

AUGUST MESSENGER

First Lutheran Church—Fergus Falls, MN

A NOTE FROM PASTOR SAUL STENSVAAG

17 YEARS OF ADVENT AND LENTEN THEMES

As I was cleaning out my files recently in preparation for my retirement, I came across all of the Advent and Lent/Easter brochures that we have had over the seventeen years I've been your pastor. There have been some wonderful themes – years when the Planning Task Force was able to come up with a powerful theme and was able to use stunning visual effects to help present the theme. Let me just highlight a few.

In 2000, the first year we had a Lenten Theme, it was Journey of the Cross, and our large Good Friday cross appeared first down by the sign on Union Avenue and moved each week closer to the sanctuary until, on the Fifth Sunday of Lent, it stood right in the midst of our sanctuary seating, where we couldn't ignore its message.

There was the year our Lenten theme was Walking Wet, and a gurgling fountain in our chancel reminded us of the promises of our baptism, and our call to walk wet in a Good Friday world.

There was Reflections of God's Love, when tiny mirrors suspended above the sanctuary reminded us of the need to take time during Lent to reflect on the basics of the faith, and also of our need to reflect the light of Christ in the world.

Who can forget the year our theme was Road Trip, when, on Easter Sunday, we heard the throaty rumble of two Harley Davidson motorcycles fire up in the narthex at the close of our worship?!

There was the suspended figure eight which reminded us that the Christian life is to be a constant back and forth between the altar and the street; gathering around the altar to hear the gospel and be fed and re-energized, and then sent out into the world to Go in Peace - Serve the Lord.

One of the most amazing visuals was when the Task Force created a dry riverbed, representing the desert of sin that our world often is, which was transformed into an amazing Garden of New Life on Easter Sunday with an actual brook flowing over the rocks on the chancel steps!

One year, the entire Lenten season, including the sermons each week, was a contemplation of the parable of the Prodigal Son, and we were treated to many examples of the way artists down through the ages have tried to depict this powerful story of a Father's unconditional love.

Perhaps my favorite, even though the visual was very simple, was one Advent Season when the theme was God Comes Down in Love. A large, downward arrow symbolizing how "Our God always comes down to us, and at Christmas he comes down in love to be born in a stable."

Friends, as you look to the future, know that God will continue to come down in love to you as individuals and as a congregation. Trust God to guide you in grace and love.

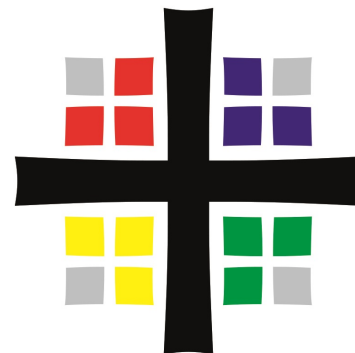
As we take our leave, I want to assure you that we can still be your friends, but I also need to remind you that I can no longer be your pastor. You have excellent pastors in

Jennifer and Stan, and I know that the Holy Spirit will see that just the right senior pastor is called to serve you into the future. Please love and embrace that pastor as you have loved and embraced me and my family.

Love in Christ,

Pastor Saul

Saul Stensvaag



ANNUAL OUTDOOR WORSHIP & POTLUCK—AUGUST 14 @ 10:00 A.M.

First Lutheran Church is having their Outdoor Worship and potluck on August 14th at 10 a.m. at the Pebble Lake Picnic Shelter in Fergus Falls. There will not be worship at First Lutheran Church that day. Please bring a dish to share, there will be hotdogs, buns,

and beverages provided. Also, bring a lawn chair to save the best seats in the grass. Our Praise Band will be playing at this service. We hope you can come and enjoy the outdoors!



ATTENTION OWLS (OLDER WISER LUTHERANS)

On Wednesday, August 17, we will travel by coach bus to the Long Lake Theater in Park Rapids to see the touching musical comedy "I Do, I Do." The coach bus will load in the lower level parking lots at 8:45 a.m. and leave at 9:00 a.m. Lunch, shopping and flower tour on your own in Park Rapids—leave Park Rapids for play at 2:00 p.m. and the show is at 3:00 p.m. Supper in Detroit Lakes. The coach bus is sponsored by the OWLS, cost per person for show is \$20.

We will return to Fergus Falls by about 8 p.m. Please pay by check (payable to First Lutheran OWLS) when you sign up at the info counter before August 11. Friends welcome! Call Margaret Kratzke with any questions at 218-736-3697



Long Lake Theater, Park Rapids

FIRST LUTHERAN'S ADULT CHOIR

The strains of "Keep your lamps, trimmed and burning" are still resonating with me as the choir sang it's final piece of the liturgical year. Another season is in the books, and what a year it was. My first year as choir director was very satisfying for me, and I thoroughly enjoyed the relationships forged in making music together with the choir at First Lutheran. Of course, I stand on the shoulders of those before me, and those who gave aid to our group, such as Harriet Wicklund, our former director, Linda Melon, the bell choir di-

rector and Mary Kay Stensvaag, the children's choir director as well as Pastor Saul. It would have been more difficult without their participation. I want to thank them from the bottom of my heart. And thanks Ashley for help with organizing and last, but not least, thanks to Keith Melberg for accompanying the choir. I have said to the choir many times that they would not want me playing piano for them!

Now for next year. How do we do things? We generally rehearse every Wednesday night for the upcom-

ing Sunday service, just one tune or so unless special circumstances in the service require more music. For the most part, around two appearances per month. Extra appearances requires music for Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and Easter. So that is the task of the choir. To be a member is to simply show up at 7:30 in the choir room (as easy as that) and no audition is necessary—just a love of choral music. Quite a few of our members will go south to see palm

trees and there are various schedule conflicts, but we have enough generally to sing. So committing to the whole year is not required and you can come as you can.

This is a great fellowship that we have as a group, and it is not limited to any age group! So come out and sing with us!

Erik Vigesaa
Adult Choir Director



CEMETERY COMMITTEE: DIRECTORY AT NORTH CEMETERY

The First Lutheran Cemetery Committee will be placing a directory at First Lutheran North Cemetery that looks similar to the one pictured below.



On the inside walls of the structure will be a glass case with the Directory of names and location of each cemetery plot. This will help families locate their loved ones faster and easier. The case will look like the one pictured on the right.



If you are interested in funding this project please write "cemetery directory" on the memo line of your offering check. If you have any questions, ask any of our Cemetery Committee Members: Steve Leitte, Jerry Toso, Mark Hermes, Leonard Hatzenbuhler, John Aune, Ken Rose, Roger Neuleib, Tom Willett, and Kearly Toso.

NEW BOOKS AND VIDEOS COMING SOON TO YOUR CHURCH LIBRARY!

Your Library Committee has ordered new children and adult DVDs and fiction and non-fiction books with a generous gift from the First Lutheran Foundation. Soon they will be out on the shelves.

A few new books that were purchased include:

- *7 Days of Awesome* by Byous & Jack
- *You Were Made to Make A Difference* by Lucado, Bishop & Gillespie
- *Searching for Jesus* by Hutchinson
- *Grace* by Max Lucado
- *Lutheran Questions, Lutheran Answers: Exploring Christian Faith* by Martin

Numerous DVDs were purchased including:

- *Veggie Tales*
- *Auto-B-Good*
- *Paws & Tales*

Watch for them! Check them out for your reading and viewing pleasure! The Library is open whenever the office is open.



A NOTE FROM OUR CHURCH COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Dear First Lutheran, I hope all of you are enjoying the wonderful days of summer. It seems that every summer passes quicker than the one before. As this summer rushes on, it puts us closer to the retirement of Pastor Saul. His final Sunday with us will be August 28th.

I want to give you some information about the interim process as we enter this time of transi-

tion. We are expecting to have an interim pastor in place starting in September. Many of you have questions about the forming of a Call Committee. We will not be forming this committee until our Interim is in place. I have been in contact with the Synod office in Moorhead and they are working diligently at finding a good fit for our congregation.

We will be hosting an

Appreciation Celebration & Potluck for Pastor Saul and Mary Kay on September 18th after the 11:00 service. We hope you can join us for this potluck and time of sharing.

As we go forward, please keep the Church Council, the church staff, and our entire congregation in your prayers.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Abrahams
Church Council President

"We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose."
Romans 8:28

FLY news August 2016



We have had a busy summer! Here's a few pictures from some of our many adventures! Watch the calendar for upcoming August Events!



WORSHIP THEMES

August 7th—“Lofty Promises”

Text: Luke 12:32-40

Well advanced in age, Abram was promised by God that he would be a Father. It seems like a pretty lofty promise. It's hard to believe – Abram doubts and Sarai laughs! What other promises are we given that seem a little too-good-to-be-true? And what if – they actually came true?

August 14th—Outdoor Worship at Pebble Lake Picnic Shelter @ 10 a.m.

“Free To Be”

Visitation Pastor, Stan Satre

‘Go ahead little bird. You can fly if you want to.’ Those could be the words to describe the reason that Jesus came to this world. He came to make it possible for us, human beings, to be what we were intended to be, but which we could never be without his help.

August 21st—“Beggars All”

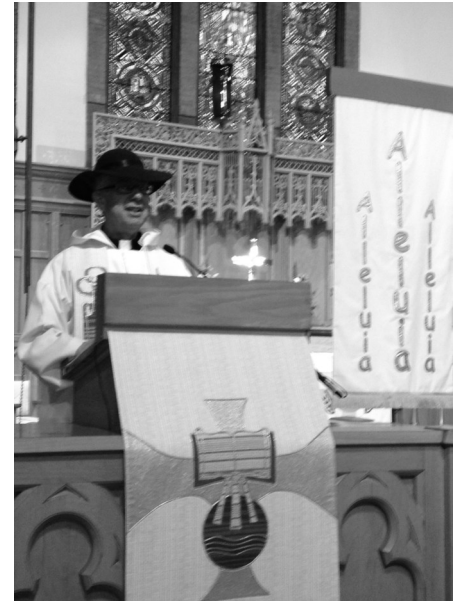
Text: Luke 18:9-14

Two men approach God in prayer, with two very different attitudes. Martin Luther, at the time of his death, was said to have written: “It is true, we are all beggars before God.” The only difference is that the tax collector knows he doesn't deserve God's love and grace. Do we?

August 28th—“Pastor Saul's Greatest Hits”

Text: Luke 14:1, 7-14

When you've heard a pastor preach for 17 years, certain themes keep recurring. Today, on His last official Sunday, Pr. Saul shares the Biblical and Lutheran themes he's most passionate about. (Just in case you missed them the first time.)



Pastor Saul with his hat with a veil—
God's light burns so bright that some-
times we need to wear shades!

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

This is your month to be called to action! Please see the sign-up sheets at church for the opportunities to serve. All are welcome to sign-up any time of the year. You're welcome to sign-up as much as your schedule will

allow. We appreciate your time & talents and sharing them with us here at church.

AUGUST SERVICE UNITS

THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE ARE IN THIS UNIT
PLEASE SAY “YES” WHEN YOU ARE CALLED TO HELP

Shirley Alfredson

Liz Kulla

Verna Anderson

Eric & Melissa Babolian

Jaime Bengtson

Janet Centers

Melissa Duenow

Christina Emerson

Jerome & Jay Ann Grant

Dustin Harris & Hayley Sokness

Allan & Judy Jensen

Steve & Roxanne Kronemann

Orrie & Dalcy Leabo

Greg & Mary Jo Marcus

Jim & Linda Matter

Gary & Janice Mickelson

Laverne Morstad

Lynn & Carla Olsen

Dan & Lynn Ouren

Tom & Kristi Rufer

James & Michelle Shearer

Paula Skaalrud

Gloria Springer

Ty & Katie Stortroen

Beth Swenson

Ronald Tomhave

Gerald & Karen Toso

John & Carol Totland

Tyler & Nicole Walls


**We're
Searching for
Volunteers**

OUTREACH

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

"There is a Significant shortage of blood for hospital patients right now and the American Red Cross has issued an emergency request for people eligible to schedule a blood or platelet donation as soon as possible. Donations are urgently needed now to fully meet the needs of hospital patients in the coming days and weeks."

-American Red Cross

First Lutheran Church is always

proud to support such a great cause like the American Red Cross by hosting blood drives in our building. Our most recent blood drive in mid July was a great success. **On day 1 they collected 55 units and Day 2 they collected 51 units! That means that with the hard work from everyone who contributed to the drive they are able to help up to 318 patients!**

The Outreach Com-

mittee would like to say a special thanks to the members of our congregation who volunteered: Rick & Linda West, Morgan West, Marjean Hanson, Sandy Kvern, Allegra Anderson, Judy Werner and Wendy Anderson. We couldn't have done it without your help, Thank you!

We also want to invite the entire congregation to get involved in volunteering at the blood drives we host. It is a great way to learn more

about the American Red Cross and what they do to help others in need. If you are interested in being a volunteer at our next blood drive, please call Rick West at 218-205-6963.

Our next drive is scheduled for November 11, 2016 from 11 a.m.-4 p.m.



American Red Cross

MEALS BY WHEELS—OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE

Meals by Wheels schedule for First Lutheran Church:

Aug.22-26

Aug. 29-Sept. 2

Nov. 28-Dec. 2

December 5-9

If you are available to drive for Meals by Wheels, please contact Rick West at 218-205-6963. First Lutheran drives 5 routes each day on the week we are assigned, so we really

appreciate all the help we can get—even if it's just one day of the week! Thank you to all the dedicated drivers who do so much for their community.



OPERATION BOOTSTRAP AFRICA UPDATE

The following letter was received from OBA in late June:

Dear Friends at First Lutheran Church,

Thank you from all of us at Operation Bootstrap Africa for your generous gift of \$2,000 received on June 20, 2016 for Selian Lutheran Hospital/Arusha Lutheran Medical Center (ALMC) in Tanzania,

headed by Dr. Mark Jacobson. Your gift provides much needed primary healthcare for the children of Africa, their families and their communities.

Selian/ALMC's goal is to serve the poorest of the poor, providing competent and compassionate medical care. In addition, Selian/ALMC has a hos-

pice program serving HIV/AIDS patients, as well as an AIDS education program. Their hospice program serves as a model for all of Tanzania, and their staff has been called upon for assistance and training in other hospitals.

Many graduates of the MaaSae Lutheran Secondary School have gone on to be hired at Selian/

ALMC programs to be social workers, clinical officers and nurses. An exciting health care partnership for OBA! Thanks for your ongoing support.

Regards,
Diane Jacoby
Director

WOMEN OF FIRST LUTHERAN—OPPORTUNITIES TO GATHER

Love Days Quilters meets second Monday of the month, August 9th,
from 9 a.m.—3 p.m.
All are welcome!

(No WELCA Board meeting or Circles until September)

*She is Clothed with
Strength & Dignity
and laughs without
fear of the future.*

Proverbs 31:25



September 16 & 17, 2016

29th Annual Convention

Northwestern Minnesota Synodical Women's
Organization of the ELCA

Calvary Lutheran Church
Perham, MN

Hosted by Calvary Lutheran Church, Perham and Immanuel Lutheran Church, Wadena

Visit our website at www.nwmnsynod.org



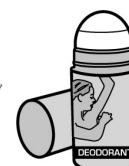
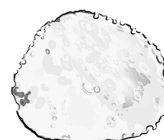
**Registration forms are available on
the info counter for the NWMN
Synod WELCA Convention**

PHYSICAL OFFERING FOR CONVENTION

At the 2016 SWO convention we are asking you to bring gently used purses filled with items all ladies need and use. These purses will distribute through Someplace Safe, a non-profit organization working to eliminate violence in West Central Minnesota and beyond.

Suggestions of Items
to include in the
purses:

- Full size bottles of unopened Shampoo and Conditioner
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Unopened body wash/soap
- Razors and Shaving Cream
- Shower sponges
- Body Lotion
- New brushes or combs
- Mouth Wash
- Deodorant
- Tampons/Maxi pads



Thank you for supporting this cause!
If you have any questions, please contact the WELCA Chairpersons, Donna Quam or Gayle Fitz.



Come Share the Spirit



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

September 11th—RALLY SUNDAY

8:30 & 11:00 A.M.—Worship Resumes

9:45 A.M.—Sunday School resumes

9:45 A.M.—Adult Bible Study resumes

First Lutheran Church
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Fergus Falls, MN 56537
Phone: 218-739-3348
Fax: 218-739-0916
E-mail: firstlc@live.com

PASTOR SAUL & MARY KAY STENSVAAG—APPRECIATION CELEBRATION & POTLUCK

Sunday, **September 18th**, following the 11:00 a.m. worship service, we will gather in the Fellowship Hall for farewell to our Senior Pastor and Children's Choir Director with a potluck meal to follow. Dessert will be provided. Save the date, more details to come!

"...remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. "

1 Thessalonians 1:3

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Thanks to Mark Patterson

09-13-2000

WALLPAPER TO SATISFY THE PASTOR'S EGO

CHURCH COUNCIL COLUMN

Hello all! With Pastor Saul leaving we will also be losing our children's choir director in Mary Kay. We wish them the best in the future and thank both of them for their dedicated, caring service to our church. As the Personnel Committee Chair, I, along with my fellow committee members, are tasked with filling Mary Kay's proverbially "big shoes". We are actively searching for a replacement, but would encourage any of you to contact me if you have a recommendation for someone within or outside the congrega-

tion. The choir meets every Wednesday after school from 3:45-4:30 p.m. for rehearsal. The Choir typically sings in worship once a month. The position is paid from September through May. Any inquiries/recommendations can be directed to myself at joe@nycklemoelaw.com

Joe Ellig
Personnel Committee Chairperson