

Easter means forgiveness; Forgiveness means freedom; and that's sheer gospel!

By John Christopherson, Senior Pastor

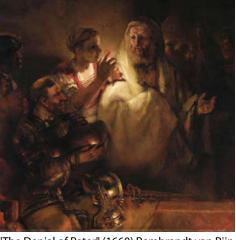


Peter must have felt sick to his stomach, for he'd just betrayed his best friend. Awash in a sea of guilt, Peter remembered the first day he'd met this lifegiving friend along the

northwest coast of Lake Galilee. He'd just come ashore after fishin' with the boys including his brother, Andrew, as well as James and John. As they were cleaning their nets, this stranger, who for some strange reason, Peter felt he'd known all his life and then some, said: *"Follow me, and I'll make you fishers of men*" (Mk. 1:16-18). And for some reason, stranger still, they cast everything aside and followed him: Jesus of Nazareth. And it was only in the following that they finally came to know who he was...As Peter was later to confess: *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"* (Matt. 16:16).

And where did this Jesus of Nazareth lead them, but into the most challenging yet exciting three years of their lives. As their little band gained the strength of another "2x4" (Mk. 3:13-19), they became like family, a baker's dozen, following Jesus into the rough 'n' tumble of life: casting out demons (even in church!) and healing the sick (Mk. 1:21f). Peter felt like he often had a bobber-of-a-brain compared to this One who transformed not only his perspective on life but his name as well: from Simon to Cephas, which is Aramaic for Peter, which is Greek for "rock." But he hung in there none the less even though he'd occasionally need to be put in his place (Mk. 8:31-33)-if not for his characteristic bluntness, then for his altogether sinking to the bottom of the sea as he too tried to "walk on water" (Matt. 14:22-33). Peter watched the paralytics get up and go (Mk. 2:1f), the blind trading in their red-tipped sticks for a pair of Ray Bans (Mk. 8:22; 10:46f), and even the dead were raised (Mk. 5:35f), simply by this best friend's touch or a word. Peter listened to Jesus' amazing teaching of God's kingdom come, a message of unconditional grace and forgiveness for all people in "little stories with big points" called parables (Mk. 4:2). And so it was that Jesus' controversial life and teachings continued to spread throughout the region, challenging the legalism of the religious status quo (Mk. 1:27f; 2:12; 6:1-3; 7:37; 11:27f).

young girl approached Peter: "You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus" (Mk. 14:67). But then, the following stopped, as Peter and the other disciples saw the hill where three shadows would fall. And rather than defending Jesus, Peter and the whole bunch denied him. After all this?! The fullest paragraph of God's love story ever known. "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Peter just couldn't forgive himself.



"The Denial of Peter" (1660) Rembrandt van Rijn

Now, open your Bibles to one of the two assigned Gospel accounts for Easter this year. Turn to Mark 16:1-8. Two little words here set Peter free from sin's deep grave of guilt and shame. Two words that spell for-giveness. Begin by reading the first five verses of Mark 16, regarding the women's great surprise when they find the stone rolled away. Then what? Read on in v.6, in the spirit of their amazement and ours: "You seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here ... " says the angel. Now, get your highlighter out and be ready for an absolute gem in verse 7: "But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him as he told you." Did you see it? Those two little words that speak of the wonder of Easter forgiveness and a future of freedom. "But go, tell his disciples and Peter ... "

Most biblical scholars contend that Mark's gospel was originally an oral account of Jesus' life and ministry as told by Peter. Imagine then what this means, that these two simple words are included in St. Mark's Easter account. I mean, what a line! **Be sure and tell Peter** that he's not left out of this good news! Now, write your name above Peter's! Yes, the Word is out: creating for-giveness. For good. For always. For salvation. Yes, it's for Peter **and you**.



All services are in-person and live streamed on YouTube

April 1 – Maundy Thursday – 7 p.m.

- Worship with Communion Fifth grade First Communion Preacher: Pastor Lars Olson
- Broadcast on KSFY at 3 p.m.
- Drive-thru Communion, parking lot 12:30-1:30 p.m. and 4:30-5:30 p.m.

April 2 – Good Friday – 7 p.m.

- Worship Tenebrae Service Preacher: Dr. John Christopherson
- Broadcast on KSFY at 3 p.m.

April 3 – Easter Vigil – 5 p.m. Preacher: Pastor Lars Olson

April 4 – Easter Sunday

- Worship with Holy Communion 7, 9, and 11 a.m.
- Preacher: Bishop Constanze Hagmaier
- Broadcast on KSFY at 11 a.m.



For Everything There is a Season

By Bonnie Lindgren, Carol Choir Director

For everything there is a season—and what a fine season it has been!

I have served as the director of Carol Choir for 47 years. It has been a privilege; it has been an honor. Thank you, First Lutheran, for sharing your children.





I always have felt God takes a special interest in these beautiful children who spread HIS message of JOY as they sing from their hearts right into your hearts. Thank you for allowing me to spend time with them each week as we sang,







But then, some three years into their "fishing for people," another net, one of demonic deceit was cast on Jesus outside of Jerusalem, arrested and put before a kangaroo court. Outside the court, a

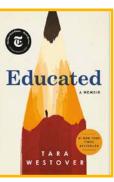
In the forgiving, life-giving hope and joy of Easter,

Pastor John

First Fridays Book Club Friday, April 2 – 5-6 p.m.

First Lutheran's Education and Discipleship Board hosts a monthly book club! A new book is chosen to discuss each month. This month, we will discuss the book, *Educated: A Memoir* by Tara Westover. Visit: flcsf.org/events

The group meets at R Wine Bar & Kitchen, 322 East 8th St.



talked, laughed, and learned all in service and glory to God. Soli Deo Gloria—To God Alone Be the Glory!

God has told me my season as Carol Choir director has come to an end.

I say a giant "THANK YOU!" to CAROL CHOIR of all 47 years—once a Carol Choir member, always a Carol Choir member in my heart. What a delight it has been for me to direct you in that prized, up-close seat right in front of your sweet little faces with sparkling eyes and see first-hand the JOY of the Lord bubbling from your hearts. You are precious to me.

CAROL CHOIR, DID YOU KNOW GOD LOVES YOU? UN-HUH—HE ABSOLUTELY ADORES YOU!

P.S. And, so does Bonnie!!

After almost fifty years of faithful ministry to First Lutheran Church, we give thanks to God for Bonnie Lindgren. We know generations of people have been impacted by Bonnie's life, work, and love of the children. If you would like to express your thanks and appreciation, Bonnie has specifically requested notes and cards be sent during this time. These will be read and appreciated for many years to come. Your notes and cards may be sent to First Lutheran Church, dropped off at the Information Desk, or sent via email to bonnielindgren@yahoo.com.

Youth and Family Ministry

Shrove Tuesday

By Marnie Dahle Backer, Youth and Family Director

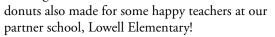


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The day before Ash Wednesday and Lent has always been quite a festive day at the church. This year, we needed to figure out a way to manage all the fun and celebration in a COVID-friendly way. Always up for the challenge, the church came up with Drive-Thru Shrove Tuesday.

While in my mind I could imagine our friends from Chris's Cakes standing at the atrium entrance tossing pancakes into cars as folks drove by, the below-zero temperatures and common sense (aka the Youth & Family staff) came up with a different plan: donuts! Because, well... they're donuts. Donuts with maple frosting-perhaps not always a first choice for donut lovers but seemed somewhat close to a pancake and syrup! Mr. Twister was happy to come hang out in the atrium making puppies and swords for the children. We also had some Mardi Gras beads and temporary tattoos to complete the carnival-esque theme.

It also happened to be our night to host Necessities for Neighbors outside under the canopy, and we were able to share some fun with our neighbors! The leftover



Time and time again, the world has needed to come up with innovative ways to accomplish things we've had the luxury to take for granted pre-2020. This can be exciting and also exhausting. It requires us to pause and take a look at how we can share God's love, church traditions, and faith with one another when life isn't ideal. The season of Lent can be like this as well-it also requires us to pause and take a look, to hear the stories of Jesus' life and death, and to take it in that he died on the cross for you and for me. And while it isn't always "ideal" for us to hear this word, we need this word of Jesus to know we are loved and forgiven.





Pictured right,

Sutton Aberson blesses her momma, Jaci, "You are a child of God.



Below, first graders proudly displaying their finished crosses are (clockwise): Lauren Fedders, Noah Willadsen, Harper Skajewski, and Hunter Anderson.













Marked with the Cross Ash Wednesday

By Pastor Lars Olson

"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return"-the words spoken on Ash Wednesday as the the parking lot and onto Dakota Avenue, filled with those who had come to receive the ashes along with the bread and wine. We were quite surprised at the number of cars, but we were overjoyed to share in the physical, touchable, incarnational portions of this worship service.

Milestone Minute

Fifth Grade First Communion

During Lent our 5th graders are learning about our two sacraments: baptism and communion. For four weeks, we gathered in Reformation Hall to learn that a sacrament is: 1) God's Word of promise, 2) Given with a physical thing, 3) Granting God's love and forgiveness, and 4) Instituted by Jesus Christ. They get to make clay chalices and



Benny Willers and mom Liz



Evy Carney





Anders Paulson and mom, Veronica

Communion **Chalice Making**

Communion Chalices being made! Students will use these chalices to receive their First Communion on Maundy Thursday, April 1.



Dylan Halstenson and his dad, Isabelle Kraft and mom, Holly. Corey.

Bread Making

Bread is made - from scratch! They made two loaves: one to take home and one to leave at the church for us to bake and then bring to Maundy Thursday for communion.





his grandma, Marilyn.



Catherine Jerstad

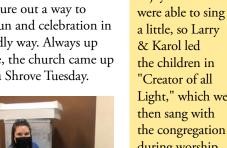


March 7 to learn and memorize the Lord's Prayer, enjoy a donut and create a Lord's Prayer cross. We

blessings bowls, bake some bread, and have a tasting time!

Blessing Bowl Making







Carter, and mom, Lacey.

Light," which we then sang with the congregation during worship.

First Grade Lord's Prayer

The First Graders and their families met on Sunday,

ash cross is marked on the forehead. The phrase recalls God's promise to Adam and Eve and all of humankind in Genesis 3:19. The ashes remind us that we are mortal and that sin and death are our lives until the cross of Christ.



This year, as strange and difficult as it has been, the faithful of First Lutheran came to worship to receive the ash and cross along with the Lord's Supper where we hear the promise of new life and salvation in Jesus Christ.

The option for drive-thru ashes and Holy Communion was also offered for those who were comfortable joining our worship by livestream or broadcast on KSFY. A line of cars stretched out of At one point in the planning process, the pastors had discussed how to do Ash Wednesday without imposing the ashes. The need of the community to limit contact and touching made this a unique problem. It would not be possible to touch each person, touch the ashes, and not make contact between people. It was going to be an oddity to have no ashes on Ash Wednesday until someone had the brilliant idea of using disposable makeup applicators. These worked wonderfully, and the crosses were much clearer than the normal smudges that the pastor's finger or thumb usually leaves. It could well be that we continue this technique in future years.

All in all, even in the hiccups and hurdles, we began Lent by confessing our sins and receiving the promise that in Jesus Christ and his cross we are saved from sin and death, not as something we do ourselves, but as a gift from God. (Ephesians 2:8)

Evelyn and Gretchen Glover are helped by their mom, Jill.



the sticky bread

dough.

Finished loaves ready to bake.

stirring it up with

dad, Zach.





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Joyful Giving

By Pastor Lars Olson

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If you were asked, "What joy comes to you from giving?" how would you answer? Stewardship & Giving Board members have been asking members of First Lutheran Church this question in order to better understand how this congregation experiences joy through giving to their church, community, and world through volunteering of time, sharing of talents, and giving of money. While the specifics of each answer varied according to each person's chosen place to give, every response overflowed with thankfulness and joy for being able to share.

Look through these quotes from the interviews and notice how these people talk about the rewarding nature of giving. The joy of giving to important causes is connected to needs in the community, but there isn't a sense of obligation. Instead, this joy is a result of giving—even in small ways for giving means helping meet a need.

- "Knowing that my giving, in any form, benefits others is very rewarding."
- "It is fulfilling to know where your funds are going and that they are making an impact."
- "We enjoy seeing our money being put to good use, locally (church, arts, political campaigns). Supporting the community in a multitude of ways: religious, recreational, arts/science, etc."
- "It's great to be part of a community, and to give to that and see the great things that come from that giving."
- "There is something special about being able to give, that it connects you to others and bolsters your soul. It's rewarding to be able to give anything."

Giving of your time, talent, and money as God has given it to you, not under threat but in generosity and freedom is different than demanding giving. It's the rare exception that finds joy in paying taxes or receiving a notice from the city that you must trim your trees to comply with the law. That's because they are demanded and not gifts. Giving gifts and giving generously of all that God has provided you, on the other hand, is a matter of the heart. The freedom given to us in Christ means being able to give freely, not under compulsion or demands, but free to give to the causes, programs, and ministries that are close to your heart. This creates an entirely different experience for the giver that is rewarding, fulfilling, and faithful.

There is also a clearly expressed thread in these interviews of a deep connection to how important it is that giving makes an impact, a difference, or helps someone in meaningful ways. This is another important topic for the Stewardship & Giving Board to communicate. So, keep your eyes open in the coming months as the Stewardship & Giving Board will highlight how your faithful giving helps First Lutheran as well as the partner ministries that our congregation supports.

Council Highlights—February 25, 2021

If there is an item that you as a church member wish to add to an upcoming Council meeting agenda, please contact Ginger Miller, Director of Administration, at 339-1983 ext. 236, or gmiller@flcsf.org. Meetings are held the fourth Thursday of each month. FLC members are welcome to visit meetings.

- This year's theme for Lent is The Apostles' Creed
- Thanks to Lindsey Gray and Andrea Van Essen for their tireless work on the Lenten Devotional and podcasts.
- Ash Wednesday attendance was strong bumperto-bumper drive through imposition of ashes and communion was well received
- Pastoral Staff is fully vaccinated, now able to make hospital visits in person.
- Discussion of upcoming events at the South Dakota Synod and Luther House of Study.
- Council Handbooks including Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest were distributed
- Discussion regarding resumption of Capital Campaign
- Crossroads Conference Assembly is March 21 at 2:00 p.m.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Gifts and Memorials

First Lutheran Church Foundation in memory of: Richard Wold: Roger & Donna Schiager

FLC Foundation for Youth & Family Ministry in memory of: Howard Paulson: Betty Pfeifle

FLC Media Ministry in memory of:Karen Braaten: Roger Braaten, Dennis & Jane King

John Drobny: Lottie Rollag

Ronald Harms: Brent Bargmann, Brad & Dawn Bargmann, Leroy & Janet Halstenson

John Kinkead: Duane Anderson

Don Linnemeyer: Kathy Stelzer

Howard Paulson: Larry & Marilyn Anderson, Gary & Shirley Barlow, Robin Burke, Stan & Sandy Christopherson, James & Sandy Fink, Jon & Jana Gadberry, Clarine Gaffin, Peter & Marilyn Hegg, Donald & Joyce Helberg, Emil & Carol Knapp, Mary Ellen Lantis,

Media Ministry

• KELO radio broadcast (\$155)

• KSFY telecast (\$1350)

• Closed captioning (\$150)

call (605) 336-3734.

Karen Lidel, Greg & Diane Marshall, Robert Mathiesen, Barb Matson, Stan & Dawn Schoal Family, Michael & Jessica

Srstka, Alan & Penny Thorson Gloria Schlechter: Jean Hoff

Richard Wold: Orrin & Karen Anderson, Alfred Borgen, Mark & Vickie Brunsvold, Michael & Maren Daley, Alice Davis, Carolyn Fischer, Wayne Gustafson, Sharon Johnson, Gary & Debbie Lloyd, Verona Mikkelson, David & Karen Molmen, Milt Mutch, Nancy Peterson, Janice Schneekloth, Richard Viehweg, Anne West, Brian & Pam Whalen, Constance Zimmerman

Paula Wood: Marlene Linton, Orrin & Patricia Townswick

Music Ministry in memory of: Aaron Fuchs: Mary Eich, Robert & Marilyn Van Demark

Organ Fund in memory of: Aaron Fuchs: Stephen Johnson

Financial Update ending 2/28/2021

Total Revenue, year-to-date

2021 Budget	.\$365,230
2021 Actual	.\$399,266
2020 Actual	.\$313,655

Total Expenses, year-to-date

Total Expenses, year to date
2021 Budget\$368,564
2021 Actual \$305,618
2020 Actual \$364,383
YTD Net Profit/Loss \$93,648
Contract For Deed,
Ideal \$126,432
HVAC System \$444,055
February WorshipAttendance711

February Media Sponsors

Feb. 7: The KSFY telecast was sponsored in memory of Les Rollag, whose birthday would have been February 15, by his family. The KELO radio broadcast, closed captioning, and the YouTube stream were sponsored in memory of Karen Braaten by Roger Braaten and family. Roger and Karen's anniversary would have been February 3.

Feb. 14: Television broadcast and the YouTube stream were sponsored by Lori and David Melemseter in honor of the baptism of Connor David Staats, their first grandson. Connor's baptism was February 11. Radio and closed captioning were sponsored in honor of Mike and Gloria Simpson's anniversary on February 18 by Elaine Johnson, Mary Ellen Lantis, Richard Berdahl, and families.

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If you're looking for easy ways to give of your time to support your church and community, take a look at FLC Now videos and opportunities on our website. These are updated monthly, and the needs are always current.



Deaths:

Feb. 2Kenneth WieczorekFeb. 8Colleen BeeFeb. 11Howard PaulsonFeb. 13Violet OsthusFeb. 15Ronald Harms

Please contact the church office, (605) 336-3734, if there is a change in address, phone number, or living situation for you or a family member. • YouTube live stream (\$75) April 4: All sponsorships are fully funded. April 11: YouTube sponsor needed.

April 18: Closed captioning and YouTube sponsors are needed.

Media Sponsors Needed

generosity of sponsors. You can donate or learn about

sponsoring a broadcast at flcsf.org/media-ministry or

Media Ministry at First Lutheran relies on the

- April 25: Closed captioning and YouTube sponsors are needed.
- May 2: Closed captioning and YouTube sponsors are needed.

May 9: All sponsorships are fully funded.

May 16: Sponsors are needed for radio, television, closed captioning, and YouTube.

May 23: Television, closed captioning, and YouTube sponsors are needed.

May 30: Radio, Television, Closed captioning, and YouTube sponsors are needed.

There are many sponsor opportunities open in the 2021 Media Ministry schedule. Call now to signup for the closest date for your memorial or event celebration. Feb. 17 Ash Wednesday: Television and closed captioning were sponsored by Judy Jasper for nursing home residents and homebound individuals. It was also sponsored in honor of FLC pastors for their ministry in spreading the Word of God. As we receive the cross of ashes on our foreheads this day, let us remember that we are members of the body of Christ, and in this season of Lent we await the resurrection of our Lord and Savior on Easter.

Feb. 21: Radio was sponsored in memory of Carl Grevlos, whose birthday would have been February 19, by his wife, Dorothy, and family.

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Capital Campaign Update

By Jean Hoff, Campaign Coordinator

It is with a grateful heart that I am able to provide the updated balance, as of March 2, of \$409,495 on the HVAC loan. With members receiving their vaccinations as well as our pastors, the future is looking brighter. The HVAC loan is being reduced monthly, and many projects need attention on our campus.

As you know, the capital campaign went on hiatus in March 2020. Conversations are currently taking place on when to resume the capital campaign.

Last month I shared plans for the Sanctuary and updating of the Chapel sound system. This month I will highlight the changes we are looking to make in the Welcome Center and the Atrium. The cost of these changes when we started the campaign totaled \$1,350,000.

The Sioux Falls Police staff spent time with church leadership to assess the safety of the FLC reception area. It was noted that the receptionists only have one way in and one way out of the area they are currently in. By moving the reception desk, sight lines will improve, and a safe exit, if needed, will be created. From the meetings members attended, the consensus was this was a highly important change.

The main floor of the church is in high demand, and often, there is not enough space available. The plan



would be to turn Luther Lounge into the Reading Room/Meeting Room. The Trinity Room would remain a meeting room as well. The restrooms in the Welcome Center would change to include a family restroom for those people needing assistance. Quite a bit of feedback on the restrooms was given, and this issue will continue to be looked into.

The Gathering Room space would include a classroom where the Care & Health offices currently are. The kitchen would be moved to the west side of the Gathering Room, creating a more open space as well as increasing the size of the kitchen. Two commercial freezers and two commercial refrigerators in this kitchen would eliminate the need for refrigerators and freezers throughout various rooms in the building.

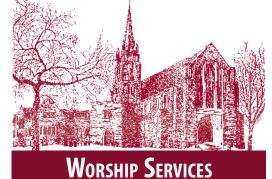
Please continue to watch for updates on the restart of the capital campaign. Next month, I will highlight the maintenance projects and mission aspects of the campaign.



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All services are in the Sanctuary

- Sat. 5 рмTraditional ServiceSun. 8 AMRadio rebroadcast of last week's
service on KELO-FM (101.9)Sun. 9 AMTraditional Service
Watch live youtube.com/flcsf
- Sun. 11 AM Contemporary Service Watch live on YouTube
- Sun. 11 AM Traditional broadcast on KSFY Sioux Falls, KPRY Pierre, and KABY Aberdeen

Find us on social media:

- youtube.com/flcsf
 - facebook.com/flcsf
- @firstlutheransf

Special Offering: St. Dysmas Ministry and Family Connections

By Jon Martin, Evangelism & Outreach Board Member



St Dysmas In 1989, in response

In 1989, in response to a need to provide worship, ministry, and fellowship to those in prison at the South Dakota State Penitentiary in Sioux Falls and at Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield, St. Dysmas was born. The name St.

Dysmas comes from the name of the thief believed to be hung on the cross next to Jesus. This man asked Christ to be remembered. The St. Dysmas ministry strives to minister to those incarcerated who also feel lost, forgotten, or abandoned. Pastor Wayne Gallipo currently serves as pastor and development coordinator for this ministry. Pastor Wayne is assisted by Pastor David Bentz in Springfield and Re-entry Coordinator Mitch Wilson.

The re-entry program is a new ministry that has emerged within the last couple of years. The goal of the re-entry program is to assist newly released inmates



with re-establishing a life in the community. Assistance includes helping with housing, employment, and connection with a mentor group to help them be successful in navigating the world. FLC has a group waiting for a person to mentor. If you are interested in joining this ministry, please contact Pastor Jeff.

Typically, First Lutheran organizes a group twice a year to join the St. Dysmas congregation in their Thursday evening worship service. Over the last year, the pastors have been restricted from the facilities at different times due to COVID but have produced video services, which have been shared in the prisons, as well as writing to the inmates, which is usually not allowed. Pastors are now back inside with live worship services and can minister to the inmates in person. However, outside visitors are not allowed at worship at this time.

Family Connection

To help meet the needs of people visiting loved ones in prison, Family Connection was established in 1996. Family Connection strives to strengthen the bond between family



members separated by incarceration and provides support to those visiting the South Dakota Penitentiary. Family Connection provides housing and meals for family members through their hospitality houses.



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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 First Lutheran editorial staff reserves the right to edit submissions.

Newsletter submissions are due the first business day of each 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 by the first of every month at flcsf.org/firstword. 0 1 7

Two hospitality houses currently function in Sioux Falls. In addition, Family Connection provides support to children of incarcerated parents and facilitates visitation between family members and their incarcerated loved ones. The ministry has been restricted at times over the last year but strives to continue to provide services in a safe manner. To learn more about Family Connection, visit sdfamilyconnection.org.

Please prayerfully consider your financial support of these important partnership ministries by using your special offering envelope. You may also donate using the yellow envelope found in the pew pockets. Please write Prison Ministries on the memo line of a check made out to First Lutheran Church, or visit flcsf.org/give to donate online. Unless otherwise indicated, your donation will be divided equally between St. Dysmas and Family Connection. Please keep the work done by St. Dysmas and Family Connection in your prayers, and thank you for your support!

Special offering envelopes are included with your regular offering envelopes. If you do not have one, please use the yellow envelope in the pew, bring your donation to the Information Desk at church, or visit flcsf.org/give to donate online.