

First Lutheran

APRIL MESSENGER

A NOTE FROM PASTOR SAUL

Issue 4, April 2015

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WHAT EVERY LUTHERAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE LORD'S SUPPER

Every year about this time, Pastor Jennifer and I meet with our fifth-graders and parents to help them learn about Holy communion. (They receive First Communion on Maundy Thursday, which is on April 2 this year.) I find it's also a wonderful opportunity for the parents to get a "refresher course" on what they should have learned in confirmation about the Sacrament of the altar. Let me share a few of the highlights of what we teach:

The Lord's Supper is a physical means of experiencing God's grace, through which we receive the gifts of forgiveness, salvation, and life – new life here and now, and eternal life after we die.

The sacrament is a way of having our spiritual batteries re-charged. We go out from worship having been fed, and being re-energized to serve God and our neighbor in our daily lives.

Holy Communion also helps us to live more confidently. In a rapidly changing and uncertain world, the sacraments provide us with a tangible means of understanding God's gift to us. Baptism makes us children of God. Receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper helps us to nourish and strengthen that relationship.

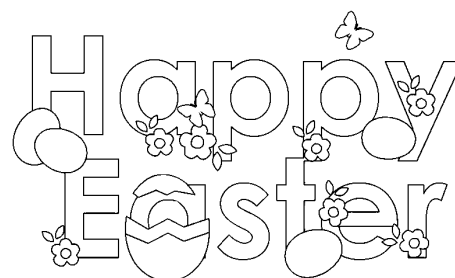
Martin Luther, in opposition to some of the other Protestant reformers, insisted on saying that Christ is truly present in this sacrament. Although the bread remains bread and the wine remains wine, Christ becomes present in, with, and under these earthly elements. This great mystery cannot be explained. But, although we can never really understand how, we believe that Christ is truly present. When we take the bread and wine, we receive Jesus Christ himself.

Teaching the fifth-graders every year helps to renew my own understanding and appreciation of the wonder of this amazing gift of God's grace. I hope that our Lord might remind each of you that He comes down to you each time you come to His table. He lovingly brings you the gifts of forgiveness, salvation, and life – renewed life now, and eternal life in the future.

In Christ,

Pastor Saul

Saul Stensvaag



TRIDUUM

April 2nd "The Wonder of the Meal"

Maundy Thursday

7:00 p.m.

Text: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Tonight we gather to eat some ordinary bread and drink some ordinary wine. But hidden in this meal is a mystery that is not ordinary and is so wonderful that it is hard for humans to understand.



April 3rd Good Friday

7:00 p.m.



The Adult Choir will present "Hear Us, Holy Jesus" by Douglas E. Wagner. As each candle is extinguished, music and scripture help us contemplate the deep meaning of Christ's death. The cross is veiled at the close of the evening service. The savior of the world is dead.

Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy.

Lord have mercy!

April 4th "The Wonder of Being Alive"

Easter Vigil

9:00 p.m.

Text: Romans 6:3-11

Tonight we receive the great news that Death has been defeated and contemplate the wonder of being made alive in Christ. No longer do we need to be afraid. Christ has won the battle, which frees us for new life in Christ.



April 5th "God's Great Surprise"

Easter Sunday

Text: Mark 16:1-8

The women on that First Easter Sunday are still in an emotional wilderness. There is nothing on their mind but death, failure, and the end of all their hopes. But God has a surprise for them – the wonder of the empty tomb. And nothing will ever be the same.



APRIL WORSHIP THEMES

April 12th "The Breath of Jesus"

Text: John 20:19-31

Today we hear the story of Jesus entering a locked room and breathing on the disciples the breath of the Holy Spirit. This gift is ours, too, and is a gift that brings us the incredible gift of new life!

April 19th "Kingdom Kids"

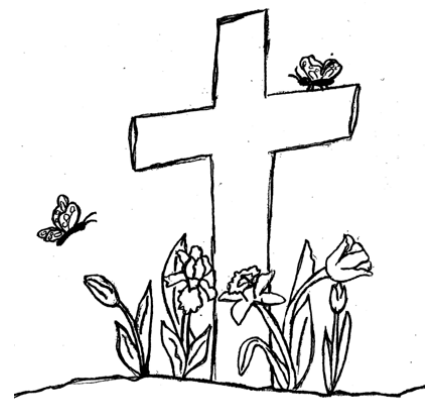
Text: 1 John 3:1-7

We are thrilled by the joy we experience as we celebrate Christ's resurrection each and every Sunday. But we're aware that we'll still face suffering, sorrow, and temptation as Christians in the world. Knowing that we are "children of God" gives us confidence to walk wet in Easter power.

April 26th "Humble Story-tellers"

Text: Acts 4:5-12

In an age of religious pluralism, Peter's claim that "there is no other name [than Jesus] given among mortals by which we must be saved" can be an embarrassment to sensitive Christians. But the cross of Christ can help us be faithful to the claim of His uniqueness as savior while at the same time loving and respecting those of other faiths.



Jeanette Fletchall

April Service Units

The following are the people in this Unit

Please say "YES" when you are called to help!

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruce & Wendy Anderson • David & Jeannie Anderson • Gary & Judy Boushley • Dane & Hannah Carlson • Donna Christianson • Josh & Amanda Duenow • Doug Elliott • Tom & Helen Harrington • Marjean Hanson • Gerald & Ruby Hanson | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donna Harlow • David & Lorri Holt • Steve & June Janssen • Lorraine Kantrud • Lee Kittelson • Walter & Mary Laney • Dan & Michelle Lembcke • John & Darlene Mandelke • George & Ann Mathison • Perry Mertz • Richard & Monica Miller | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve & Branda Mouritsen • Mark & Megan Neubauer • Jacqueline Ness-Ludwig • Al & Barb Pendergrass • Brenda Piekarski • Jamie & Stephanie Swenson • Pete & Jody Thom • Scott & Kim Ward • Kristi Wentworth • Tom & Lisa Wolfe |
|---|--|---|

NEW MEMBER CLASSES

Pastor Saul, Pastor Jennifer & the Membership Committee will be forming a New Member Community beginning Sunday, April 12th from 4-6 p.m. If you or someone you know is interested in exploring membership at First Lutheran – PLEASE COME. **Childcare available.**

All interested persons are asked to come on April 12, 19, & 26. This friendly, informal atmosphere offers an opportunity for everyone to get to know one another and take a look at our Lutheran teachings. Attending the sessions doesn't commit you to join.

New members will be received on May 17th (at the 8:30 a.m. service).



Council Highlights– March 2015

- The Council has approved a new website design and is in the process of having it created.
- We will be having the entire building tuck pointed this summer.
- The youth room make-over is well underway. Stop down to see it! :-)



**DEADLINE TO SUBMIT
ARTICLES FOR THE
MAY MESSENGER
IS APRIL 21st**

Photo Directory – If you were unable to have your photo taken for the directory there will be one more opportunity in June. Our June dates are June 10-13th from 2-9 p.m. Those dates are now open online for you to register at our website: www.firstlcfmn.com and clicking on the Lifetouch link or by calling the church office at 218-739-3348. These



are the final photo sessions so please sign up because we want you to be included in our First Lutheran church directory. Thank you to everyone who has scheduled their sessions so far, we really appreciate everyone who is involved in this wonderful tool for our church family!



Tanzania **Testimony**

By: Brooke Kollman

The second day after lunch we met with a lady named Elizabeth, who works with the hospice program, and we split up into two groups. Emma, Dani, Wendy and Kenny were in my group. We went to a boma, which is a group of houses where the extended family members all live together. The houses all face each other in a kind of circle. As we walked through every mom, dad, kid, grandma.. ALL of them walked into their homes. To me it was like they were scared to interact with a Mzungu, which means "white person" in Swahili.

"All of the smiles in Africa were the most amazing smiles you will ever see"

The home we were to visit was in the back of the circle. We walked in, and saw a lady who was about 30 years old. Elizabeth talked to her in Swahili, but then she would translate. We found out that her name is Amina and she has Cervical Cancer, and she also is HIV positive. She has a 5 year old daughter, named Chasemin who is also HIV positive. She was born with it.

While we were sitting there, there were two little girls outside the "door" which was just a sheet with holes. The little girls would look through the holes and if you looked back they would move away from the hole and start laughing so hard. I finally told one of them to come sit on my lap.

It was Chasemin and we started to clap hands and smile. Then the other girl came in and sat on Wendy's lap. The little girl on my lap did not know any English. But Dani and Emma started to make silly faces at her and she would copy, and it started to turn into a game where whoever laughed first lost. We got some good laughs from that! And need I say Dani and Emma lost every time! Elizabeth told us that Amina can't speak English, but she can understand it.

Then we walked out of the house and everyone else was outside of their houses. We were just standing around, taking all of it in and waiting for the vehicle, when all of a sudden Chasemin came hopping to us on her legs. She was squatting so it looked like she was a frog or something. So Emma, Dani and I all got down the same way and we started to go after her. Pretty soon all the kids were doing it and it kind of turned into tag. Next we stood up and they all chased after Dani, but we got tired so we stopped.

"I want to thank you, everyone, who supported the trip this year and in years past."

Right after we stopped, Amina, the hospice patient, came up to me. She looked at me and said, "Can we get a picture together?" So I whipped out my phone and took a 'selfie' with her! Then she gave me a big hug and I said to her, knowing she can understand English, "I hope you get better." She whispered in my ear, "I do too. Thank you, and I love you." Wow, that was one of the

parts of this trip where I saw God. Elizabeth telling us she doesn't speak any English, but she could tell me that she loved me. That was the most amazing thing to me. It felt like God had no clue what to say to me but he knew he needed to tell me he loved me. So he sent a lady who speaks no English to me and she tells me they she loves me.

"Wow, that was one of the parts of this trip where I saw God."

But after that, an elderly woman with a stick came walking to me, and started to ask me a question in Swahili. So what did I do? I smiled and nodded. Then she started singing and tapping her stick on the ground, and I was still smiling. So Elizabeth came over and told me what she was saying. She was asking if we could sing and dance for her. Well, there were kids, and moms, and everyone out there watching us. So we thought "what better song than the hippo song". So we starting "in the beginning God made the sea" and we kept going and did the actions. Next thing we knew the kids were copying us and doing the actions, and on the "hip hip hippopotamus" part the woman took her stick and stomped around with it! I bet they had no clue what we were saying but they loved it and I loved seeing the smiles on their faces! All of the smiles in Africa were the most amazing smiles you will ever see!

It was such an amazing experience and I want to thank you, everyone, who supported the trip this year and in years past. It was truly the best experience I have ever had and probably will ever have!



"Everlasting Love"

Join us as we partner with
Luther Crest Bible Camp!

God's love is amazing. God loves us so incredibly much. Join us as we gather together to learn more about God's incredible love for each one of us!

Each day we'll enjoy games, worship, art & crafts, Bible Dive, snacks, meeting new friends, lots of laughter, and much more!



Our summer theme verse is:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might."

Deuteronomy 6:5



Sign ups will start soon! Cost is \$ 30

Day Camp Dates: June 15-18 for kids who have completed Kindergarten all the way through 5th Grade age.

Contact Pastor Jennifer with any questions at the church office 218-739-3348

If you would like to volunteer, please call the church office and ask for Pastor Jennifer.



"Butterflies" Vacation Bible School

June 15-18th, Monday—Thursday

Sign up for a fun week of Vacation Bible school for preschool children (birth to 5 years old) and their parent, grandparent, or other "favorite" adult! The children will explore Bible parables through singing songs, listening to stories, creating art projects, playing, and being in fellowship with other young families.



Monday—Thursday: 9:00—10:30 a.m. Butterflies VBS

Registration for preschool children who will attend Butterflies VBS:

Child's Name _____ Current Age _____

Child's Name _____ Current Age _____

Child's Name _____ Current Age _____

****Please include notes about allergies, special needs, and considerations, etc.****

Parent's names and phone number(s) _____

Fee: \$5.00 registration per Butterflies family

_____paid

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN OF FIRST LUTHERAN

Love Days Quilters

Meeting Quilters Room

Every Monday (9-3)

We invite you to join us!



WELCA Board meeting

No meeting until MAY.

Circles; Wednesday, April 23rd

Sarah – 9:30 am at Pioneer Pointe

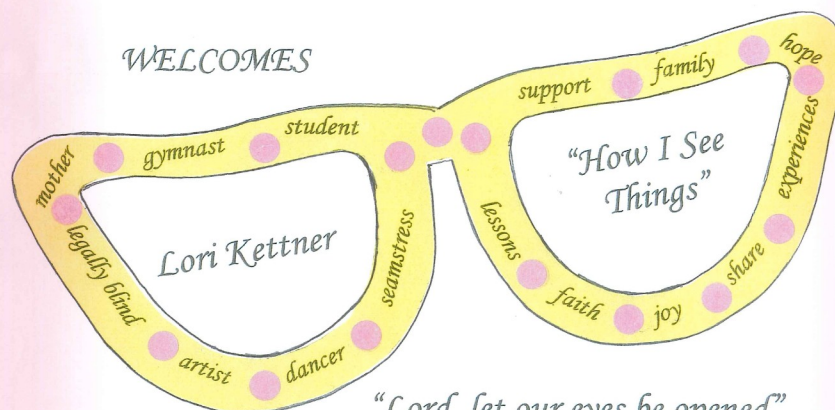
Hannah – 1:00 pm at Church

Women of the ELCA

Monday, April 13, 2015

Cluster 8 Spring Gathering

WELCOMES



"Lord, let our eyes be opened"
Matthew 20:33

Hope Lutheran Church
1309 Stony Brook Road Fergus Falls, Minnesota

Preregister at your church
Arrive at 4:30 Pick up reserved nametag
Meal at 5:00 Meeting and Program following Dinner

Registration deadline is March 31st.

Stop by First Lutheran Church office to sign-up.

Please make checks for \$10 payable to First Lutheran WELCA.



First Lutheran's

TASTE OF SPRING

ANNUAL SALAD LUNCHEON & BAKE SALE

Thursday, April 30th
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Start checking out your favorite salad and bar recipes that you plan to donate for the Luncheon and/or bake goods for the sale.

Sign-up sheets for salad, bars and volunteers to help that day will be available in the Narthex on April 12, 19 & 26. Please sign-up early!

Plan to attend and taste all these wonderful salads & bars, and pick up your homemade bakery items.

THANK YOU!



On Sunday, May 3rd, the Church

Council, on behalf of the entire Congregation, will recognize and honor the services of four of our music staff. This special recognition will be given to Linda Mellon, Harriet Wicklund, Keith Melberg and Mary Kay Stensvaag for their 100 years of music service to our church. A reception will be held between services, hosted by the Church Council. All are invited.





First Lutheran Church

April 2015

Cindy Larson
Sunday School
Superintendent

Sunday School News

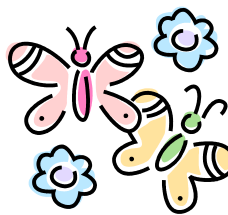
BUILDING FAITH: BRICK BY BRICK

By the time it's April, our fifth graders will be in the middle of their instruction with parents to learn about Communion. They will have molded their own chalice out of clay and will anticipate seeing their finished work at their First Communion on Maundy Thursday. On the 1st, the fifth graders will also make the Communion bread for that service. It's a special time for these students as they learn, participate and receive



First Communion. Another Milestone Class is offered on April 19th to students in 10th Grade. We invite the families to take this time to discuss the responsibilities and freedom of being new drivers and how being a Christian

may influence their choices. Our congregational member, Officer Connor West will be the facilitator for that class.



Mark your
Calendars:
"Butterflies" VBS
will be held
June 15-18

Happy Easter!
No Sunday School 5

"Butterflies"
0-3 yr. Olds and
parents 12

Sunday Funday! 19

10th Grade Mile-
stone Class 19

"Dragonflies" for
Preschool 2-
Kindergarten 19

10th Grade Blessing
in worship 26

**There is
No Sunday
School on
Easter Sunday
Happy Easter!**

"Can Hunger" Food Drive



Our students took on a challenge to exceed the number of items and cash collected for the Food Shelf last year. They were promised a Sunday "Funday" as a reward for their

efforts. We haven't seen the end results at this time, but are hopeful that, with your help, they will help fill the shelves of the food shelf! Thank you!





FLY NEWS

First Lutheran Youth

April 2015

Easter

Breakfast

Coming Soon!

- April 4: 7PM
Easter Breakfast Set
Up and Prep (We
will Provide Pizza!)
- April 5: Easter
Breakfast
- (Please Check
your Schedule for
your assigned time!)

- If you lost your
schedule, please
contact Pastor Jen-
nifer to see when
you are scheduled
to work!

April Fly Calendar:

April 1 NO FLY
(No Fly 57, No Sen-
ior Fly)

April 8 Fly K4, Sen-
ior Fly

April 15 Fly 57, Sen-
ior Fly

April 22 Fly K4, Sen-
ior Fly

April 29 NO FLY
(5th Wednesday)

THE GREAT 3 DAYS - THE TRIDUUM

I love liturgy and tradition. There is something about it that just really speaks to me. In the coming days, we have an opportunity to experience some truly incredible worship services and I want to explain them a little bit to you in this space this month.

Maundy Thursday—7 PM,

April 2. What does the name mean? The term "Maundy" comes from the Latin "mandatum;" it is from a verb that means "to give" or "to command." After Jesus and the disciples finished the Last Supper and walked toward Gethsemane, Jesus taught them a new commandment -- "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (John 13:34). On the first Maundy Thursday, after they had eaten, Jesus gave the

disciples his body and blood together with the bread and wine for the forgiveness of their sins. After Holy Communion is celebrated it is customary to "strip the altar," which symbolizes the abandonment of Jesus by his disciples and the stripping of Jesus by the soldiers before his crucifixion.

Good Friday - 7 PM, April 3

No vestments or paraments are used on this day. We gather somberly as we listen to the music of the choir sing about the crucifixion. Tenebrae is usually held the evening of Good Friday and includes the gradual dimming of the lights and extinguishing of candles.

Vigil of Easter - 9 PM, April 4

The Easter Vigil is the pinnacle of the church year. Held between Holy Saturday and sunrise on Easter morning, it is the

first celebration of Easter.

The Easter Vigil begins outside of the church building where a new paschal candle is blessed. Worshipers are reminded of the connection between the Passover of ancient Israel and the new Passover, which is Christ's victory over sin and death. Alleluia! The alleluia is used for the first time since the beginning of Lent. This is truly a night like none other! I hope you decide to take part in the Triduum this year—the great 3 days. May God Bless you through this Lent and Easter Season. You are in my prayers!

In Christ,

HGTV, MEET YOUTH ROOM!

If you haven't been to your youth room in a while, you're in for a major shock! The room has been undergoing a major transformation. New couches and carpeting have been ordered, new paint has already been

applied to the walls and floor, and we have done some serious organizing. Right now it may be in a

little bit of a mess, but soon it will be AMAZING. Come on down and check it out! Thank you to the First Lutheran Foundation for the assistance in purchasing the carpet, and to the Memorials and Special Gifts Committee for the installation of Wi-Fi!



OUTREACH



The 2015 Meals by Wheels schedule:

- April 6-10 & 13-17
- July 20-24 & 27-31
- November 2-6 & 9-13

If you are interested in driving for Meals by Wheels, contact Rick at 205-6963. We drive 5 routes each day, so we appreciate all the help we can get - even if it is one day!

Thank you to the First Lutheran volunteers and to those who gave blood at our March 6 Red Cross Blood Drive. There is always a need for blood donations in our Red Cross region and American Red Cross greatly appreciates our efforts and our support of their blood drives.



Buck-a-Chick is here! This Lenten season, our congregation will again be participating in the "Buck-a-Chick" program through ELCA World Hunger Relief. A \$1 donation buys a chick for a family living in poverty. Once the chick begins producing eggs, the eggs provide nutrition to the family and/or can be sold at marketplace for income. Please consider donating to the Buck-a-Chick program. The sale will run March 15 to April 19. You can purchase the chicks in the narthex at the "Buck-a-Chick" table, writing "Buck-a-Chick" on a check and putting in the offering plate, or stopping at the church office.



Operation Bootstrap Africa

We want to share the thanks and joy received in their thank you letters for our 2014 benevolence gifts to the MaaSAE Girls Lutheran Secondary School (MGLSS) and the Selian Lutheran Hospital/Arusha Lutheran Medical Center (ALMC) in Tanzania. Over the past 20 years, more than 650 students have now graduated and the school ranks in the top 10% of all Tanzania secondary schools by exam scores. Last year every MGLSS Form 4 graduate passed her national exam compared to the Tanzania national pass rate of 58%.

These girls are wonderful role models and are contributing in many positive ways to their families and communities in Tanzania. The Selian Lutheran Hospital/ALMC serves the poorest of the poor in this region of Africa with specialty surgeons scheduling trips to volunteer at Selian/ALMC providing services to children with club feet, cleft palate, skeletal fluorosis and plastic surgery for burn victims. Their hospice program serves as a model for all of Tanzania and their staff is called upon for training and assistance by other hospitals. Many

graduates of the MaaSAE Girls Lutheran Secondary School go on to be hired in the Selian/ALMC programs training to be social workers, clinical officers and nurses which is an exciting partnership for Operation Bootstrap Africa. Our donation of \$5,000.00 (\$2,500 to each organization) helps them to continue their great work. Thank you to everyone in our congregation for your generosity that makes this donation possible.

