

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Ministers: All God's People at FLC

Jake Dyrhaug, Pastor

FIRST



“Servants of All”

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March 2019, Newsletter

April 1, 2019



A Season of Hope: Baskets of Promise for Lutheran World Relief

As we walk through the season of Lent together, you can announce to the world that the Hope of Christ makes a new season possible. We announce this hope in several ways: **We Give**—to brothers and sisters in poverty around the world; **We Make**—by assembling Personal Care Kits to offer hope for people coping with war, poverty and disaster; **We Worship**—all of the Sundays and Wednesdays in Lent and by waving Eco-Palms on Palm Sunday; **We Pray**—we read and share daily devotionals and pray for all brothers and sisters living in poverty that they may find increased stability and dignity.

This Lent we will again participate in Lutheran World Relief's Baskets of Promise appeal. Each week, we'll collect a different item that we will use to assemble Personal Care Kits that give people around the world tools to stay healthy in life's most challenging situations. In 2018 we collected supplies to assemble 100 Personal Care Kits—Thank you! We learned that the kits were distributed to refugees in Serbia. How many can we assemble in 2019? Watch for a date to assemble the kits later in the spring.

Here is the collection schedule so that you can watch for these items:

March 6	Bars of soap, 4-5 ounce, any brand in original wrapping
March 13	Bath towels, lightweight, 52"X27" max, dark color is best
March 20	Toothbrushes, adult size, in original packaging
March 27	Combs
April 3	Nail clippers, metal, attached file optional
April 10	Bars of soap, as above

You can bring items to church at any time, watch for the growing collection in the gathering space. Thank you for sharing the hope of Christ with all our brothers and sisters around the world.

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When I think of living life “on the edge of faith”, I think of something wonderful just on the horizon, or a magnificent view from a mountain, or I think of living on the perimeter, daring to venture out to the edge of the familiar in life or society. Or for someone who is just beginning to try trusting God, it can be that moment when that suddenly seems possible. Another image that comes to mind is downhill skiing, where you make your turns by getting “on the edge” of your ski in order to get a good grip to go where you need to go. This Lent, I invite you to come along on a journey that will take us to some of the places where the people surrounding Jesus began to believe and trust in the Savior as he went to give his life for us.

Beginning Ash Wednesday, March 6, we will be journeying through “Life on the Edge of Faith”, as each week we will reflect on those who were there as part of the Passion of Jesus: A Sleeping Disciple, The High Priest, A Maid, A Soldier, and A City Dweller. Here at First Lutheran we will be worshipping once

again with the Holden Evening Prayer service. Beginning the Wednesday after Ash Wednesday, each week prior to the service at First, a Lenten Soup Supper will be served from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

On Maundy Thursday, April 18, our 2nd grade students will receive Communion with the clay chalices they will make. Good Friday services will be at 1:00 and 7:00 p.m. once again, with Palm Sunday and Easter services the following Sunday.

Let us journey to the edge of faith this season of Lent as we walk with our Lord in the prayerful days for Christian disciples leading up to the time Jesus would give all, once for all on the cross for us.

Your Servant in Christ,

Pastor Jake Dyrhaug

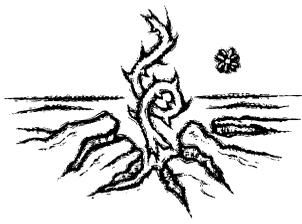
New Member Group

If you or someone you know would like to become a member of First Lutheran, we are preparing for the next new member group. We have set aside a time for the group to meet; we ask that you attend this session. The group will meet on Tuesday evening; April 23 at 6:30 p.m. New members will be received in worship on Sunday, April 28.



The group session is meant to help new members to find their place in the mission of the congregation, get to know others in the congregation, and discuss the foundations of the faith we share. Current members are encouraged to attend and make a new friend.

If God is calling you to membership at First Lutheran, this session is for you. For more information, or to sign up for the group, please call the church office at 632-6667.



Lent 2019



**7:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday Worship with
Holy Communion
and Imposition of Ashes
March 6
Soup Supper served at 5:30 p.m.**

With ash and soot we begin the Lenten season with confession; we begin with Psalm 51. Today this ancient prayer placed on our lips becomes new again: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions."

As we confess our unfaithfulness to God, our lackluster love for our neighbors, our neglect of suffering and injustice in the world, we ask God to wash us, to purge us, to create in us clean

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

*Adapted from Evangelical Lutheran Worship, pg. 87,
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For this year's mid-week worship services, we gather for soup and worship using Holden Evening Prayer. Come between 5:30-6:45 p.m. to share fellowship over a simple bowl of soup and slice of bread, worship is at 7:00 p.m. Freewill offerings received at the suppers support Oasis Central Minnesota homelessness project and First Lutheran's local mission assistance fund. Please give generously to these causes. Thank you to all who have already volunteered to provide soup or help with serving and cleanup. If you would like to lend a hand, please see the weekly board in the gathering space or contact Steven Weiss, 320-360-6881 or the church office.

**Lenten Devotions
Lasting Hope**

For each of the days of Lent, this small book contains a colorful photo, scripture text, quote to ponder, and daily reflection that explores the psalms assigned to the Sundays in Lent during this liturgical year.

Psalm 51 – March 6-9

Psalm 91 – March 10-16

Psalm 27 – March 17-23

Psalm 63 – March 24-30

Psalm 32 – March 31-April 6

Psalm 126 – April 7-13

Psalms 32, 116, 22, and 98 – April 14-20

For each of the days of Lent, this small book contains a colorful photo, scripture text, quote to ponder, and daily reflection. You may pick up a copy at church. Please let us know if you would like to receive a copy in the mail.

May Jesus, God's promised one, be with you on this Lenten journey.

Game Night
Sunday, March 3, 4:00-7:00 p.m.
at Great River Arts

Bring a friend and your favorite board game (or play one that is provided) and come to GRA for games and fellowship. The Congregational Life Team will provide the snacks, coffee, water, lemonade and juice. Adults may purchase beer or wine. For more information, contact Ted Pfohl at 320-260-8009.



Concordia Chapel Choir Concert
Thursday, March 21, 7:00 p.m.

First Lutheran will host the Concordia College Chapel Choir tour on Thursday, March 21. The choir will provide an evening concert for the community here at First Lutheran. There will be a few familiar faces in the choir! The congregation will provide supper and overnight housing for 79 students in host homes. If you are able to host students in your home, please contact the church office with number of students you can accommodate (2, 3, or 4) and whether or not your home has dogs or cats. Host homes will be asked to provide breakfast to the students and return students to church on Friday morning for departure on the next leg of their tour. We are recruiting for assistance in providing and serving the evening meal here at church. Mark your calendar and plan to attend and consider how you can assist with this event. Contact the church office for more information. Thank you!

World Day of Prayer
Friday, March 1, 5:00 p.m.
“Come—everything is ready”

Bethel Lutheran Church hosts the World Day of Prayer service in Little Falls on Friday, March 1 at 5:00 p.m. All men and women in the community are welcome.

This year’s service is prepared by the women of Slovenia and based on Luke 14:15-24, the parable of the great feast. Sestri, a women’s Slavic chorus based in Little Falls will provide music of the region. Following the service a pasty dinner will be served. Free-will offering for the World Day of Prayer.

World Day of Prayer is a worldwide ecumenical movement of Christians from many traditions who come together to observe a common day of prayer each year on the first Friday in March. World Day of Prayer services begin at sunrise in the Pacific and follow the sun across the globe on this day of celebration. Bring a friend or two and come for worship. For more info, contact the church office.

Women of the ELCA
Heartland Conference Spring Gathering
Thursday, April 11
8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Bethesda Lutheran Church of Malmö

All are welcome to attend this women’s gathering with the theme “My Beautiful Broken Shell” based on the text from 2 Corinthians 4:16, 18. The conference will include a speaker, a business meeting and election of officers for the Heartland Conference, a silent auction, worship and Holy Communion, and a lunch served by Bethesda Lutheran women. For more information, to register, or for directions to the church, please contact the church office.

Adult Opportunities:

Men's Bible Study Breakfast

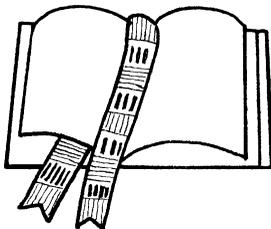
All are welcome to come for breakfast and Bible study! We meet Wednesdays, March 13 and 27 at 7:00 a.m. at the church. Come when you can, leave when you must!

Afternoon Bible Study Wednesdays, March 13 and 27 1:00 p.m.

Bring your Bible and a friend and come for study and discussion with Pastor Hank French. We are studying the mysteries of the faith.

Book Club

All adult readers are welcome to read with this group. Watch for the March book selection! The group meets on Tuesday, March 26 at 7:00 p.m. in the church library to discuss the book.



Martha Circle

The Martha Circle will meet Monday, March 11, at 9:30 a.m. at the church.

Thank you!

Thank you to all who have designated their Thrivent Choice dollars to First Lutheran Church and to "Children First" Christian Preschool. We have seen an increase in the number of Thrivent members who are eligible to donate these funds, and an increase in the amount. **Reminder:** March 31 is the last date to designate Thrivent Choice ® dollars from 2018. Please call your representative or the church office if you need assistance with this or have questions. Thank you for putting your Thrivent Choice dollars to work in mission and ministry at First Lutheran!

Council Highlights

- Welcomed new council members: Carol Anderson, Steve Jones, Carl Rydeen and Sue Sylvester, each serving a three-year term.
- Council members read and signed the 2019 Group Covenant.
- Voted to extend an offer of full-time employment beginning on August 1, 2019 to Diana Kempenich, as Youth and Family Minister.
- Designated the 2019 Lenten Soup Supper proceeds to Oasis Central Minnesota Homelessness project and for local mission assistance needs.
- Heard that plans were underway to organize storage areas.

Published Devotional

Congratulations to Erin Makela, daughter of Ron and Monica Makela for her published poem "Broken" printed in The Lutheran Message devotional, pages 38-39. You can pick up a copy in the gathering space. Keep writing and speaking your faith, Erin!

Health and Fitness Blueprint

Sometimes it seems like we hear a lot about all the other aspects of our faith-based life and not a lot about our health and fitness. But our bodies are a temple of God and we should treat them as such. As believers, the world is watching to see how we live, act and move- literally. Are we being good stewards with the body God has given us?

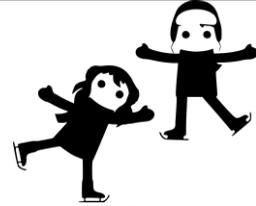
Everything we do begins with a foundation. Without a foundation we can't begin to build whatever we're building! Goals are our foundation. What do you want your fitness foundation to be? Now, I'm not talking about having vain or unrealistic health goals (i.e. size 1 or 8-pack abs), but healthy, sustainable goals. Maybe you've always wanted to run a 5K or maybe even a marathon. Perhaps it's just to be consistent in working out regularly.

Need some ideas? Here are a few that I encourage everyone to do. Walk 10,000 steps per day – that's five miles if you're wondering. Drink at least 64 oz. of water daily (you actually need more than that, but the eight glasses, 8 oz. each is easy to remember). Start with five pushups on the first day of the month and add one each day.

Just like building a house, you have a blueprint that shows the design, color, height, room sizes. Think of this as your health blueprint. Do you want to lose weight? Run further, faster? Eat less processed junk? Growth happens when we challenge ourselves. So don't be afraid to set the goals high and work towards them.

Pray about what your health goals should be. God cares about your health. If you don't have your health, you can't enjoy your family, friends and most importantly, Jesus! Get your health and fitness blueprint started today!

Adapted from Bible.com



Ice Skating at Little Falls Exchange Arena Monday, March 4 7:15-8:15 p.m.

We are able to use an hour of time at the ice arena for skating fun and exercise. Bring your skates and your family and friends to skate at the indoor rink.

Health Ministry Team Meeting Tuesday, March 12, 6:00 p.m.

The Health Ministry Team at First Lutheran is a team of four to eight people who care about the physical, emotional/psychological and spiritual health of our members who will work with the pastor and the Parish Nurse to provide educational materials/opportunities and to develop programs that holistically address the health-related needs of our members of all ages—children through senior citizens.

New members of this team are welcome. If you have interest, please come for a short meeting to discuss and share ideas about the health and wellness of our church community.

Tear Soup for the Grieving Wednesday, March 20 5:30-7:00 p.m.

If you or someone you know has experienced the loss of a loved one, you are invited to this gathering time to share a warm bowl of soup, hot bread, and a place to share stories together. There will be a memorial craft for us all to do as well. All are welcome. Bring a friend. We have rescheduled this event to take place during the Lenten soup supper on March 20. Please let us know that you are coming so that craft supplies are available for all.



March is Food Share Month

“Make us worthy, Lord, to serve those throughout the world who live and die in poverty or hunger. Give them, through our hands, this day their daily bread; and by our understanding love, give peace and joy. Amen.”
Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Hunger Facts:

- ✠ One in 10 Minnesotans or more than 500,000 state residents, experience food insecurity on a regular basis.
- ✠ More than 49 million Americans, including more than 16 million children, live in households that do not have consistent access to nutritious food. That is the equivalent of the populations of California and Ohio going hungry.
- ✠ In 2011, 900,000 veterans (not including homeless vets) relied on the SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) to provide food for their families.
- ✠ Of the families with children suffering from food insecurity and hunger in the US in 2012, 68 percent contained at least one adult working full-time, 10 percent had at least one adult working part-time, 7 percent had an unemployed adult actively looking for work, and 7 percent were headed by an adult with a disability.
- ✠ There were more than 3 million visits to Minnesota food shelves each year from 2011 to 2017, with over 3.4 million visits in 2017.
- ✠ 9.5% of all Minnesotans and almost 12.7% of Minnesota kids lived below the poverty level.
- ✠ During the 2013 Legislative session, a group of Minnesota lawmakers challenged one another to try to eat for a week on the average SNAP budget of \$1.29 per meal. Not one of them could do it.
- ✠ Morrison County Food Shelf serves an average of 1160 individuals or 406 families each month.
- ✠ 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 1st Ave SW.

Minnesota FoodShare is a program of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches founded in 1982. This interfaith organization provides education and advocacy about hunger issues in Minnesota and coordinates the largest food drive in the state each March.

“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 First Lutheran Church, or Coborn’s. Your financial gift may be given through First Lutheran, please write “Food Shelf” on the memo line of your check. For more information about the Morrison County Food Shelf, call 632-8304.

“...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me”
Matthew 25:35

"Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings from "Children First,"

Spring is right around the corner. February learning experiences and themes included: Color Fun, Dental Health, Valentines and Friends, America and "I Love to Read". Thank you to Heather and friends for our new toothbrushes! We were busy creating artwork and experimenting in science/math. Be sure to check out Preschool artwork/experiments hanging in the Education wing hallways. "Children First" has a Facebook page! "Like" us at Children First Christian Preschool. We use Facebook as a communication tool to share classroom activities with family and friends.

Please remind Bridgeway and Little Falls Health Services residents and friends of our visits. The children look forward to our visits and hope everyone will come see us! Thank you again to Andy's Charter Service for bussing our children!

"Children First" is ready to partner with families to build and strengthen academic, physical, social

emotional and spiritual growth of children. Drop-in classroom visits are welcomed. Planned visits are preferred so we can include your Preschooler in class projects and activities. Planned visits or registration questions may be directed to Gail Hittesdorf, Director, at 632-6667 or 320-291-4698, or by email childrenfirst@flclittlefalls.org.

Thank you to First Lutheran Church members and Preschool families for your generous monetary donations to our Gifting Campaign. We also appreciate all who take time to volunteer in/out of our classrooms. Time is a wonderful gift. Please keep us in your prayers for the continued success in the Preschool ministry and education. We appreciate everyone's support!

Yours in Christ's Service,
Gail Hittesdorf, Director

"Teach a child how he should live, and he will remember it all his life" *Proverbs 22:6*



Creation, Church, and You—Earth-keeping Practically Speaking

**Saturday, March 30, 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Brainerd**

The NE MN Synod EcoFaith Network leadership team presents this workshop to assist congregations with integrating care of creation throughout all of the congregation's activities. First Lutheran is sending a team to this event, if you have a passion for creation care and would like to attend please contact the church office. Thank you!

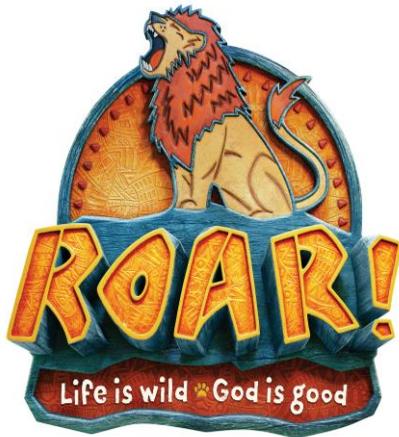
Eco-Palms for Palm Sunday Worship April 14

One small way that First Lutheran practices stewardship is through the purchase of Eco-Palms. Traditional harvesting of palms in Mexico and Guatemala has contributed to destruction of the forest and harm to the indigenous communities. Eco-Palms are harvested in a way that preserves the trees and also gives the workers a fair wage. May God bless the hands that do this work.

Progress!

We are happy to announce that we have found a source for individual communion cups that are biodegradable and compostable. The cups are made from corn! These will replace the plastic cups that we were unable to recycle.

Vacation Bible School 2019
Monday-Friday
August 5-9



It's time to begin planning for VBS! This year we will experience "Roar" where kids will discover that life is wild and God is good! Please give prayerful consideration to your call to this ministry opportunity. Many adult hands are necessary to have a fun-filled week of caring, sharing, and personal spiritual growth. Watch for more information in the weeks ahead and to learn more, contact the church office at 632-6667.

Confirmation Ministries

Second Grade: the sessions on Holy Communion, "The Welcome Table" are Sunday, March 10 and 17 at 2:00 p.m. This class is for second graders and their parents/guardians. Students who wish to receive communion as a class can plan to do this at Maundy Thursday worship on April 18 at 7:00 p.m. Letters have been mailed to families. Please call the church office if you did not receive a letter or for more information.

Grades Seven and Eight: Class time ended on Wednesday, February 27. Thank you to students and families for making confirmation learning a priority in your faith life.

Mentor Program: Students in grades eight are beginning their mentor relationships. Please keep the students and mentors in your prayers.

Sunday School News

Preschool Sunday School (Ages 3-PreK) continues to meet in the Ruth/Naomi room (south education wing) from 9:35-10:20 a.m. each Sunday. Thank you to all who assist with this class, you are appreciated!

TREK Rotation (Kindergarten-5th Grade)
We wrap up our section on "The Beatitudes" on Sunday, March 3. And begin a new three-week rotation "God's Promise to Abraham" on Sunday, March 10. For more information about TREK Rotation, or to volunteer to lead a station, you can lead with a friend or family member, contact the church office.

Youth in Grades 6-8 meet each Sunday for lessons, and fun!

If you have questions or would like to volunteer, contact 632-6667.



**“Spring Ahead”
Daylight Savings Time
begins on SUNDAY, MARCH 10**

Daylight Savings Time begins earlier than in the past. Remember to set your clocks *ahead* one hour on Saturday evening, March 9 – then you’ll be on time for church on Sunday, March 10! ☺

Sunday Worship Schedule

- 8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship using a variety of liturgical settings
- 9:35 a.m. Sunday School Hour
- 10:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship led by a Praise Band

Holy Communion is served at all services.

Come and See!



Items for the **April NEWSLETTER** are due on **March 20, 2019!**