



First Word

The monthly newspaper of First Lutheran Church

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100 Years: A Heritage of God’s Grace!

By Jeff Backer, Associate Pastor of Evangelism & Outreach



If you didn’t know, the year 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of First Lutheran Church as a congregation, though we can look into our history and find that we are actually a congregation that was birthed nearly 143 years ago.

The original church that stood here at 12th and Dakota Avenue was St. Olaf Church, a Norwegian congregation that had been formed on January 10, 1877. Another Norwegian congregation formed in 1890 at 14th and Duluth was called Trinity Lutheran but was later renamed Grace Lutheran. Now you may ask, why would two seemingly similar groups have formed congregations and built churches easily within sight of one another? Your answer can be recognized in the modern church today.

There had been a difference between the theology and doctrine between the two churches for some time. Both congregations worshipped in the native language of Norwegian, and this became the resolving factor that eventually brought the congregations together. In 1917, Trinity made the move to dissolve and reform as an all-English speaking congregation called Grace Lutheran. It took three years, the combining of three Norwegian-Lutheran Synods, and St. Olaf finally changing to an English-speaking service to facilitate the merging of the two congregations.

After many details were hashed out, the formal merger took place on September 21, 1920, with the enactment of the articles of agreement and the unanimous vote to call Rev. H.J. Glenn as the pastor. It soon became apparent that neither building would be able to house the growing congregation, so in 1924, architects designed a new sanctuary, and the first capital campaign was held to raise \$150,000 to build the sanctuary. This happened in the same year that five banks failed in Sioux Falls and when the annual budget for the church was \$15,000 to \$20,000. Before the completion of the new building, another \$40,000 was needed to provide for interior resources like pews, building the chancel, the altar, pulpit, lectern, an organ, and other furnishings. This was easily raised, and the building was dedicated on November 30, 1930.

So how do you put 100 years of faithful and faith-filled ministry into words? The 100th Anniversary Committee met and tried to encapsulate this, and it was very hard. We had a discussion for over an hour on the theme of the anniversary, “A Heritage of God’s Grace.”

The committee wanted to ensure we were focused on the congregation of First Lutheran, not the building. For sure, there are many ways that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been shared in our community, in the region, and in the world since 1920. Many local agencies and organizations are rooted in the fertile soil of the First Lutheran congregation. In those first years after the merger, First Lutheran was the primary organization that formed the Lutheran Children’s Home Finding Society, later called the House of Mercy and eventually becoming what we know today as Lutheran Social Services. In 1925, the Sioux Valley Hospital Association was formed, and every board member was a member of First Lutheran with Rev. Glenn serving as president. In those early years, First Lutheran was instrumental in the relocation of Augustana Academy to Sioux Falls as Augustana College. Rev. Glenn served as the Augustana interim-president in 1928-1929. Stories like this go on and on for the next 90 years.

There have been MANY ideas and plans for how to recognize this historic event, and many plans are still in the works. I want to encourage you to familiarize yourself with the opportunities and ways we will recognize this celebration by looking at the calendar on the back page of this issue of First Word. We also want to turn our gaze to the next 100 years. There is no doubt that the strength of the First Lutheran congregation comes in our faith rooted in God’s redemption in Christ Jesus. If not by God’s will, nothing here would exist. Each person who attends worship, is involved in programs, volunteers to work at service events, continues to seek to learn more about who God is, who we are, and what God has done in Jesus Christ is a part of God’s voice that is still speaking into our world. While we can appreciate where we have been, this fuels our focus on tomorrow.

Plan to attend the many special events to celebrate this year. Come and hear the voice of pastors and musicians who have historically served in our midst. But I would challenge you as the congregation of First Lutheran Church to embody the drive and tenacity of our forebears in faith, who took on seemingly impossible situations to make the gospel of Jesus Christ known. Give thanks today for the gift of God’s grace and heritage that we enjoy!

Thanks be to God,
Pastor Jeff



Annual Meeting and Launch of the Capital Campaign

The Annual Meeting and Celebration Launch of the Capital Campaign, “God’s Grace: Our Heritage and Future,” is scheduled for Sunday, January 26 at 12:15 p.m. There will be a light lunch beginning at 11:30 a.m. with sloppy joes, chips and a salad. Come join us for some exciting news about the capital campaign and to hear about what has happened in the church during 2019. As members of this church, please make plans to attend and be part of the decision making process.

Guided By the Star of Bethlehem, We Follow the Magi into the New Year. . .

2020 Anno Domini (“In the year of our Lord”)

By John Christopherson, Senior Pastor



“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him . . .’”

(Matthew 2:1-2; RSV)

Family of First Lutheran Church . . . as we move together in faith into this new year . . . let’s take a focused step forward, out under the star of Bethlehem once more. For it will serve to guide us, as the Magi of old, in wondrous ways. And so, what does this light “shine on us”? What does it “tell us”? And where does it “lead us”?

1. That to do the work of ministry is to do the work of the star. “And the star came and stood pointing and shining toward the place where the Christ child

lay” (Matthew 2:9). In this New Year, point people to where Christ is present: in worship, in baptism, in the Lord’s Supper, in the Word that is read and proclaimed, and in the needs of others.

2. That we ask ourselves what it is that we lay before him who is the greatest gift-giver of all, who has given his very life for us and our salvation. Do we come on bended knee? Do we offer our finest? “And opening their treasures, the wise men offered him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh” (Matthew 2:11). Let us begin this New Year, by giving the Christ Child our very hearts of committed stewardship/discipleship, for the sake of his coming kingdom.

3. That when we follow the star of Bethlehem . . . we continue the journey, the very steps of faith of the wise men and their camels, as they “go home by another way” (Matthew 2:12); that is, a way of



Concordia College Choir, 2009 Christmas Concert

humility, thankfulness, and an everlasting comfort and joy.

May the Lord’s face shine on you and be gracious to you in this New Year.

John Christopherson
Senior Pastor

AROUND THE CHURCH



“Oh, I get it, it’s an Epiphany!”

By Lars Olson, Executive Pastor



We’ve all had one of those moments when the ordinary becomes extraordinary so that something more than your perspective shifts and your life is changed. Some call it an “Aha moment”

because it’s an event that suddenly strikes you with a realization that changes everything. It probably happened in school a few times when learning your favorite subject, and it’s often associated with falling in love because small everyday occurrences become something much more in the blink of an eye, and not only is your life changed but you also can’t go back. You can’t unlearn something. You can’t not feel that way any longer. Because of a simple yet profound experience, you are forever different.



Epiphany is a day of the church year. It is celebrated every year on January 6 as the end of the Christmas season, and it is mostly associated with the visit of the three Kings, wisemen, or magi. However, the Epiphany is not meant to be a “one-time event” in Jesus’ life, but rather the realization that every time we encounter Jesus Christ our lives are forever changed, and that a real danger is to think that we know Jesus so well that the course of our lives is already set. When this happens then, our attending worship or studying the Bible or really anything about our life of faith takes on the purpose of protecting us from Jesus giving us a new life beyond the one we have crafted.

The old green hymnal, the Lutheran Book of Worship, describes the church year between Christmas and Lent this

way. “The (season following Epiphany) serves as a bridge between the birth of Jesus and his passion. The season begins with an ancient celebration that originally drew together several themes: the birth of Jesus, the coming of the Magi, his baptism in the Jordan, his first miracle at Cana in Galilee. In the west, the Epiphany came to be associated with the Magi alone, who were seen to be the representatives of the nations who come to worship Jesus. (So the Epiphany season in Lutheran practice has often been a time for an emphasis on world missions.) The first Sunday after the Epiphany is the celebration of the Baptism of Jesus. This event is worthy of considerable attention since it marks the beginning of his ministry. In the current Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and Episcopal calendars the Epiphany season extends to Ash Wednesday, thus giving more time for emphasizing Jesus’ public ministry. As has been customary for Lutherans, the Last Sunday after the Epiphany each year is observed as The Transfiguration of Our Lord, the remembrance of an epiphany which brings the Old Testament into Jesus’ time. Providing a glimpse of Jesus in all his splendor, this festival offers a preview of his glory which is to come” (Lutheran Book of Worship; Manual on the Liturgy, p. 23).

- Dec. 25 to Jan. 5 - the 12 Days of Christmas
- Jan. 6 - Epiphany
- Jan. 12 - Baptism of Our Lord
- Feb. 2 - Presentation of Our Lord
- Feb. 23 - Transfiguration of Our Lord
- Feb 26. - Ash Wednesday

So in the gospel readings for Sundays in the weeks following the Baptism of our Lord on January 12, the focus is on the early ministry of Jesus, his teachings—especially the “Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew 5), and his calling the wrong sort of disciples. Each gospel lesson is meant to give new words to old ears, to bring new visions to people whose lives have become dull and predictable. This is to reveal Jesus as God in the flesh, so we see Jesus with new eyes and hear God’s Word. Jesus bursts into people’s lives not to affirm who they have been and what they have been doing, but to give them an entirely new life as a gift from God’s mercy and grace. And every time it happens, it’s an Epiphany!



Each church year, our weekly scripture readings are based around one of the “synoptic gospels” of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, while the Gospel of John is used on certain weeks throughout each of the three-year cycle. This year is Year A, which means that the Gospel of Matthew will give shape to our worship, preaching, and teaching.

Join us on Sunday mornings, January 10 through February 9, at 9:30 or 10:45 a.m., in the Friendship Room for a four-week introduction to the Gospel of Matthew.

- January 19 - Overview of Matthew (with Pastor Lars Olson)
- January 26 - Jesus’ Teachings and the Sermon on the Mount (with Pastor Jeff Backer)
- February 2 - Jesus in Jerusalem (with Pastor Jeff Backer)
- February 9 - Resurrection and Great Commission (with Pastor Lars Olson)

Capital Campaign Update

By Jean Hoff, Coordinator



New Year blessings to all of you! You may have thought that things were pretty quiet during the months of November and December regarding the Capital Campaign. Well there was plenty going on behind the scenes. Thank you to the staff, board members, executive committee, and other members of the congregation who have made a pledge to the campaign, “God’s Grace: Our Heritage and Future.”

Now that the New Year is here, the renderings from Architecture, Inc. will be back up in the Atrium and Gathering Room. Teams of two will call and schedule meetings with members of the congregation. We will also be doing some group meetings in the Gathering Room. We have some individuals, including our own Dave Munson, who want to share with you how they see the changes impacting First Lutheran in the future.

Aren’t we lucky for those who had the wisdom in the past to secure the Blackstone apartment building and to purchase on contract for deed the Ideal store or even the little building that first housed Painted Prairie years ago? This congregation has had great visionary people, people who saw that a downtown church needed a parking lot for our members and made it happen. Now we have the need to improve our campus for security, safety, and the future generations to worship at this beautiful church built on the corner of 12th Street and Dakota Avenue.

My hope and prayer is that you will open your home for a visit when you receive a call or request to attend a meeting in the Gathering Room. The meetings in the Gathering Room will be limited to 40 attendees. The two meetings scheduled at this time are Tuesday, January 7, at 10 a.m.; and Tuesday, January 14, at 6:30 p.m.

Note from Jean

I want to thank the Church Council for offering the position of Capital Campaign Coordinator to me. I have had such wonderful opportunities to work with members of the congregation, as well as the staff, and it has been joyful. I look forward to meeting more members as we move into the New Year.

Living in the Faith You Have Received

A. Trevor Sutton

January 9-30
Thursdays, 6:30 p.m.
Friendship Room
Led by Pastor Jeff

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Being Lutheran Book Study

Join us for a study of the book “Being Lutheran: Living in the Faith You Have Received” by A. Trevor Sutton, facilitated by Pastor Jeff Backer. The study will meet Thursday evenings, January 9-30, at 6:30 p.m. in the Friendship Room. Alternatively, you may form a small group to work through the book together. Please contact Pastor Jeff, jbacker@flcsf.org to coordinate materials.

Books are available for sale at the Information Desk for \$16.

About the book: “Being Lutheran, by A. Trevor Sutton, challenges you to throw out all those notions you might have about what it means to be Lutheran. When it comes down to it, being Lutheran is really very simple. It’s about following Jesus. We go where Jesus goes, we listen when Jesus speaks, we trust when Jesus promises. And we live because Jesus lives.”



A Great Year of WELCA Opportunities Awaits

WELCA seeks to bless, serve, and enable ALL women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America here



at First Lutheran Church. In addition to our circle meetings, each of our 11 monthly meetings provides opportunity for fellowship, education, Bible study, prayer, and worship. This year, the FLCW programs include:

- January 9 – Calvin Vermulm presents “Brings Hope” at the Center of Hope, Sioux Falls.
- February 6 – John Cerwinski reminisces over memories of his FLC custodial work.
- March 5 – Harmony South Dakota leaders Dan and Heidi Goeller share its empowering story.
- April 2 – Janet Kittams of the Helpline Center shares its mission, its great outreach.
- May 7 – Cynthia Sheppard shares about “Spring Cleaning” at the annual Salad Supper.
- June 4 – There will be a Bible study leader, yet to be announced.
- August 6 – Pastor Jeff Backer will be our Bible study leader just after his return from a study trip to Israel.
- September 3 – This dessert and coffee night will be a 100th Anniversary FLCW Celebration.
- October 1 – NE Mother of the Year Jan Schiferl will speak and sing about “Change of Plans.”
- November 12 – The program will honor our veterans and the American flag in song and word.
- December 12 – Maggie and David, local favorites, will brighten our “Christmas Party for Jesus.”

Check media for time and place and always feel welcomed. We look forward to you joining us as each circle hosts us in their chosen month this 2020. Along with ongoing responsibilities, we will also host guest appearances in celebration of the First Lutheran Church 100th Anniversary Celebration. Come join us!

Meet the Women of Martha Circle

By Phyllis Day

The small group of women in the Martha Circle meet on Thursday afternoon in the Gathering Room. Lively conversation, coffee and treats provided by the hostess is followed by a thoughtful and well-researched Bible study led by Hazel Wek. The group is comfortable discussing the study as we sit together around the table.

As with each of the Circles, we have enjoyed some special members over the years. We celebrated with Migs Sommers as her birthdays neared 100 years. Her sisters Barb Entringer and Patty Erickson attended the Circle meetings until health issues prevented their active participation. Eunice Quaman was the rommegrot queen in her day and Marilyn Schmutter was a biblical resource, sometimes bringing her daughter, Pastor Erika, along. Marge Oolman faithfully continues to send greeting cards for every occasion while confined to her own home.

Long-time members Gladys Bredeson and Migs Sommers were also original members of the Altar Guild Sewing Group. One of their primary projects was to make and embroider the baptismal towels that are still used today. While others were a part of this Guild, it would be difficult to estimate the number of towels finished by Barb Entringer who made this a special project of hers. She undoubtedly made hundreds of them over many, many years.

The Martha Circle women are pros at arranging plates of cookies, which has been their assignment for the bazaar. In addition, Hazel Wek shares her talent by providing lovely piano music for bazaar guests. She also plays for WELCA meetings and the semi-annual communion services at local retirement centers.

Phyllis Day and Hazel Wek share responsibilities as co-chairs of Martha Circle along with active members Lois Peterson, Donna VanHouten, Juanita Nesje, Mary Ryrholm and Sharon Eck.

Come and join us on Thursday afternoon in the Gathering Room. You may just meet someone new and know that you would be so very welcome.



Above: Migs Sommers, Lois Peterson and Phyllis Day
Below: Migs Sommers and Gladys Bredeson



Above: Donna Van Houten, Hazel Wek, Sharon Eck, Lois Peterson, Phyllis Day, and Juanita Nesje, enjoy treats at their monthly meeting.

WELCA Welcomes Center of Hope Director

By Kathy Stelzer, WELCA President

WELCA Meeting, January 9 at 12 p.m.

Thankfully, most of us have not experienced the effects of being in dire need. Those who are can find a holistic approach to their needs being met at the Center of Hope in Sioux Falls. It is a place that brings hope by giving, caring, serving, sharing, learning, loving, and healing. Those who visit this center can find winter clothing, bikes for work, guidance with health concerns from their Faith Community Nurse, information about other available programs, access to the center's phone and public computers, and more.

Calvin Vermulm started out in youth ministry in the Reformed Church of America. Having served in various pastoral positions, he is now director for the Center of Hope here in Sioux Falls. On January 9, (note the date change), he will speak to us about his work there in a talk entitled “Walking along Side Folks Who Struggle.”



We will learn how this nondenominational group's journey brings spiritual and physical health to residents and ultimately brings change to the community one life at a time.

So please note the WELCA meeting date of Thursday, January 9, at 12 p.m. in the Gathering Room. Dorcas Circle will host this meeting. We look forward to a time of fellowship, music, inspiration, and learning. Also at that meeting, Pastor Katherine will install the 2020 FLCW officers, both new and existing. Prior to the WELCA meeting will be a meeting of the WELCA Board at 10 a.m. in the Friendship Room. All women of the church and any guests are invited to join us.



CARE AND HEALTH MINISTRY



Won't You Be My Neighbor?: A Faithful Aging Film Event Friday, January 10, 1-4 p.m.

Senior Adults and High School Students Welcome

First Lutheran Church will offer an afternoon film event geared toward senior adults and high school students on Friday, January 10, 1-4 p.m. Join us in the Friendship Room for a viewing of *Won't You Be My Neighbor*, the critically acclaimed 2018 documentary on the life and work of Mister Rogers directed by Morgan Neville. The movie is rated PG-13.

This event is one of four Faithful Aging Milestone activities that will be held at First Lutheran Church in 2020. The Faithful Aging Milestone ministry is meant to nurture the spirituality of those ages 60 and above.

This event will allow participants to reflect on Communication of Love as they discuss the film's themes of empathy and kindness. We believe partnering senior adults with high school students for this event will allow for some rich intergenerational dialogue as well!

Thanks to a gift from Thrivent, this event is FREE to all, but advance registration is required. Register online at flcsf.org/seniorministry or call Jordan Stone, Care and Health Coordinator, at 605-339-1983 ext. 237. Registration closes on Wednesday, January 8.

Won't You Be My Neighbor Event Schedule

- 1 p.m. Registration and refreshments
- 1:15 Movie viewing
- 2:45 Break
- 3 p.m. Discussion and prayer



Fred Rogers rehearses the opening of his PBS show "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" during a taping in this June 28, 1989 file photo, in Pittsburgh. (AP Photo/Gene J. Puskar, FILE) <https://www.flickr.com/photos/galaxyfm/346109093>

Visitation Pastor Ministry at First Lutheran Church

First Lutheran has a team of four visitation pastors available to share visits and communion with homebound members on a monthly basis. The visitation pastor team, pictured above, performs an incredibly important function in our church's ministry.



L-R: Pastor David Houck, Pastor Bob Chell, Pastor Roger Noer, and Pastor Dennis Tranburg

If someone cannot physically be present with us in worship, they are still an important part of our faith family, and we do not want to miss the opportunity to communicate this. Those who are homebound have many gifts to share with others. As our visitation pastors go into their homes to extend comfort and care on behalf of the church, our pastors receive an ample blessing from these Christian sisters and brothers in return. We thank God for the friendships that

have been forged among those in the care of our visitation pastor team and the good word they have brought to many in a time of need.

If you or a loved one is unable to regularly attend church and would like to be connected to a visitation pastor, please call Donna Jahr at the church office. It would be our pleasure to serve you. Donna can be reached at 339-1983 ext. 202.



Grieving with Grace Continues January 4

Grieving with Grace is a support group where adults learn about the grieving process and how to care for themselves as they work through the grief of a loved one's death. Sessions usually take place on the first Saturday morning of the month in the Gathering Room of First Lutheran Church. Social time begins at 9:30, and the group sessions last from 10 to 11 a.m. For the next several months, we will continue journeying through the book *Understanding Your Grief*, written by noted grief expert Dr. Alan Wolfelt. Participants in our class will receive a free copy of the book as well as their own grief journal. All sessions are open to first-time participants, and talking aloud is not required. Our topic in January will be "Embrace the Uniqueness of Your Grief." If you have questions about Grieving with Grace, contact Pastor Katherine Olson, the group's facilitator, at kolson@flcsf.org or 339-1983, ext. 214.



Bearing the Burden

Things can happen in life that are hard, and sometimes having a fuzzy little friend can help to alleviate some of the pain. Burden Bears are available for children and young adults. They are intended for young ones who are experiencing difficult times in their lives such as illness, loss of a family member, divorce, or other difficult life situations. They are meant to be given to anyone in need, by anyone.

Bears can be obtained by contacting Heather Smith, Children's Minister, at hsmith@flcsf.org or 339-1983 ext. 238; or Jordan Stone, Care and Health Coordinator at jstone@flcsf.org or (605) 339-1983 ext. 237.



First Lutheran's
Holistic Health Team
presents

Stepping into Health

It's not too late!

—Winter Session—
January 1 - March 31
Lace up your shoes and get ready for
three months of walking/running:

Quarterly sessions

- Walk/run wherever, whenever you can
- Quality pedometers available (\$10 each)
- Registration required

Register Today!

Contact John Hegg at 339-2582 or johnhegg@sio.midco.net

Incentive Rewards
presented monthly and at session end





Did You Know?

By Marnie Dahle Backer,
Youth & Family Director

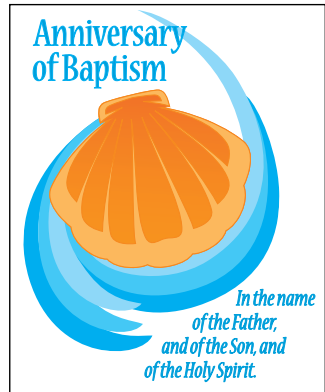
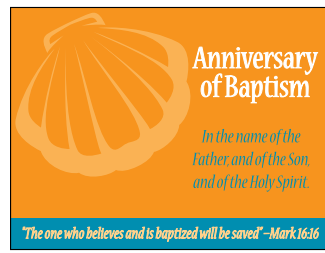


A question we occasionally get asked in the Youth & Family Ministry area is “Why do you have such a large postage budget?” In the day and age of texting, emails, and social media, one might think we don’t need to send any mail. Well... our postage budget has decreased in size over the years thanks to all the other avenues of reaching out to people. But sometimes, you need to send something tangible – maybe a postcard, a thank you note, or even a care package. Every month we send out Anniversary of Baptism cards. We send these cards out to every baptized member. And...they receive them for thirty years! You read that right, thirty, 3-0. It sounds a little crazy I will admit. But it is well worth the time!

About 15 years ago, we realized people didn’t seem to know their baptism date. What? In the life of the church, that’s like not knowing when your birthday is! Pastor John loves to talk about baptism being your second birthday, and we think it’s important that you know when that is and celebrate it. This amazing day of your baptism is when God came to you, reached out and claimed you as his own. And...no matter what you do, he will never let you go. AMAZING!

And so...each month the Youth & Family staff, along with Pastor Lars, sit down and sign each card individually. Each

card has been hand addressed with the date of your baptism – so you know – it’s for YOU! And before we send them out, we sit down together and pray for each person by name, praying that you might feel God’s arms holding on so very tightly to you.



The cards change slightly from year to year but offer some reminders of this amazing promise

given to us and even some suggestions for celebrating. So when you receive your card (or your child’s card) in the mail, dust off that baptism candle, and eat blue cupcakes by candlelight. Celebrate God’s promise to you!

Romans 6 gives us this promise, verse 4: “therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” NRSV. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, bless you and keep you now and forever! Amen.

Coming Soon Summer Sunday!

January 19 – we celebrate all the great camps we have happening in 2020 AND... you can sign up that day! Deadline for early bird prices is Thursday, February 13.



Vacation Bible School, June 1-3
3-year-olds–kindergarten

Day Camp, June 8-11
1st-5th grades

Outlaw Ranch, June 14-19
6th-7th grades

Camp Metigoshe, June 14-19
8th-10th grades

New York City mission trip,
June 20-27, high school

Peru mission trip, July 4-12
11th-12th grades and adults

(registration closed, but ask if spots are available!)

NeSoDak Bible Camp, July 26-31
4th-5th grades

Joy Ranch, August 5-7
1st-3rd grades

Minneapolis service trip,
August 12-14, 5th-8th grades

**Grades are 2019–20 school year*

After Feb. 13, prices increase \$50 or more!
Prices and registration: flcsf.org/camps

Milestone Minute Anniversary of Baptism

Anniversary of Baptism is Sunday, January 12. All families who celebrated a baptism in 2019 are invited to come to a breakfast at 10:15 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. We will then have a special blessing for all at the 11 a.m. worship service. As we celebrate the baptism of Jesus, we can all be reminded of our own baptisms and give thanks that God has claimed us as his own. Rejoice!



Bella Noche
Dinner & Auction

Sunday, February 23 ♦ 5 p.m.
First Lutheran Church, Reformation Hall

Dinner ♦ Live & Silent Auctions
Tickets available beginning January 23

Join us for this spectacular night of food, community, plus silent and live auctions!

Auction items are needed – vacation stays, adventure experiences, hand-crafted items (wood, quilts, pottery, etc.) framed artwork, themed baskets – get together with your small group, coworkers, family or friends and create a fun basket (meals, family fun, sports packages, chocolate, grilling, gardening, cooking, off to college, baby, etc.).

2019 Christmas Pageant

Thank you to all who came out to hear the children sing and read scripture about Jesus during the Christmas pageant on the Sunday afternoon December 15. There were costumes, camels, cocoa, cookies, and most importantly, Christ.



Above: Larry Olson and Katey Lawrence (not pictured) accompany the children.

Below left: Noah Willadsen practices his scripture verse as his brother, Evan, stands next to him.

Below right: Tucker Meester, Theodora Maxon, HattieMae Skatvold, Andie Aberson, and Samuel Hoelsing sing for Jesus.



Mission

First Lutheran Church welcomes all people into the community of Jesus Christ, equipping and sending them forth to serve and witness in Jesus' name.

Guiding Principles

We are grounded in the great commandment of Jesus.
(Matthew 22:34-40)

We are grounded in the great commission of Jesus.
(Matthew 28:16-20)

We are committed to welcome and minister to all people.

We are committed to equipping people for ministry.

We are committed to service in our community and world.

We are committed to a ministry of relationship building.

We are committed to our heritage and identity as a reforming church.

We are committed to excellence in broadcast ministry.



Worship Services

Saturday (Chapel)

5 p.m. Vespers/Communion

Sunday (Sanctuary)

8 a.m. Traditional Worship with Communion


9:30 a.m. Traditional Worship

11 a.m. Contemporary Worship

Media Ministries Broadcasts


8 a.m. KELO-FM Radio (101.9)

11 a.m. KSFY (Sioux Falls), KPRY (Pierre) and KABY (Aberdeen)

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First Word

First Word is the monthly newspaper of First Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, SD. It is distributed to members of the congregation and others upon request. Opinions expressed in First Word are those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by the First Lutheran Church congregation or staff. The editors of First Word reserve the right to edit submissions.

Newsletter submissions are due the first business day of the month. Please submit articles or questions regarding First Word to Communications Director, Jodi Hoyt, at jhoyt@flcsf.org. Reader feedback is always welcome.

First Word is available online to read or download at flcsf.org/firstword



Listings are through November 2019

Births

Aug. 8 **Bryer Robert Haight**, son of Matthew and Rayna Haight

Aug. 17 **Christopher Dudley Thames V**, son of Lindsay and Christopher Thames IV

Oct. 3 **Jack Douglas Jensen**, son of Alex and Nikki Jensen

Oct. 14 **Rory Faye Plucker**, daughter of Josh and Betzi Plucker

Nov. 24 **Stella Rose Olinger**, daughter of Charles and Hilary Olinger

Nov. 25 **Atlas Cole Hjellming**, son of Corey and Karla Hjellming

Baptisms:

Nov. 10 **Bryer Robert Haight**, son of Matthew and Rayna Haight

Nov. 10 **Christopher Dudley Thames V**, son of Lindsay and Christopher Thames

Deaths

Nov. 8 **Irene Kvien**

Nov. 12 **Sandra 'Sandy' Earl**

Nov. 29 **Eunice Hovland**

Senior Luncheon – January 14

All First Lutheran senior adults and their friends are invited to join us for a delicious catered lunch and an entertaining program on the second Tuesday of each month. On Tuesday, January 14, at noon, the menu will be BBQ Pulled pork sandwich, coleslaw, baked beans. Program to be announced. Please RSVP for the luncheon by calling the church receptionist at 336-3734, by Wednesday, January 8. Need a ride? Please call Project CAR, 332-2777, by 9 a.m. on Monday, January 13.

Council Highlights

If church members wish to add to an upcoming Council meeting agenda, please contact Marilyn McNeill, Business Administrator, at 339-1983 ext. 236 or mmcneill@flcsf.org. Meetings are held the fourth Thursday of each month. First Lutheran Church members are welcome to visit meetings.

November 22, 2019

- Randy Eide reported that financials remain much the same as during the year, but contributions offerings have been up.
- The 100th Anniversary steering committee is making good progress. From February to November there are a number of pastors and musicians scheduled to participate in the anniversary celebration. They plan to have a calendar of events by January. They are working on how to best promote and get the word out for the anniversary celebration.
- Visits are in progress for the Capital Campaign. Pastor John thanked Jean Hoff for all her good work in keeping everyone on task with the Capital Campaign.
- Pastor Jeff stated that things are very busy at FLC with planning upcoming services all the way into next year. Continuing to build connections is a part of this planning.
- Pastor Katherine shared that visitation pastor, Pastor Chell, is recovering from surgery and the other pastors are filling in during his absence. She thanked Jordon Stone for all her great help.
- Marilyn stated that progress is being made on a balcony project to move the bell tables and hand bells to the north balcony. It was discovered that the railings in the north and south balconies are not up to safety codes. They are not high enough. This project should be finished by Christmas Eve.
- There was discussion on to make better use of all the visitors/members who attend the Christmas Eve services. Marnie shared that we will take photos in the Atrium to welcome people to church and e-mail or text them. A lengthy discussion was held on how to make personal connections with people attending these services.
- We are asking for more suggestions for possible board members.
- Many of our fiction library books were sold at the Bazaar. The rest of the books are being sorted and the ones we keep will be in the Luther Lounge which will eventually become the Reading Room as well as a place for meetings.
- Kathy Stelzer, FLCW chair, shared all that the FLCW have been doing and what their focuses are for next year.
- Budget Congress was held.
- Pastor Lars asked the Boards to develop their goals and in February be ready to go. Board chairs each shared their budget requests and ministry plan.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Officers/Executive Committee

Aaron Ellingsen President
Michael Paulson Vice President
Randy Eide Treasurer
Mindy Moore Secretary
John Christopherson Senior Pastor
Terri Carlson Member-at-Large
Lenae Schwartz Member-at-Large

Council Representatives

Care & Health Barney Brandenburg
Education & Discipleship Cami Jacobsen
Evangelism & Outreach Colleen Kokenge
Finance, Admin. & Property Michael Kedik
FLCW Kathy Stelzer
Foundation Somer Anderson
Stewardship & Giving Birgit Peterson
Welcome & Community Deb Nelson
Worship & Music James Moore
Youth & Family Ben Ready

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH STAFF DIRECTORY

Pastoral Staff

(203) Dr. John Christopherson Senior Pastor
(210) Rev. Lars Olson Executive Pastor
(209) Rev. Jeff Backer Associate Pastor
(214) Rev. Katherine Olson* Associate Pastor
(202) Rev. Bob Chell* Visitation
(202) Rev. David Houck* Visitation
(202) Rev. Roger Noer* Visitation
(202) Rev. Dennis Tranberg* Visitation
(202) Rev. Dave Johnson Emeritus

Administrative Staff

(236) Marilyn McNeill Business Administrator
(211) Jody Byrnes Finance Administrator
(202) Donna Jahr Secretary to the Pastors
(225) Kristy Zuraff* Admin/PM Receptionist
(201) Cleo Sorensen* Receptionist/Secretary

Care and Health Ministries

(237) Jordan Stone Caring Coordinator
(202) Cheryl Satterlee* Wedding Coordinator

Media Ministry

(231) Jodi Hoyt Director
(213) Susan Bell Communications Coordinator
Kathy Hein* Broadcast Director
Garrett Masters* Broadcast Director
David Palmer* Broadcast Director
Hons Oakland* Broadcast Director
Tanner Wangness* Broadcast Director

Facilities

(201) Dave Wilson Facility Manager
Rick East Custodian
Jeff Hartnett Custodian

Worship and Music Ministries

(260) Zachary Brockhoff Director/Organist,
FLYGHT and Jubilant Singers Director
(261) Shirley Barlow* Administrative Assistant
Larry Olson* Contemporary Worship
Dr. Paul Nesheim* Adult Choir Director,
Women's Choir Director
Bonnie Lindgren* Carol Choir Director
Donna Hamilton* Accompanist
Sue Severson* Accompanist
Mary Ryrholm* Agape Ringers Director
Pam Sonnichsen* Instrumental Coordinator
Marcia Kittelson* Organist Emerita

Youth and Family Ministries

(204) Marnie Dahle Backer Director
(235) Elias Johnson-Youngquist Youth Minister
(228) Mark Nassen* Coordinator
(238) Heather Smith Children's Minister
Nancy Henrichsen* Nursery Attendant
Gayle Johnson* Nursery Attendant
Irma Rodriguez Leon* Nursery Attendant
Kris Stark* Nursery Attendant

() = Direct dial phone extensions. If no extension is listed, please call the Director of the ministry area.

* Part-time staff

Main phone (605) 336-3734
Direct dial to extensions (605) 339-1983
Toll-free (800) 425-9899
Fax (605) 336-8370
Pastoral emergency (605) 610-9431
Custodian cell (605) 351-8281
Project CAR (605) 332-2777

FINANCIAL SERVICES



Financial Update as of November 2019

Total Revenue, year-to-date

2019 Actual	\$1,826,069
2018 Actual	\$1,824,086

Total Expenses, year-to-date

2019 Actual	\$1,946,746
2018 Actual	\$1,815,434

Contract For Deed Ideal \$209,604

HVAC System \$1,316,543

Worship Attendance 2,792

Gifts and Memorials, November

Gifts to the First Lutheran Church Foundation in honor of:

Pastor Jim Christopherson's 90th birthday: Gary & Shirley Barlow, Don & Joyce Helberg, Carol Lerdal, Carl & Janet Naessig, Don & Florence Toft, Carol Twedt

Gift to Care and Health Ministries: E.N. & Jay Wood

Gifts to Media Ministries in honor of:

Pastor Jim Christopherson's 90th birthday: Phyllis Day, Jerry Drake, Joanne Dahmen Hagen, Emil & Carol Knapp, Dennis Knutson, Howard & Lou Ann Paulson, Sandra Pedersen, Mike & Gloria Simpson, Darlene Weis
Austin Nickel's Ordination: Tracie Osthus

Gifts to Media Ministries in memory of:

Joanne Ambrosion: Gladys Ambrosion
James Bell: FLC Staff
Jerry Bruget: Virginia Alick, Gary & Sheila Alrick, Mel & Mardella Anderson, Orrin & Karen Anderson, Pr. Jeff Backer & Marnie Dahle Backer, Daniel & Ann Barkel, Ruth Barlow, Janelle Ellison Belcher, Denton & Sandra Benson, Gordon & Dolores Berge, Jim & Charlene Berry, Bruce & Pam Bettmeng, Larry & Mary Ann Blowers, Carol Bormann, Roger & Karen Braaten, Wauthena Brooks, Dick & Donna Brufflat, DiAnn Burwell, Robert & Gail Carlson, Larry & Geraldine Cass, Phyllis Day, Bernard & Rose DeWald, Joan Domke, John & Shirley Drobny, Marilyn Eikanger, Marvyl Eldal, Stuart & Marcia Ellison, Don & Judy Erickson, Dave & Julie Gibson, Donald & Judith Gohl, Russell & Carol Greenfield, Bob & Carolyn Greenfield, Curtis & Glenda Hage, Leroy & Janet Halstenson, Roger Haugo, Peter & Marilyn Hegg, Jake & Norma Hofer, Mary Ann Hohman, Kevin & Guyla Hohn, Sandra Holleman, Melvin & Carol Klein, Denise Klein, William & Marcene Kromminga, Dick & Gerry Kropp, Kenneth & Joan Kujath, Dr. Eric & Jennifer Larson, Troy & Deana Larson, Thomas & Joan Larson, Carol Lerdal, James & Eaine Luce, Marilyn McLeod, Gary & Jeralyn Meier, Darlene Michael, Dr. Wayne Mitchell, Darrell & Marilyn Moseson, Ardeen & Cindy Mulder, David & Linda Munson, Milton Mutch, Carl & Janet Naessig, M. & B. Nelson, Dorothy Nelson, Douglas & Darla Newborg, John & Marlen Norberg, John Odney, Dr. Gary Olson, Merle & Marjory Olson, Terry Oppold, Maxine Owens, Howard & Lou Ann Paulson, LaMoyne & Karyn Pederson, Jerry & Lyla Peterson, Pr.

Frank & Marit Pudas, Kyle & Rebecca Reinhillier, Irene Rezac, Ken & Judy Schmuck, Karen Schneider, Trudy Schroeder, Garry & Gloria Scott, Mike & Gloria Simpson, William & Beverly Simpson, Twila Sine, Gertrude Smith, Dave & Pam Sonnichsen, Cheryl Stone, James & Janice Thompson, Larry & Mabel Tieszen, Leone Trygstad, Eugene & Ruth Trygstad, Randy & Kathy Tucker, Peggy Uther, Douglas & Carol Uthe, Paul & Karen Van Bockern, Robert & Marilyn Van Demark, Coletta Venske, Gene & Shirlee Vognild, Dave & Roxy Weidenbach, Hazel Wek, Freddie Wenik, Floyd & June Wiesner, Mark & Suzanne Willadsen, Donna Willadsen, Sharyl Wolf

Sandy Earl: Donald & Joyce Helberg, Emil & Carol Knapp, Karen Lidel, Ione Pereboom, Charlotte M. Peters, Ronald & Carol Viet

Flip Fjellanger: Jake & Norma Hofer
Jill Greenfield: Lottie Rollag, Jean Hoff, Shirley Stenseth

Wava Homandberg: Betty & Larry Olson
Irene Kvien: Jeanette Edman, Judith Kearney

Elizabeth Mendelson: James & Dorothy Christopherson, Marilyn Eikanger, David & Ruth Erickson, Vance & Sherry Goldammer, Leroy & Janet Halstenson, Jean Hoff, Robert & Sarah Roth

Beverly Winter: Keith & Lori Anderson, Janyce Brettcher, Grace Feldman, Lee Del Howard, Tim & Carol Hudson, Michael & Lila Jamison, Bill Jensen, Bennett & Christine Kyte, David & Sela Nagelhout, Cynthia Olson, Duane & Beverly Schommer, Nelda Vellek, Paul & Sandy Wermerson, Timothy Zoellner & Pamela Cutler Zoellner

Gifts to Music Ministries in honor of:

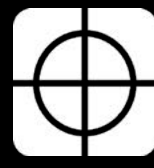
Pastor Jim Christopherson's 90th birthday: Don & Judy Erickson, Stanley & Norma Schmidt

Gifts to Music Ministries in memory of:

Jeremy Halstenson: Judith Godbey
Marvin Widmann: Joel & Linda Christensen, Guy & Arlyce Eich, Don & Judy Erickson, Randy Ferrin & Kathy Trombly-Ferrin, Betty Fiddeler, Robert & Tina Hillman, Scott & Christine Hjellming, Janice Hoeck, Mary Ann Hohman, John & Jane Hubler, Stephen Johnson, Kenneth & Marita Karels, Janet Larsen, David & Pamela Marburger, Robert Mathiesen, Rick & Margot Middleden, Duane & Lois Nearman, John & Jane Paulson, Debra Rasmussen, Mike & Gloria Simpson, Mark & Danette Zickrick

Beverly Winter: Jeanette Edman

MEDIA MINISTRY



Become a media Sponsor

Support First Lutheran in providing a weekly worship experience for people who are unable attend worship in person. Sponsor a radio broadcast, television broadcast, or closed captioning in honor of or in memory of a loved one, to celebrate a special life event, or to the glory of God. Contact First Lutheran at (605) 336-3734.

Thank You November Sponsors

First Lutheran Church's worship can be seen every Sunday at 11 a.m. on KSFY, KPRY, and KABY in South Dakota; southwest Minnesota; northwest Iowa; and northeast Nebraska. Sunday's 8 a.m. worship is broadcast live on KELO-FM, 101.9.

November 3: Radio was sponsored in memory of Chuck Osthus, who would have celebrated his birthday November 5, by his wife, Tracie; and family, Scott and Tezra, and David and Lynne.

November 10: Radio broadcast was sponsored in memory of Drs. Arthur Huseboe and Doris Eggers Huseboe and their parents, Delbert and Erna Eggers and Carl and Lillian Huseboe. Funds have been made available through a gift to the First Lutheran Church Foundation.

Television broadcast was partially sponsored in loving memory of Beverly Winter by her family and friends.

November 17: Television broadcast was sponsored in loving memory of Mark Doescher by his father, Bob Doescher; and sisters, Robin, LeAnne, and Sarah.

The radio broadcast and closed captioning were sponsored in loving memory of Mark Doescher by his sisters—Robin, LeAnne, and Sarah and their families.

November 24: Radio broadcast was sponsored in loving memory of Morris and Edith Magnuson, whose anniversary would have been on November 25, by gifts to the First Lutheran Church Foundation.

The television broadcast was sponsored by earnings of a gift to the First Lutheran Church Foundation in loving memory of Hilmer and Susie Lillebo.

November 28 Thanksgiving Day:

Television was sponsored in loving memory of Thomas Russell Greenfield and Jill Marie Greenfield by Russ and Carol Greenfield, Gregg and Julie.

Closed captioning was sponsored in thankfulness for and in memory of Bonnie Merrill, Carl Wilkins, Maudie Wilkins, Bessie Thompson, Dorothy Peterson, Mabel Jasper, and Agnes Welch. Given by nieces and nephews.

Sponsorships available

Help us share the good news of Jesus Christ beyond our sanctuary into peoples' homes. Please consider sponsoring a radio broadcast (\$150), television broadcast (\$1300), or closed captioning (\$140). To learn how you can be a Media Ministry sponsor to honor or remember a loved one, or celebrate a special life event, please call the church at (605) 336-3734. Additional open dates may be available.

January

January 5: Media is fully sponsored
January 12: Television sponsor needed. Radio and closed captioning fully sponsored.
January 19: Radio, television and closed captioning sponsors needed.
January 26: Television and closed captioning sponsors needed. Radio is fully sponsored.

February

February 2: Television and closed captioning sponsors are needed. Radio is fully sponsored.
February 9: Closed captioning sponsor needed. Radio and television are fully sponsored.
February 16: Television sponsor needed. Radio and closed captioning are fully sponsored.
February 23: Radio, television, and closed captioning sponsors are needed.
February 26 (Ash Wednesday): Television and closed captioning are fully sponsored. (No radio needed)

March

March 1: Radio sponsor needed. Television and closed captioning are fully sponsored.
March 8: Closed captioning sponsor needed. Television and radio sponsored.
March 15: Television sponsor needed. Radio and closed captioning fully sponsored.
March 22: Television sponsor needed. Radio and closed captioning fully sponsored.
March 29: Radio, television and closed captioning sponsors needed

April

April 5: Closed captioning sponsor needed. Radio and television are fully sponsored.
April 12 (Easter) Media fully sponsored.
April 19: Closed captioning sponsor needed. Radio and television are fully sponsored.
April 26: Radio and closed captioning sponsors needed. Television fully sponsored.

100TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS



Throughout 2020, First Lutheran celebrates 100 years of ministry as a congregation. To mark this occasion, former pastors and musicians will join us throughout the coming year. Please add these dates to your calendar and plan to join us in worship. In September and November of 2020, we join together as a

congregation around the 100th Anniversary concert and 100th Anniversary worship.

February 2020



Saturday/Sunday, February 15 and 16
Pastor Jason Burggraff, guest preacher
Pastor Jason Burggraff, who served as Associate Pastor from 2007 to 2012, will preach during weekend worship services.



Wednesday, February 26, 2020
Ash Wednesday, 11:15 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.
Pastor Dave Johnson, guest preacher
Pastor Emeritus Dave Johnson will preach during Ash Wednesday worship services.

March 2020



Saturday/Sunday, March 7 and 8
Pastor Peter Strommen, guest preacher
Pastor Strommen, who served as Associate Pastor from 1979 to 1983, will preach during weekend worship services.

April 2020



Palm Sunday, April 5
Dr. Jerry Hanson, guest conductor
At the 9:30 AM worship service, Dr. Jerry Hanson, who served as Director of Music for 27 years from 1976 to 2002, will lead the Adult Choir. Dr. Hanson will direct John Ferguson's "Who Is This?" commissioned by First Lutheran Church and dedicated to Dr. Hanson in thankfulness for his leadership.

May 2020



Saturday/Sunday, May 2 and 3
Pastor David Holm, guest preacher
Pastor Holm, who served as Senior Pastor from 1984 to 1992 will preach during weekend worship services.



Sunday, May 3
Dorothy Christopherson, guest conductor
Dorothy Christopherson, who served as Director of both Women's Choir and Agape Ringers from 2002-2015 will lead the Women's Choir at 8 and 9:30 a.m.

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Sunday, May 3, 3 p.m.
Organ Concert, FLC Sanctuary,
Dr. Michael Elsbernd, organist
Dr. Elsbernd, who served as Director of Music and organist from 2008 to 2015, will offer an organ concert in the First Lutheran sanctuary. The concert is free and open to the public.

June 2020



Sunday, June 7, 3 p.m.
Lecture-Recital, First Lutheran Sanctuary
Brian Johnson, pianist with the Trinitas Trio

Pianist Brian Johnson, who served as Director of Music from 2000 to 2005 will offer an afternoon lecture-recital along with the Trinitas Trio from California on the topic of the Holy Trinity.



Saturday/Sunday, June 13 and 14
Pastor Natanael Lizarazo, guest preacher

Pastor Lizarazo, who served as Associate Pastor from 2000 to 2014 will preach during weekend worship services.

August 2020

Saturday/Sunday, August 8 and 9
Pastor Denise Broveak, guest preacher

Pastor Broveak, a former member of First Lutheran, now serving as Pastor at Christ Lutheran Church in Hartford, SD, will preach during weekend worship services.

September 2020



Sunday, September 13, 3 p.m.
100th Anniversary Concert
First Lutheran Sanctuary

First Lutheran Choirs are joined by members of the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra, Grammy-award winning organist and Professor of Organ at The Juilliard School Paul Jacobs, and the Sioux Falls chamber ensemble Transept to present a newly-commissioned piece of music for organ, orchestra, and choir by Juilliard Professor of Composition Wayne Oquin.

In addition, Paul Jacobs and members of the South Dakota Symphony will present Francis Poulenc's "Organ Concerto in G Minor" and solo organ works appropriate to the celebration.

This event is part of the Lankford Arts Series. The concert is free, but complimentary tickets are required. Tickets may be reserved online at flcsf.org/100 beginning in March and will be available to the general public in May.



Sunday, September 27
Dr. Christopher Windle, guest conductor

Dr. Windle, who served as Assistant Choir Director from 2009 to 2011, will lead the Adult Choir during 8 and 9:30 p.m. worship.

October 2020



Saturday/Sunday, October 10 and 11
Pastor Brian Mortensen, guest preacher

Pastor Mortensen, who served as Senior Pastor from 1993 to 1999, will preach during weekend worship services.

Sunday, October 11
Rolf Anderson, guest conductor

Rolf Anderson, who served as Director of Music from 1975-1976, will lead the Adult Choir at 8 and 9:30 a.m.

November 2020



Sunday, November 1 – All Saints' Day
100th Anniversary Worship

We worship together as a congregation on Sunday morning at 9 and 11 a.m. in the First Lutheran Sanctuary, as we give thanks for the blessings of the past 100 years. The Augustana Choir joins in leading worship alongside First Lutheran Choirs, brass, timpani, and instrumentalists.

EVANGELISM AND OUTREACH

January Special Offering: Companion Synods

By Dan Lindquist, E&O Board Member



This month's special offering will to support our companion synods in Nicaragua: Iglesia Luterana de Nicaragua Fe y Esperanza, ILFE (The Nicaraguan Lutheran Church of Faith and Hope), and in Cameroon: L'Eglise Evangélique Luthérienne au Cameroun, EELC (The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon).

When the E&O Board divided up the writing responsibilities for our special offering articles, I was adamant that I have a chance to share with the people of First Lutheran Church my first-hand experiences traveling to Nicaragua and Cameroon to work alongside the Lutheran Church in both countries.

I have traveled to Nicaragua on four separate occasions with a medical mission group, working in conjunction with ILFE, providing care to those in rural Nicaragua as well as people in the capital city of Managua. What a privilege it has been to go and be the hands of God working in His world! Luke 12:48 "...everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded."

While many see this as a call to give financially to God (which is exactly what I'm asking you to consider!), I also believe it is a call to give of our individual time and talents! In Colossians, Luke is referred to as a physician (from the Greek for "one who heals"). As a medical professional, I have found Luke's words resonate in my heart as well as in the work of my hands.

In February 2017, I traveled to Cameroon with Bishop Zellmer and a delegation of nurses and advance practice providers from the South Dakota Lutheran Synod, partnering with Global Health Ministries, to provide medical supplies and education to three hospitals in the Adamawa Region of Cameroon. Again, I looked to the New Testament, to Matthew 9:35-38, "Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; 38 therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.'"

We traveled 16 hours by train from the capital in Yaoundé to N'Gaoundéré and Garoua-Boulai, spent time at hospitals and rural clinics; worshiped together at the Millennium Church; embraced our brothers and sisters in Christ at the Leprosarium in Foubarka; met with seminarians at the Lutheran Institute of Theology in Meiganga; and shared countless prayers, conversations, and meals with those who Christ calls US ALL to love!

Let me leave you all with my favorite travel quote, attributed to Mark Twain: "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime."

It is my hope that we will be able to post some of the photos and videos I have from my time with our companion synods, so please be on the lookout for that post on the church's website! Prayerfully consider financially supporting our Companion Synod Ministries and partnerships in Nicaragua and Cameroon.

Special offering envelopes are included with your regular offering envelopes or use the yellow envelope in the pew. Please bring your donation to the Information Desk at church, or visit flcsf.org/give to donate online.