

# FEBRUARY MESSENGER

First Lutheran Church—Fergus Falls, MN

## A NOTE FROM PASTOR SAUL STENSVAAG

### MY FAVORITE PARABLE

Every three years, in our assigned Gospel texts for Sunday morning, we encounter Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son on the fourth Sunday in Lent. It has become my favorite parable, because of the beautiful way it talks about the unconditional, undying love of our Heavenly Father, who is always willing to welcome us home with open, forgiving arms.

Henri Nouwen has written a delightful devotional book based on this parable. He calls it, *From Fear to Love*. He has some astonishing things to say about how we are to find ourselves in this parable. (Which, incidentally, is one important way to read any of Jesus' parables - find myself in them.) Nouwen writes:

*"I want you to know that you are the younger son, that you are the older son, and that you are called to become the father who loves unconditionally. There is a younger son in you that needs conversion,*

*and there is an older son in you that needs conversion. There is also a father in you that needs to be revealed to you so that you can receive the younger and the elder sons who 'return' to you day after day.*

*Somewhere at the end of it all, God wants all of us to be present at the banquet. The banquet is not only because the youngest returned, but it is for the eldest too, and for the father. Together. We are called to be united in the Father and as the Father. 'Be perfect as your Father is perfect,' Jesus says. 'Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate.'*

*So, claim humbly the 'younger son' in you, and claim the 'older son' in you. And strive to claim the God in you who receives and forgives your straying child within."*

The Lent/Easter Planning Task Force this year has come up with the theme: **LENT: DISCOVERING THE TREASURE**

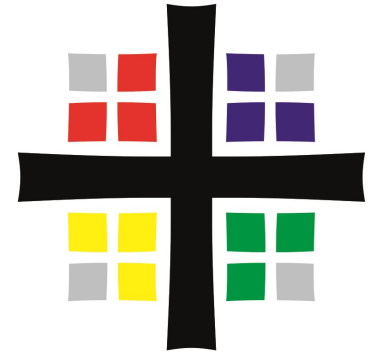
My hope for each of you is that by the grace

of God you might rediscover the treasure of the Christian Family. My hope is that you may rediscover that the lost brother or sister you dislike and reject is really your brother or sister in Christ. Your heavenly Father wants you to sit at the same table together. May you rediscover that all those whom you have called enemies basically belong to the same family as you do, and that we all belong around the same table, together with our heavenly Father and our brother, Jesus Christ.

In His Name,

*Pastor Saul*

Saul Stensvaag



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*Happy  
Valentine's  
Day*

**DEADLINE FOR  
THE MARCH  
MESSENGER IS  
TUESDAY,  
FEB. 23**



# February Fly News 2016

First Lutheran Youth, Fergus Falls, MN



## Senior Fly Schedule:

(8th-12th Grades)

February 3: 7:30-8:30

February 10: 7:45-8:30 Games & Grub  
(After Ash Wed. Service)

February 17: 7:45-8:30 Games & Grub  
(After Vespers)

February 24: 7:45-8:30 Games & Grub

## Fly K4 and Fly 57 Schedule:

(4:30 PM-5:15PM)

February 3: Fly 57

February 10: Fly K4

February 17: Fly 57

February 24: Fly K4



## God is Love!

Love is a tricky thing. Even for adults, love is confusing! What did God say about Love? Jesus said, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* (Matthew 22:37-39). As we approach St.

Valentine's day, love is in the air. We often think of "love" as a feeling or an emotion, to feel affection for someone. But Jesus didn't usually talk about feelings. Instead he commanded actions for living out faith: Follow me... Pray for those who persecute you... You give them something to eat... Go and do likewise... Take and eat... Which

leads me to believe that in these two great commandments, Jesus is commanding us to act – to love, not just with affection and words, but with our whole lives.



It's not easy to love like this. Loving like this means being kind, looking at people the way that God looks at them, speaking positive things about people that probably don't deserve it, and serving

people with your whole heart. My encouragement to you: give it a try. See what happens! :)

And remember that God's love is amazing. God loves you deeply and personally. You are God's favorite. You are a beloved child of God. Don't forget it!

*Pastor J. J. J.*

## Family Ministry Game Night

Join us for a fun evening of Board Games on Sunday, February 21, from 5 to 7 PM! Bring a few

board games with you and be prepared for a fun time of



gathering together with friends! All ages are welcome, singles, couples, babies, adults. Pizza supper will be provided.

Please bring drinks for your family and come for some fun!



FIRST LUTHERAN  
CHURCHSPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:

- In keeping in line with our theme of SHINE, the Children's offering was designated for ELCA World Hunger; raising money for mosquito nets.



## FEB. EVENTS

First Grade 7  
Milestone Class  
with parents

"Butterflies" 14

First Grade 21  
Blessing in  
worship

Yes, there is 21  
Sunday School!

Yes, there is 28  
Sunday School!

# Sunday School News

CINDY LARSON  
SUNDAY SCHOOL  
SUPERINTENDENT

FEBRUARY 2016

## "SHINE" every day 2016

"And they'll know we are Christians by our love" I was reminded of this old camp song when I thought about our theme, "Shine".

Do they see our love for Jesus shining through us everyday?

Our actions and words may help others want to know the joy we share in Jesus. As an example, Our Sunday school students collected so many

Coats and warm clothes to share with others in our community, that it filled my car to the brim!

That's one way we showed our Christian love and shined! Our new SPARK story studies The Lord's Prayer. Kids are challenged to recite the prayer at Sunday School. We are hanging up an award in the hallway for those who

have it memorized.

Our students are shining examples of love. Their dedication to learning about God's love and sharing it with others is refreshing!

"Let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

Matthew 5:16



## Faith Milestone Classes



Every grade has a Milestone Class once a year on a different topic. We want to help you and your child have a faith experience through play, games, special guests, hands-on

activities, fellowship and conversation. As partners with you in your child's faith education, we can facilitate a time for families to discuss lots of faith related topics that are age

appropriate. We appreciate your efforts in being in attendance at these one-time a year classes. Added bonus: a great time to get to know other First families!



## WOMEN OF FIRST LUTHERAN—OPPORTUNITIES TO GATHER

**No WELCA Board Meeting**

**Love Days Quilters meets every Monday from 9 a.m.—3 p.m. Everyone is welcome!**

### **CIRCLES**

**Wed, Feb. 24th**

**Sarah at 9:30 am  
Pioneer Pointe**

**Hannah at 1:00 pm  
First Lutheran Church**

## THANK YOU FIRST LUTHERAN WOMEN!!

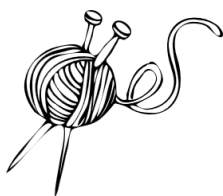
A goal of \$900 was set to be raised by FL Women in 2015 for the Thankoffering and we were able to send \$1,055. Total amount raised is sent to the church-wide women's organization to help address concerns of women and children in crisis—especially the crisis related to poverty, health, AIDS and domestic violence. In 2014, Thankofferings totaled over \$900,000 from 2,450 congregations. The blue

offering envelopes you received in the November Messenger were put to good use! Thank you Sandy Pearson for doing all the book work and sending it in!!



## ARE YOU AWARE???

We have a supply of hand knit prayer shawls (in the office) available to be given to persons who are ill. Anyone in the congregation who has a friend or knows someone who should be visited could give a prayer shawl along with the visit. This little prayer is given with the shawl—"You are special to God and to First Lutheran Church. This prayer shawl was made especially for you, and we pray that as you unfold it, it will keep



you warm in His love, and at peace in your heart. " Maybe some of you knitters would be interested in having a pattern—it's a nice project to do in the convenience of your own home. If you would like more information about this, talk to Pastor Stan Stare or Ashley in the church office.



## VALENTINE PARTY FOR THE OWLS (OLDER WISER LUTHERANS)

(Anyone who is eligible to order from the "senior menu at Perkins" is eligible to be an OWL) Come join in the fun! **Saturday, February 13th at 11 a.m. at Café 116** for lunch and entertainment! The small side room is reserved for us. Sign up at the Info Counter before Wednesday, Feb 10th so we have a count. Questions?? Call Margaret Kratzke



## WORSHIP THEMES

### February 7

#### **"Breath of Heaven"**

**Text: Genesis 2:4b-8, 18-25**

In the second creation story (in Genesis 2) when God breathes His breath into the man, he is given life. God continues to breathe His Holy Spirit into men and women today. Transfiguration Sunday is about seeing God at work in our world. How would your life be different if you acknowledged the breath of the Holy Spirit within?

*Ash*  
WEDNESDAY

**February 10**—Ash Wednesday

#### **"Moth-proof, rustproof, theft-proof"**

**Text: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21**

Jesus words at the end of our Ash Wednesday Gospel set the stage for our Lenten Theme: *Lent: Discovering the Treasure*, when he says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

### February 14

#### **"Worldly Temptations"**

**Text: Luke 4:1-13**

Three times the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness with worldly treasure: food, power, and security. Three times Jesus resisted the temptation, trusting in God.



### February 21

#### **"Count the Stars"**

**Text: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18**

How many stars are in the sky? Our universe is vast, huge, and amazing. Today, childless Abram is promised descendants as many as the stars. What a promise! Today we join in thanksgiving to God for the treasure of God's good creation.

### February 28

#### **"Treasures for All"**

**Text: Isaiah 55:1-9**

Come! Eat, and Drink! Today's text offers a gracious invitation to exiles living outside of Judah to come to the land that is overflowing with abundance. God's gifts overflow for all of us. How can we be gracious stewards of God's treasures and help share these gifts with the world?



## FEBRUARY SERVICE UNITS

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

Allegra Anderson

Ross & Carrie Anderson

Patti Ashworth

Mark & Diane Boen

Chris & Lindsey Clark

Carolyn Ellingson

Marcia Ferber

Steve & Gayle Fitz

Kurt & Pam Gustin

Kevyn Heck & Angie Bowman

Robert Hemmingson

Mark & Susan Hermes

Denny & Ruth Hystead

Gary & Pam Jaenisch

Wayne & Marlene Johnson

Sue Kilde

Shane & Kristen Kragness

Robert & Barb Lorsung

Darryl & Dana McClafin

Linda Merz

Dale & Jann Peterson

Gerald & Christine Peterson

Karen Schafer

Brian & Ann Shuck

Art & Karin Storm

Doris Teberg

Laurie Tomhave

Brian & Kristin Torgerson

Greg & Tara Wagner

Pam Western

Tom & Jane Willett



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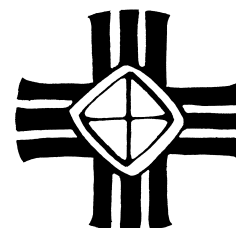
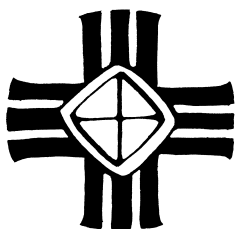
### BURIALS AT FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH CEMETERIES FOR 2015

#### **BURIALS SOUTH CEMETERY**

Peggy Peterson  
Leo Jorschumb

#### **BURIALS NORTH CEMETERY**

Alice Anderson  
Mark Brown  
Bette Henkes  
Katherine Jimmerson  
Baris Oscarson  
Ted Stahl Jr.  
Kenneth C Toso  
Carol VanderLinden  
Valdine Wollan



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### **RELAY FOR LIFE**

Our First Lutheran Church **Relay for Life** Team will be selling Herberger's Community Days Coupon Books as a fund raiser until February 21 between church services. Please show

your support for our team by purchasing \$5 coupon books which are available on the info counter at church on Sundays and also in the church office during the week.



### **A PLACE TO BELONG**

First Lutheran Church received 23 thank you cards from members of A Place to Belong after the Christmas Giving Tree gifts were delivered. We want to share a few of them with you.

*Thank you for the warm sweatshirt and gift card. It feels nice to know people like you care about us at A Place to Belong.*

*Thank you very much for the Holiday gift*

*card—to get away from the house is a pleasant thing for me. Winter time can get tough on me. I am very grateful.*

*Thank you so much for the sweater. Your group makes many of our members Holidays much brighter. Thank you.*

*Thank you for the card making supplies! I plan to make cards for friends, family*

*and the lonely elderly ladies in my apartment building. Thank you so much!*

As you can see, the gifts you have brought to church in December, have impacted the members of A Place to Belong in such an important way. It brings us closer as a community by giving to others in need. Thank you to each and everyone who supported the Christmas Giving trees this year.