



First Word

The newsletter of First Lutheran Church • Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Updates from Council



*Michael Kedik,
Council President*

Martin Luther's "The Freedom of a Christian"—In this treatise, Luther argues that Christians are both free and responsible. He states that "A Christian

is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all." This means we are free to make our own decisions and choices, but we are also responsible for our actions and must be transparent and accountable to others. As leaders in the church, we must embody this balance of freedom and responsibility and be transparent in all that we do.

As your new president, I want to emphasize the importance of transparency in our church. Transparency means being open and honest about decisions, actions, and information related to the church. It is essential for building trust and credibility with our congregation and for effective leadership.

I believe that clear, open communication is one of the primary ways to demonstrate transparency. I am committed to communicating regularly with you, both in person and through various communication channels. This includes providing regular updates on church operations, finances, and any changes or decisions that may impact the congregation. I will use *First Word* to accomplish this. I will provide a summary of both the Executive Committee and Church Council actions every month.

The Church Council, at the February

meeting, approved a motion to provide minutes of all board meetings within 7 days of the minutes being approved. To keep the information private and for congregation members only, the minutes will be posted to the Church Center application. More details to come on access. Additionally, they will be printed and stored in a binder at the Info Desk for check-out by members.

In addition to communication, I believe in involving the congregation in decision-making processes whenever possible. Your input and feedback are valuable to me, and I promise to consider your perspectives when making important decisions. By involving the congregation, we can ensure that everyone feels heard and included in the church's decision-making processes.

Another important aspect of transparency is financial accountability. As a leader, I am committed to managing our finances responsibly and transparently. This means providing regular financial reports to the congregation and being open and honest about any financial challenges or concerns. Doing so can build trust and confidence in our leadership and the church's financial management.

Lastly, I want to emphasize the importance of addressing any issues or concerns that arise openly and honestly. We are all human, and mistakes can happen. When they do, I promise to acknowledge them and work to correct them in a transparent manner. By being transparent about challenges and concerns, we can demonstrate our commitment to honesty and accountability and ultimately strengthen our relationship with the congregation.

In conclusion, I want to assure you that transparency is a critical aspect of my leadership in our Lutheran Church. By being open and honest with you, communicating regularly, involving you in decision-making processes, managing our finances responsibly, and addressing concerns openly, I hope to build trust, credibility, and a strong foundation for our church's future success.

Thank you for your trust and support.

Highlights from February Executive and Council Meetings:

- Emphasizing openness, the Council would like all FLC members to know they can attend any Council meeting—it is held on the fourth Thursday of every month in the Pentecost Room.
- Any FLC member who wishes to address the Executive Committee can do so by contacting any Executive Committee member with the agenda item they would like to add; everyone is welcome. This committee meets on the third Tuesday in Pastor Jason's office.
- A motion was made and approved to ensure all meeting minutes will be available online and in printed form within 7 days of the minutes being approved.
- January revenue were down \$39k to budget, and expenses were up \$12k to budget.
- Call committee for a new associate pastor was announced and approved.
- The property board has been asked to investigate options for roof repair and exterior door repairs.
- A council retreat to plan for the future of First Lutheran Church was discussed and will be discussed further in March.

Committee Updates

April Special Offering: St. Dysmas of South Dakota



*Pr. Jeff Backer,
Senior Pastor/Director
of St. Dysmas*

*“Remember those who
are in prison, as though
you were in prison with
them...” -Hebrews
13:3a*

Greetings from your sisters and brothers in Christ behind the walls and bars of the South Dakota State Penitentiary!

St. Dysmas of South Dakota is a ministry of the congregations of South Dakota to provide worship opportunities and pastoral care for people incarcerated in the penitentiary system in South Dakota.

St. Dysmas Lutheran Church is technically an incorporated congregation that gathers inside the penitentiary: on Thursday evenings in Sioux Falls on “The Hill,” on Friday evenings at Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield, SD (35 miles west of Yankton, SD), and on Sunday

evenings at the Yankton Trustee Unit on the state hospital campus in Yankton.

The people who come to St. Dysmas worship wake up each day in the consequences of the worst decision or action they ever had in their life. But when they climb out of the chaos and tension of the prison and come to worship, they are seen as God’s children. In the worship space, we refer to them by their Christian name, and for a short time, they are seen as people. It is one of the most liberating experiences they can have while serving their sentence.

Since May 1 of last year, we have seen worship attendance increase by up to 300%. Bible studies and pastoral care one-on-ones continue to be sought out and well-attended.

St. Dysmas also offers re-entry accompaniment for those individuals being released from prison who need help transitioning back into productive lives. We partner with halfway houses and agencies across the state, and sometimes

even out of state to help people restart productive lives. Often, we see successes as we can provide resources in a time of critical need.

First Lutheran Church has historically been a strong partner in the St. Dysmas story. Groups of visitors have routinely come to worship in Sioux Falls, and you have continued to be very generous in your financial support. St. Dysmas is not financially supported by the state of SD, the South Dakota Synod, or organizations like Prison Congregations of America. It is congregations, families, and individuals who make this ministry possible.

Your partnership with St. Dysmas changes peoples’ lives, and above all makes the gospel of Jesus Christ known to those whom society often forgets about. Thank you for making this possible.

In addition to your support, we welcome your prayers and invite you to come and experience worshiping with St. Dysmas for yourself. If you would like more information, please visit stdysmas.com.

FLCW/WELCA – Prayer Power

“Pray without ceasing” (I Thess. 5:17). “Where two or three are gathered in My Name, there I will be with them” (Matt. 18:20). According to O. S. Hawkins in *The Prayer Code*, the disciples never asked Jesus to teach them to preach, heal, evangelize, or organize. They only asked Jesus to teach them to pray. He taught them the Lord’s Prayer, which we continue to use as a model today. Hawkins also refers to prayer as the battlefield of the Christian life. It can be said that Satan always has a plot, but Jesus always has a plan that He shares with us through His Word and in our uplifted prayers.

Originally started by Donna Johnson and Charlotte Cooper-Tracy, a small group of FLC women met faithfully for

prayer. Now, since COVID, another small group of FLC women have been meeting regularly on Friday mornings at 11 in Christ the Victor Chapel to informally share a devotion and then pray. With the amazing history of FLC in mind, the focus of their prayers is on our congregation’s present and future plans, as well as the spread of the Gospel in America and around the world. Prayers have been lifted up for Pastor Jason and his family, his leadership role, FLC staff, FLC leaders, FLCW, and our FLC congregation’s growth and community involvement. Pastor Jason has shared with us his commitment to the

power of prayer.



Come Join Us! (You can pray verbally or silently join in.) As you come to pray, let your heart and mind be toward the spread of the Gospel and the FLC Christian witness here and there, far and wide. In I Tim. 2:1, we read, “I urge you, first of all, to pray

for all people. Ask God to help them, intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them.” Further, “The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results” (James 5:16b). May God bless you to pray always!

The Prayer Warriors

FLCW/WELCA – You're Invited!

By Co-presidents, Marcia Huffman and Lola Coon

On March 2, the Gathering Room was filled with singing, laughter, beautiful cello music, and a heartwarming presentation from Pastor Jason. He shared stories of his life of faith, his family, and his vision for First Lutheran Church to be grounded in God's Word and led by the Holy Spirit.

May 4 brings another invitation to all women of First Lutheran to join our

FLCW/WELCA group for a Potluck Salad and Dessert Supper at 6 p.m. in the Gathering Room. We will dine on salads, desserts, breads, and beverages as we "spring" in to warmer weather! You will be given the opportunity to learn how to dress for success as we present a whimsical, light-hearted style show with suggestions on how to be fashionable and some hints regarding what to avoid. Come join in the laughter as volunteers model the latest fashion trends created by

our own designers. You will not want to miss this!

Please RSVP to Marcia Huffman at 605-360-4168 or Lola Coon at 605-201-5703 by May 1 so we are able to accommodate seating. We look forward to seeing you on May 4. And remember you are always invited to join one of our seven Bible Study Circles who meet monthly to study God's Word. The Circles meet at various times and dates so you can choose a gathering that fits your schedule.

Thanks to Visitation Pastors, Praise God from whom all Blessings flow!



*Donna Jahr,
Care & Health Board*

Last month I went to the funeral of a true matriarch in the faith. She was quite a lady, but I knew that before I went to be with her family as we said goodbye.

The service began

with glorious, triumphant music, and then her visitation pastor stepped forward to conduct the celebration of life. In the six short years he had known her, you could tell they had had some wonderful conversations about her life, her family, and her faith. She was one of "his sheep." He walked with her when she was strong and independent and beside her through her declining time. What a beautiful friendship they had knit together.

Visitation Pastors play a special and unique role in our congregation. They

provide pastoral care each month to homebound members, bringing a devotion, communion, and conversation to members who are no longer able to participate fully in the worship life of the church. They are the lifeline so our shut-ins stay connected to FLC. They also assist with hospital visits, if needed.

I wanted to reconnect with our visitation pastors, so we went to lunch. There's no better way to get reacquainted with someone than over a plate of good food. Here is what I learned:

Our visitation team comes from a variety of backgrounds. **Pastor Bob Chell** served as campus pastor at SDSU for 20 years and as the pastor at St. Dymas, the SD State Prison congregation, for four years before joining the FLC visitation team in 2017. **Pastor David Houck** spent 20 years as a missionary in Africa before returning to the U.S. and beginning visitation for FLC in 2015. In May 2022, **Robin Hofkamp**, a Deacon of Word and Service,

began her visitation ministry. Before coming to FLC, Robin worked 27 years for the Sioux Falls School District as an educational interpreter and tutor for the deaf. **Pastor Roger Noer** joined the FLC staff in 2015 after serving as senior pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Aberdeen and other congregations throughout South Dakota. Pastor Roger is currently on medical leave. **Pastor Dennis Tranberg** started visitations for FLC in 2016 after being the chaplain at Bethany Home, a skilled nursing care facility, and a parish pastor at various congregations in North Dakota, Pierre, and Sioux Falls.

The conversations around our table were priceless. These individuals have huge hearts for ministry, and it showed. They have developed friendships through their personal visits, and their pastoral care is an integral part of the overall ministry of FLC. The blessings received through visitations are cherished by both the pastors and the recipients.

Happy 90+ Birthday!

These members of our congregation turn 90+ this month. If you see them around church, wish them a great day!

April 3—Eugene Hassel

April 9—Richard Blundell

April 14—Jeanne Buren

April 18—Merna Salmonson, Dorothy Christopherson

April 23—Darlene Paulson

April 26—Inga Spadino



Youth & Family

Shrove Tuesday Fun!



Valerie Pherson, Children's Minister

Shrove Tuesday at FLC was our kick off to Lent event! We gathered together to eat pancakes, play games, and act silly before the seriousness of confession on Ash Wednesday. The season of Lent officially began on Ash Wednesday and goes through March until Holy Week in April. These 40 days in Lent are set aside to reflect on the road Jesus took to the cross. So before we

did that, we celebrated together!

Chris's Cakes flipped us delicious pancakes; Mr. Twister's balloon creations were amazing; the carnival games, craft, and cakewalk provided endless fun!

A huge thank you to all the staff and volunteers who helped with this event! We had a wonderful team of willing board members and families who allowed this event to run smoothly!

As we look forward to Easter and as the seasons change into spring, we are reminded that our hope is always found in Jesus during struggles, changes, and celebrations!

Blessings to you all, Happy Lent!





Around the Church

Where Christ is Raised from the dead, winter is ended!



*Jason Burggraff,
Senior Pastor*

In preparation for our Lenten theme this year, “Marriage, Martyrs, and Mysteries of the Faith: Echoes of the Reformation, 500 years later,” I was introduced to one of Luther’s first hymns, which he wrote to honor the first Lutheran martyrs, who were killed in 1523. The last line of the hymn reads: “His word is yet remaining! E’en at the door is summer nigh, The winter hard is ended.” In writing this, Luther shows that where martyrs have been killed for the preaching of the Gospel, surely then the true Gospel of Christ is reaching its hearers, and thus the

cold, hard winter of frozen ears and icy works-righteousness has come to an end by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Having just come through a long, hard winter in South Dakota (is it over yet?), you can perhaps appreciate more now than other times of the year—the thanks and relief of our Lord’s work in this world, both with the changing of the seasons, but even more in the raising of his Son, Jesus Christ, from the tomb. For whether you’re a fan of snow and ice or not, the salvation Christ brings from our sin, death, and the devil’s beguiling lies is a salvation that brings new life, where there was once only frozen tundra.

As I write this in March and look out my window, I still see some large piles of snow in the parking lot. I’m hopeful by the time you read this, the snow will all be

melted! But I can’t say that will be the case for sure.

What I can say for sure, however, is that Jesus Christ, who was killed on the cross for our sins, has been raised from the dead, and he lives with us now! He lives among us wherever his Word is preached and his sacraments shared. And thus the hard winter of sin is ended. In order to publicly proclaim his death and resurrection, we will be gathered for worship 11 times between the eve of Palm Sunday (April 1) and Easter Sunday (April 9). What fun it is to be brought together in worship when you have been given such a truth as this!

I look forward to sharing in the joy and freedom brought by Christ’s redeeming Word with you in the coming weeks of worship!

Capital Campaign Update



*Jean Hoff,
Capital Campaign*

The work on the reception desk area began on Tuesday, March 7. The electricians were in on Thursday, March 9. The cabinetry was delivered on March 20. I am hopeful that by the time you read this article in *First Word* the reception area will be completed.

The sound design company hit a snafu when the owner had a medical emergency. We are approximately six weeks behind in receiving items from the sound design company. However, we still believe we can get the new sound system up and running by October 1, 2023.

The steeple needs work, and this was part

of the original capital campaign. Again, there is a company coming to give the church a quote on the cost.

There has been some water leaking into the broadcast room, and ARS was out to repair the holes in the Tower Entrance roof that caused the leaking. The Tower Entrance roof must be replaced this summer. The estimated cost is \$27,000.

The next issue to be addressed is the amount of snow that was on the Atrium roof. The amount of snow was too heavy for the roof, and again the church had ARS out to remove the snow and create a path to the drains so the water will drain from the roof. ARS will be back out to reevaluate the roof since it is 19 years old and most flat roofs have a life expectancy of 15-20 years.

Some water leaked into the north balcony of the sanctuary. When ARS was out to

fix the roof leaks, they also looked at that issue. A drain was frozen with about four feet of ice on top of it. This issue will be looked at again when we have some warmer weather.

The doors on the Tower Entrance need to be replaced, and the cost of the doors is around \$20,000. A door on the north side of the church also needs to be replaced.

Though the roofs and the Tower Entrance doors are not part of the *God’s Grace: Our Heritage and Future Capital Campaign*, they are areas of great concern to the church. A special account has been established under the Property Board for the doors. The church currently has received \$2,500 towards the purchase of new doors. If you would like to contribute to the repair of the tower entrance roof or to the replacement cost of the doors, please contact me at (605) 339-1983, ext 236.

Hellos and Goodbyes



Rose Merchant, Receptionist

Hello! My name is Rose Merchant, and I'm the new afternoon receptionist. I am originally from Brookings, but I moved to Sioux Falls in 2015 where I attended Lincoln High School. After graduating in 2018, I went to the University of South Dakota for a couple of years. I studied French, International Relations, and Journalism. Over a gap semester, I

worked in Pierre as a committee secretary at the capital for the 2021 session. I couldn't stay away from my roots for long, though, and now I am happy to be back in Sioux Falls, where I love to spend time with my friends and family. My other hobbies include reading, drawing, playing piano and ukulele, going to local live music shows, and embroidery. I also have a lovely cat named Fergus who is like my little, cuddly shadow.

Starting this job at First Lutheran Church has been such a blessing in my life, and I am grateful to have been given the opportunity. I can't wait to meet new people and learn from my experiences here!



*Caryn Lengkeek,
Office and Hospitality Coordinator*

Hello, everyone! My name is Caryn (pronounced Karen) Lengkeek. I'm originally from Randolph, MN, which is near Northfield. I now live in Rock Rapids, IA. I am thrilled to be joining the First Lutheran Church team!

I have one biological child but nine others who call me "mom". And from those, I have 15 "grandkids." I love getting to be grandma to so many wonderful people.

My hobbies include cooking and baking, reading to young children at a science fiction convention in Minneapolis, and sewing and quilting. I am involved with the Siouxland Renaissance Association here in Sioux Falls, and that's a big reason why I moved closer from Minnesota. I also started a non-profit to expand the protections around the Blood Run National Historic Landmark in NW Iowa.

I've already met some wonderful people here at First Lutheran, and I'm looking forward to meeting more!

As we welcome new staff to our ministry at First Lutheran, we also say goodbye to another. Welcome to Caryn Lengkeek and Rose Merchant, who join us as Office and Hospitality Coordinator and Receptionist. And God's blessings to Skylar Schwab, who after a year and a half of serving our youth and families as Youth Minister, has accepted a position as program director at Outlaw Ranch. We give thanks for the gifts God brings to the community of First Lutheran through Caryn

and Rose as they join us and through the gifts God has shared through Skylar as she makes the move to camp ministry. Whether we are coming or going, Psalm 121 assures us of God's protection:

*"The Lord will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;
the Lord will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore." Psalm 121:7-8*
—Pastor Jason



*Skylar Schwab,
Youth Minister*

If there is one thing that is true and certain about myself, it is that I am follower of God. It means that my plans do not always align with

where God is calling me to. It is with a bittersweet feeling that I say I am leaving First Lutheran Church as I have accepted the Program Director position at Outlaw Ranch Bible Camp beginning in April.

During youth group, I like to encourage my youth to think of "God Moments" that have occurred throughout the week and share within their small groups. God Moments can be something simple like a beautiful sunset or something big where they felt God's presence deeply. This discernment process for me felt like many God Moments that kept building up.

The family and congregation members here at First Lutheran are phenomenal. My ministry here was short, but it has made quite an impact on me. To the youth I have gotten to hang out with between confirmation, middle school

days, youth groups, bible camps, and our trip to New York—thank you. Thank you for being your beautiful and authentic self that God created. I will miss you all dearly!

"As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishers. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." Immediately they left their nets and followed him." -Matthew 4:18-20



First Lutheran Church
327 S Dakota Ave
Sioux Falls SD 57104

Deaths:

February 4: Susan Ahrendt
February 5: Don Kattke
February 8: Norman Ekeland,
Todd Thorson

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Thank You, February Media Sponsors

February 5, 2023

- The broadcast on KELO-FM was given in memory of Les Rollag, whose birthday would have been February 15, by his family.

February 12, 2023

- The telecast on KSFY was sponsored by Janet Lyso in appreciation for pastors who are faithful in the proclamation of Christ; they are the mineral in my soil.
- The broadcast on KELO-FM and closed captioning on KSFY were given in celebration of Mike and Gloria Simpson's anniversary by the Berdahl family.

February 22, 2023

- The closed captioning and telecast on KSFY were sponsored by Judy Jasper for nursing home residents and homebound individuals. It was also in honor of the FLC pastors for their ministry in spreading the word of God. As we received the cross of ashes this day, let us remember that we are members of the body of Christ and in this is the season of Lent we await the resurrections of our Lord and Savior on Easter.

April Events

April 2: Palm Sunday 9am and 11am services

April 6: Maundy Thursday 11:15am and 6:30pm services, First Communion Milestone

April 7: Good Friday services 11:15am and 6:30pm

April 8: The Great Vigil of Easter service 5pm

April 9: Easter Sunday services, 7am, 9am, and 11am

April 10: FLC Offices CLOSED

April 15: Dementia/Alzheimer's Support Group 9am

April 25: Senior Luncheon 11:30am

April 28: Matt Tylutki Graduate Organ Recital 7pm

February Gifts and Memorials

FLC Foundation

In memory of Faith Christiansen

Media Ministry

In memory of Marcene Scully
Tom & Ginny Christopherson

FLC Men's Worship

In memory of Norm Ekeland
Lyle & Jean Eidsness, Karen Hohman,

Shelley Johnson, Carol Lerdal, Barb Matson, Carlyle & Janet Naessig, William & Nancy Olson, Franklin Pudas, Clara Mae Ranschau, Eric & Sue Severson

Caring Ministry

In memory of Diane Kaardal
Ralph & Susan Wojtowicz