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,

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,

Saul Stensvaag

Inside this issue:

FLY News 2
Sunday School News 3
WELCA 4
Thankoffering 4
Prayer Shawls 4
Worship Themes 5
Service Units 5
2015 Burials 6
Relay for Life 6
A Place to Belong 6

DEADLINE FOR THE MARCH MESSENGER IS TUESDAY, FEB. 23
February Fly News 2016
First Lutheran Youth, Fergus Falls, MN

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!

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!
Sunday School News

“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!
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 Pear-son 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
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?

February 10
“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”
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

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<td>Allegra Anderson</td>
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<td>Tom &amp; Jane Willett</td>
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First Lutheran Church
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Fergus Falls, MN 56537
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E-mail: firstlc@live.com

February Messenger

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 sup-
plies! 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 De-
cember, have impacted the
members of A Place to Belong
in such an important way. It
brings us closer as a commu-
nity by giving to others in
need. Thank you to each and
everyone who supported the
Christmas Giving trees this
year.

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

Relay for Life

Our First Lutheran
Church Relay for Life
Team will be selling Herber-
ger’s Community Days Cou-
pon 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.

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