

MARCH MESSENGER

First Lutheran Church—Fergus Falls, MN

A NOTE FROM PASTOR JENNIFER ROSE

Dear Friends,

My youngest son, Charlie, who is 20 months old, is in love with someone. You might think that this person that he is in love with is “Mama” or “Dada” – and I know Charlie loves us too – but Charlie has someone else that makes his heart go pitter pat. Charlie is in love with Elmo - the furry red little monster on Sesame Street. Charlie has a few Elmo movies – one of them being a movie called “Elmo in Grouchland.” In this movie, Elmo’s favorite blanket is stolen by an angry man named Huxley – a man who has a problem with a little word: “MINE.” He steals toys and trinkets from everyone and stamps “MINE” all over them. He clearly has a problem with sharing. It’s a nice lesson for kids, and as we have 4 of them and they clearly need to share things (especially attention from Mommy and Daddy) it’s a lesson that is worth learning well in our house.

I’ve been thinking about this movie a bit lately, and wondering how much we are like Huxley. We like to sort of “hoard” things. We may know people who have lost jobs or who are struggling financially to a significant degree. But those of us living relatively comfortably tend to stay at the sidelines. We sit around and do nothing – thinking to ourselves that our contributions don’t matter, or that they won’t add up. We cling to our material possessions – when we should be instead clinging to the words of Jesus that say, “and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.” (Matthew 10:42)

It is my encouragement to you, dear friends, during this season of lent. Give of yourselves deeply and richly. Invite a family over for dinner. Give generously to the Fergus Falls food shelf. Participate in the ELCA World Hunger 40 Days of Giving program. Talk as a family about other ways that you might be able to give of your time, talent, or treasure. Offer your support in whatever ways you can. God loves us always - even when we’re like Huxley. But our Sisters and Brothers in Christ need our help. Thank you for all you do!

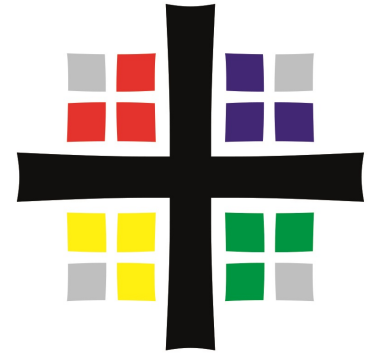
And at the end of the day, the one thing that you should hold close to you and say is “mine” – is the treasure we receive from Jesus – the priceless treasure of knowing that you are God’s dearly beloved child – and that nothing can change that. That, my friends, is priceless.

Jesus, Priceless Treasure (ELW 775)
*Jesus, Priceless treasure,
source of purest pleasure,
Truest friend to me:
Ah, how long I’ve panted,
and my heart has fainted,
thirsting, Lord for thee!
Thine I am, O spotless lamb;
nothing in this world can hide thee,
Naught I ask beside thee.*

In Christ,



Pastor Jennifer



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Mark Your Calendars!!

April 10, 24 & May 1	New Member Classes (4-6pm)
April 21	Salad Luncheon (11am-1pm)
May 8	Confirmation Dessert & Rehearsal (7pm)
May 15	Reception of New Members & Rite of Confirmation
May 15	High School Senior Recognition Dessert
May 29	High School Senior Recognition Sunday

WOMEN OF FIRST LUTHERAN—OPPORTUNITIES TO GATHER

**The WELCA Board does
not meet in March**

Love Days Quilters meets every Mon-
day from 9 a.m.—3 p.m.

All are welcome!



CIRCLES

Wed, March 23rd, 2016

Sarah at 9:30 am @ Pioneer Pointe
Hannah at 1:00 pm @ First Lutheran
Church

GATHER MAGAZINE

Gather magazine is published 10 times a year by Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. There are many interesting and inspirational articles as well as a Bible Study in each issue.

You can get *Gather* on your iPad, Android, and Kin-

dle Fire. Download the app via iTunes, Google Play, or Amazon. All you need to access the articles is a print subscription. Call 844-409-0576 or go to www.gathermagazine.org/subscribe to get started (\$15 for a year). Find out more at gathermagazine.org.

TASTE OF SPRING—ANNUAL SALAD LUNCHEON & BAKE SALE

Thursday, April 21st, 2016 11:00 a.m.-1:00 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 4th, 11th and 18th. Please sign up early! Plan to attend and taste all these wonderful salads and bars and pick up your homemade bakery items. **Thank you!**

EASTER PLANTS



Spring Flowering plants are needed to decorate the church on Easter. If you would like to furnish a plant, please send a check for \$20 to the church office (or put in a pew envelope marked "Easter Plant" and place in the offering plate). Those purchasing a plant may take it home following the 11 o'clock service on Easter Sunday.



A Big Thank You

To the Lenten/Easter Task Force in spending all the time planning and decorating for our Lent Season this year.



Winter Weather Information

If Fergus Falls schools close due to bad weather, the activities at the church that day will be cancelled and the church office will be closed. (If a leader of an evening activity, such as the adult choir, decides they **WILL HOLD THEIR EVENT**, they should contact the members.) Sunday morning worship will never be cancelled, but please use your good judgment when deciding if you should come to worship or not, **REMEMBER**, you can always listen at home to the 8:30 a.m. worship on KJJK AM 1020.



UPCOMING
EVENTS:Senior Fly
Schedule:**March 2 (After
Vespers)****March 9 (After
Vespers)****March 16 Su-
per Fly Supper
(6:00PM Before
Vespers)****March 23 NO
FLY****March 30 7:30
PM**Fly K4 and Fly
57 Schedule:**March 2 Fly K-7
Lent Event****March 9 Fly K4****March 16 Fly 57****March 23 NO FLY****March 30 NO FLY
(5th Wednesday)**

FLY News

FIRST LUTHERAN YOUTH

MARCH 2016

Spring is in the Air!

It's finally starting to warm up in Fergus Falls, which means that my mind automatically goes to SUMMER! How about you? Do you start daydreaming about laying out in the sun and soaking up rays, going to the cabin or getting out on the lake?

I'm starting to make plans for this summer's activities. What are you interested in doing? Want to go Roller Skating? Go to a Red Hawks game? Go to Valleyfair?

Have a lock-in? Have a girls spa retreat? I'd love to hear your ideas and suggestions for summer activities. It will be here before you know it!

Nice weather can do so much to lift our spirits—but so can God. I invite you to come to our Wednesday Lenten services just to do a little recharge for the soul. I think you will find, as I have, that these services are a little bit of a breath of fresh air. Good news

when we need to hear it. There's nothing like the comfort of coming to your home church.

Remember too, that God walks with you always—when you're in church and when you're not.

"Behold: I am with you always, to the end of the age"

—Matthew 28:20

In Christ,

Pizza Ranch Fundraiser March 7

Attention all pizza fans! The youth of First Lutheran Church will be participating in a fundraiser at Pizza Ranch on Monday, March 7th to

raise funds for our summer trip to Outlaw Ranch in Custer, SD. We will be bussing tables at Pizza Ranch from 5-8 PM. Our group will

receive a portion of the sales that evening and any tip money that comes in! Let's pack Pizza Ranch on March 7th!

**FIRST
 LUTHERAN
 CHURCH**



March Happenings:

4th Grade Milestone Class with parents	6
"Butterflies" 0-3 yr. olds	13
4th Grade Milestone Blessing in worship	13
5th Grade Milestone Class with parents-Pottery	13
5th Grade Milestone Class with parents-	20
Palm Sunday School Parade in worship	20
EASTER No Sunday School	27

Sunday School News

402 South Court Street

March 2016

SHINE

This month, we are discovering the treasure, along with the congregation. Our Workshops are focused on Holy Week and Easter so the students are listening to Spark Bible references about Holy Week, decorating empty eggs, playing caterpillar and Butterfly tag, fig-

uring out a crossword puzzle, making crushed crowns from pretzels, learning a celebration refrain, creating props to represent their part in the Lenten story; all to remind them of the empty tomb and Jesus' resurrection!

On Palm Sunday, we are inviting the congregation to go on a Holy Week Treasure Hunt during Sunday School. Also, children will sing in church on Palm Sunday at the beginning of both services!



First Communion Classes: Faith Milestone for 5th graders



A special faith learning experience begins on March 13 during Sunday School. The parents will begin their classes along with their children. They'll learn about the Sacrament of Holy

Communion. After their instruction over the next few weeks, students will experience their First Communion at the worship service on Maundy Thursday, March 24th at 7:00.

WORSHIP THEMES

March 2 "God's Power"

Isaiah 40:27-31

Jerry Peterson

New Life Church in Rothsay

March 6

"The Treasure of a Father's Love"

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Jesus tells a beautiful story of a father's love in today's Gospel. And then he says, *'That's what God is like.'* God is not an angry, vengeful judge. God is a loving father who longs to welcome us with open arms, whether we are the younger son or the elder brother.

March 9 "Good From Evil"

Genesis 50:15-20

Pastor Jake Anderson

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

March 13 "Jesus, Priceless Treasure"

Philippians 3:4b-14

The apostle Paul has a lot he could boast about. But he considers all of this rubbish in order to be found in Christ. Jesus is a true treasure. What will we find in our treasure chest this morning?

March 16

"A Shepherd through Dark Valleys"

Psalm 23

Pastor Ben Durbin

Augustana Lutheran Church

March 20

"Jesus: Trash or Treasure?"

Luke 19:28-40

In today's readings, we hear a vast spectrum of different attitudes toward Jesus. First Jesus enters in a grand procession—and soon Jesus becomes ridiculed and mocked. What once was treasured soon becomes trash. How do we approach Jesus today—as trash or treasure?

March 24—Maundy Thursday

"God's Treasured Children"

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

On this Maundy Thursday, we hear God's love story—written for you and me, his beloved children. Today we learn a new commandment: that we must love one another. How do we share God's humble servant-like love of us with others?

March 25—Good Friday

John 18:1-19:42

The Adult Choir will lead us in solemn contemplation of the events of Good Friday. As each candle is extinguished, music and scripture help us meditate on 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.

March 26—Easter Vigil

"While It's Still Dark"

John 20:1-10

The Easter Vigil reminds us that God does some of His best work in the dark.

March 27—Easter Sunday

"Easter Treasure"

Luke 24:1-12

The women go early on Easter Morning and discover an empty tomb. They were perplexed, but the emptiness of the tomb declares that Christ is Risen. And the treasure of new life—eternal life—belongs to all who believe in Him.



MARCH SERVICE UNITS

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

Matt & Danielle Freitag

Bill & Helen Watkins

Jay & Dolly Dunbar

Phyllis Anderson

Brett & Wendy Duenow

Myron & Lori Brusven

Tim & Bernice Overland

Jon & Debbie Opatz

Allan & Pam Schroden

Gordy & Sandy Kvern

Gordy & Marie Fuchs

Robert & Terri Blackwelder

Larry & Jeanette Dorn

Gerald & Sheila Elliott

Matt & Leslie Flugstad

Larry Goos

David & Vicki Hanneman

Jan Kjellerup

Roger & Sue Lewis

Barrett & Harriet Wicklund

Matt & Rachel Duenow

Don & Teresa Ashworth

Kris Eckley

George Fick

Jennifer Frank

Patty Haldorson

Chuck & Dawn Henkes

LeAnne Jaenisch

Wade & Elesha Jyrkas

Kurt & Carla Koski

Rosie Mertz

Leisha Coleman

Dave & Beck Kantrud

NEW MEMBER CLASSES

Pastor Saul, Pastor Jennifer & the Membership Committee will be forming a New Member Community beginning Sunday, April 10th from 4-6 p.m. If you or someone you know is interested in exploring membership at First Lutheran – PLEASE COME. **Childcare is available.**

All interested persons are asked to come on April 10th, April 24th, and May 1st. 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 15th (at the 8:30 a.m. service).



Come Share the Spirit

WEDNESDAY LENTEN WORSHIP SERVICES

12:10 PM Worship
(lunch follows in Narthex)

7 pm Lenten Vespers Services



Elizabeth Abrahams, President

Greg Peterson, Vice President

Debbie Opatz, Secretary

Greg Wagner, Treasurer

Tonya Bergren, Youth

Logan Sonmor, Stewardship

Dick Felstul, Finance

Terry Gervais, Worship

Rick West, Outreach

Kelsey Felstul, Education

Joe Ellig, Personnel

Andrea Loomer, Membership

Mark Hermes, Property

LeAnne Jaenisch, Fellowship

2016 Nominating Committee

Lisa Wolfe, Kim Ward, Marlene Wilde, Margaret Kratzke, Harriet Wicklund, and Jasmine Sonmor

Lent/Easter Brochures went out in the mail two weeks ago, if you didn't receive yours you can pick one up at the info counter, church office or give the church office a call and we can send you one.

Lenten Coin Folders

LENTEN COIN FOLDERS are available for you to pick up at the back of the sanctuary, on the info counter, in the church office or we can send you one if you call the church office. The folders are a wonderful way to give back during the Lenten Season. The money collected from the coin folders is given to one of our benevolences: Luther Crest Bible Camp.



OUTREACH



The 2016 Meals by Wheels schedule:

- May 16th-20th & 23rd-27th
- August 22nd-26th & 29th-Sept 2nd
- November 28th-December 2nd & December 5th-9th

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!



American
Red Cross



Not all heroes wear capes.

March is Red Cross Month. Every donation you give helps us do more of what we do.

Fergus Falls Blood Drive

First Lutheran Church

Tuesday, March 29th

1:00 – 7:00 pm

Appt/Info:

1-800-RED-CROSS (733-2767) or

www.redcrossblood.org

Please Bring Photo ID or Donor Card



Download the Blood Donor App today!

redcrossblood.org | 1-800 RED CROSS

Pope Francis asks Protestants to forgive Catholics for persecution

by **Catholic News Service**

posted Tuesday, 26 Jan 2016

The Pope spoke at a prayer service concluding the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

After walking across the threshold of the Holy Door of the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls with an Orthodox metropolitan and an Anglican archbishop, Pope Francis invoked God's mercy upon divided Christians and apologised for times that Catholics may have hurt members of other denominations.

"As bishop of Rome and pastor of the Catholic Church, I want to beg for mercy and forgiveness for un-Gospel-like behaviour on the part of Catholics against Christians of other churches," the Pope said on Monday at a prayer service concluding the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

"We ask most of all for forgiveness for the sin of our divisions, which are an open wound on the body of Christ," Pope Francis said.

"At the same time, I ask all my Catholic brothers and sisters to forgive if, today or in the past, they were hurt by other Christians," he said. "We cannot erase what happened, but we do not want to allow the burden of past faults to continue to poison our relationships."

"Beyond the differences that still separate us," he told the ecumenical gathering, "we recognise with joy that at the origin of the Christian life there is always a call whose author is God himself."

The path to Christian unity, he said, is not simply about drawing closer to one another, but has more to do with each person drawing closer to Christ and finding each other there.

"When all Christians of different churches listen to the word of God and try to put it into practice," the Pope said, "they truly take important steps toward unity."

He added: "It is not only the call that unites us. We are joined by the same mission: to proclaim to all the mighty acts of the Lord. Walking together and working together, we will become aware that we are already united in the name of the Lord. Unity is made by walking."

In response to Pope Francis appeal for forgiveness from Protestants (including Lutherans), our Church Council authorized this letter to be sent to our brothers and sisters in faith at Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church.



Dear Father Alan Wielinski, and all our Sisters and Brothers in Christ at Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church,

At a prayer service during the recent Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Pope Francis appealed for forgiveness for un-Gospel-like behavior on the part of Catholics against Christians of other churches. (see enclosure)

In the name of God, and in obedience to the command of Christ, we the pastors and church council, on behalf of the people of First Lutheran Church of Fergus Falls humbly accept the Holy Father's appeal.

In turn, we appeal to him and to you, our sisters and brothers in the Roman Catholic Church at Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church, for forgiveness for un-Gospel-like behavior on the part of Lutherans against Christians of the Roman Catholic Church. We do not, we cannot, speak for all who practice faith within the various churches of the Lutheran tradition. Our polity does not allow for that. Yet we ask forgiveness for ourselves, and in turn pray that such forgiveness might extend to our sisters and brothers in our tradition.

Furthermore, while recognizing the differences our churches continue to have, we commit ourselves to walking and working together with our Catholic sisters and brothers to proclaim the mighty acts of our Lord, for as Pope Francis himself said, "Unity is made by walking."

May the Lord who walks with us grant us unity and peace.

In Christ,

Pastor Saul Stensvaag

Pastor Jennifer Rose

Council President Elizabeth Abrahams