Keep saving those aluminum cans! Thanks!

News of the Family

+

Vernon Pearson died on June 24. His funeral service was held July 6 at First Lutheran.

Steven Lundorff died on July 10. His celebration of life was held on July 19 at Camp Ripley Chapel.

Julie Blanchard died on July 21. Her celebration of life was held on July 26 at First Lutheran.

+

May God grant peace to their family and friends.

+

Items for the **September NEWSLETTER** are due on **August 16, 2021!**



Sunday Worship Schedule

- 8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship using a variety of liturgical settings
- 10:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship led by a Praise Band

Holy Communion is served at all services.

Come and See!

Stay after the 8:30 a.m. service, or come early for the 10:30 service, for coffee (leaded and unleaded!), treats and fellowship in the Gathering Space. Everyone is welcome!

First Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
2100 Riverview Drive
Little Falls, Minnesota 56345-4402

First...
Servants of All!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT
OR
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 14
Little Falls, MN