

# First Lutheran NEWSLETTER



March 2026

## Clergy Coaching Network the FORUM--WWJD

The phrase comes from the 1896 novel “In His Steps,” written by Charles Sheldon, a Congregational minister and social reformer. In the book, a group of Christians make this radical commitment: before every major decision, they will ask, “What would Jesus do?”—and then actually do it, regardless of cost. That question became not just a slogan, but a moral discipline.

“In His Steps” sold more than 50 million copies, making it one of the best-selling religious books in history.

Then, in the 1990s the phrase had a revival when youth groups began using WWJD bracelets, necklaces and T-shirts. For many young Christians, “WWJD?” functioned as a moral checkpoint—a pause before acting. And honestly, that pause was a gift. Anything that made us stop and remember that we belong to Jesus was and is worth something. But over time, I’ve come to see that the question, while helpful and doesn’t go far enough.

Why? Because sometimes we ask, “What would Jesus do?” we imagine a Jesus who already agrees with us. We soften his edges. We make him safe. We can turn him into a spiritual endorsement of our instincts. We imagine a Jesus who sounds suspiciously like us. Same politics. Same preferences.

As theologian Reinhold Niebuhr warned, moral reasoning untethered from realism can become self-justifying rather than self-critical.

But when you actually sit with the Gospels, Jesus is harder to pin down than we’d like. He tells us to love enemies (Matthew 5:44). He blesses the poor and warns the rich (Luke 6:20, 24). He says you can honor God with your lips while your heart is far away (Mark 7:6). He flips tables when worship becomes exploitative (Matthew 21:12–13).

Movie Night	March 1
Blood Drive	March 3
Daylight Savings	March 8
FLY Escape room	March 20
Easter egg hunt	April 4
Murder Mystery dinner	April 17
Danish Bread (AOL)	April 23
End of school party	May 22nd

Pastor’s notes	Page 1, 2
New Stuff Alert	Page 3
Lenten Services	Page 4
Events	Page 5
Holy Faith	Page 6, 7,8
Thank you	Page 9
w&M, LHC, Plants	Page 10
S&C, Men, WELCA	Page 11
Parish Nurse	Page 12
Council	Page 13
Finance	Page 14
Calendar	Page 15

## WWJD Continued

If we ask what Jesus would do, we have to be prepared for answers that can unsettle and even disturb us. And then there's the world we live in. Jesus did not face social media algorithms, nuclear weapons, global markets, or modern immigration systems. Faithfulness today requires more than a quick guess about what Jesus might have done in first-century Galilee. It requires wisdom, study, community, courage and faithful application of what we have discerned.

Scripture calls us to something deeper:

“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2).

“By their fruits you will know them” (Matthew 7:16).

“Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly” (Micah 6:8).

That kind of faithfulness doesn't happen in isolation. It happens in the give and take of community dialogue. It takes prayer, humility, and listening – especially to those who are hurting.

Which is why the WWJD question needs a little expanding.

We ask not just, “What would Jesus do?” But, “What does faithfulness to Jesus require of us – here, together, right now?” Because discipleship isn't just about my private choices. Jesus announced a Kingdom (Mark 1:15). He talked about good news for the poor and freedom for the captive (Luke 4:18). He formed a people and said, “You are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14).

Following him means asking what love of neighbor really looks like in this moment (Mark 12:31). It means bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). It means telling the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Sometimes it means taking up a cross (Luke 9:23).

And that's where it gets real! Because love isn't abstract. Justice isn't theoretical.

Obedience isn't sentimental. At some point the question starts costing us something – things like comfort, approval, maybe even belonging.

So, I'm grateful for that old question. WWJD has helped many of us take a breath and turn back toward Jesus.

But I believe Jesus pushes us further – beyond slogans – into discernment, courage, and costly love.

**So maybe the truest prayer is simply this:**

**“Lord, what are you asking of us now?”**

**And then, step by trembling step, we seek to follow.**

In Christ,  
Pastor Lynn

## New stuff Alert!

1. **Living Hope Camp** - Being a caregiver is hard. One need of our community is a respite from caregiving. Time to go to Drs' apts, run errands, or even nap and recharge. Living Hope Camp is designed to provide respite care for approx 5 hours a day on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Our Parish Nurse, Jeri Wilmore, will direct and provide the respite care with the assistance of volunteers. The camp is limited to 5 or fewer people per day and must be scheduled in advance. We are asking for a free-will donation of \$15 per hour to cover the costs of a Registered Nurse and supplies. Scholarships will be available. Contact Jeri if you are interested in signing up for this service.

2. **The City of Battle Lake is celebrating 135 years in 2026** - How should we as a church celebrate our beloved community? Please help us brainstorm!

---

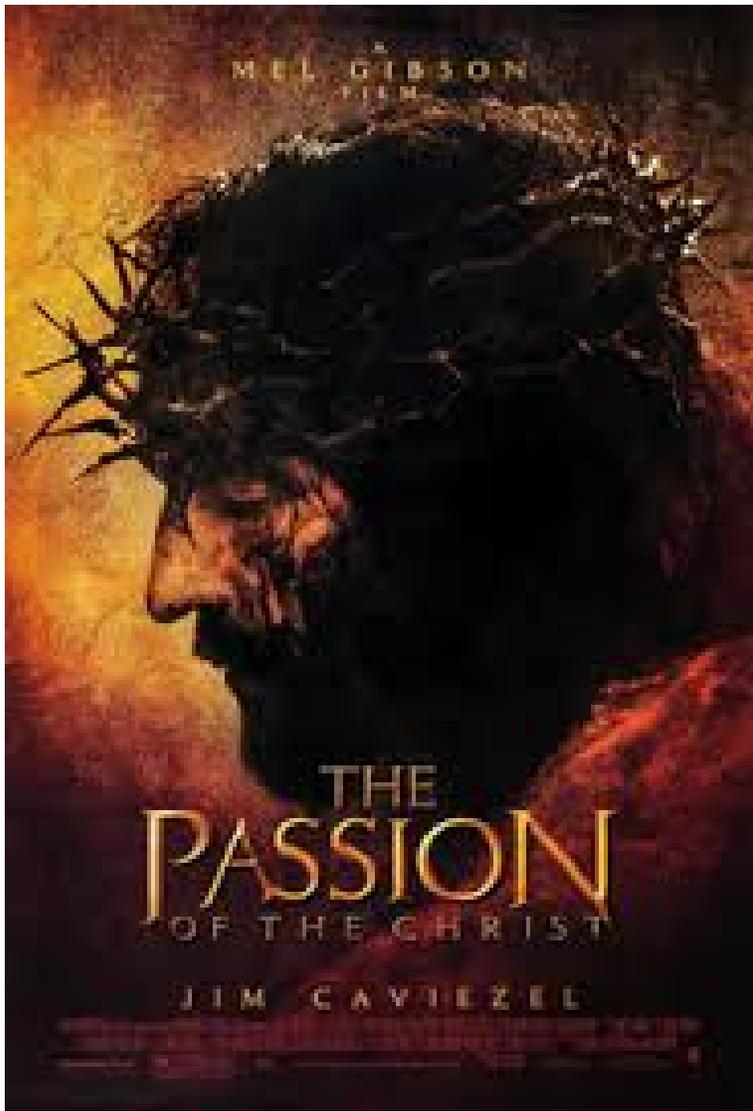
By the time you read this, I will have had my lumbar spinal fusion surgery. (It was moved up to February 2<sup>nd</sup>.) I covet your healing prayers. Prayers for patience are appreciated, too, since I do not “idle” well. 😊

We are blessed to have so many capable and willing leaders in our congregation helping out while I am recovering. Don't hesitate to thank them - and provide grace as they serve God.

I appreciate your understanding and patience! Pastor Lynn

*Pleasant words are like a honeycomb,  
sweetness to the soul and health to the body.*

Proverbs 16:4



## Lenten Services

Wednesdays 3/4, 3/11, 3/18 and 3/25.

Soup Suppers: 5:30 pm  
Movie Starts at 6:15 pm  
with discussion at 6:45 pm

After the Soup Supper, we will remain in the Fellowship Hall. Each week, we will watch approx. 30 minutes of the movie "The Passion of Christ". A brief discussion will follow. NOTE: This is a violent, 'realistic' depiction of Jesus' arrest, trial, and crucifixion. It may not be for everyone. An alternative movie will be offered.

I wish to tell all that are helping during this time of my healing, a great big heartfelt thank you!

It is so much appreciated in this time for me.

Pastor Lynn

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>** we will be taking a group of students to Oak & Iron in Fergus Falls. We will do an escape room and have pizza. Meet at church at 5p and we will be back by 8:30p. Students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade and up are invited to attend with a max of 8 students for the escape room. RSVP to Missi by 3/16. Please provide \$25 for entry to escape room.



**Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>** from 4p-6:30p there will be a movie night for kids in PreK and up. We will be watching the movie Rise of the Guardians. Snacks and beverages will be provided.



**Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup>** from 7p-10p there will be a Murder Mystery Dinner for students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade and up. We will play Murder At The Disco. RSVP in advance for your character profile and come dressed in character.



**Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>** from 6p-11p at the church there will be an End of the School Year Party for students going into 5<sup>th</sup> grade and up. There will be a BBQ, games, and prizes.



For additional information on cost and registration please visit [artofthelakes.org](http://artofthelakes.org)

**Thursday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>** join Kate Mudge in a Danish Braid baking class from 5p-7:30p. You'll learn how to make a classic Danish braid from start to finish. You'll choose your own filling from two delicious options: Lemon curd & raspberry OR Lemon cream cheese & blueberry. Each person will leave with a freshly baked Danish braid and an extra dough to take home so you can make another one the next day.



FLCamp will be returning this summer for our 3<sup>rd</sup> year! Camp will run from May 26<sup>th</sup> - Aug 27<sup>th</sup> Monday-Thursday from 7:30a-5:30p.

Your support for FLCamp is always greatly appreciated. If you would like to purchase items from our camp wish list go to find a list or registry on Amazon. You can search using “Missi Abfalter” or “FLCamp”



This year we will be partnering with Faith Haven for the annual Easter Egg Hunt. The egg hunt will be on **Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup>** starting at 10am out at Faith Haven. There will be crafts, face painting and pictures with the Easter Bunny.

Any candy or small toy donations would be greatly appreciated for stuffing eggs for the egg hunt. Also, the WAFL students will be doing a Reverse Egg Drop around the neighborhood to spread some Easter cheer.

Any volunteers to help at Faith Haven would also be greatly appreciated. Volunteers can help hide eggs, do face painting, oversee crafts or take photos. If you are free to help please speak with Missi.



This is a great opportunity to support Faith Haven and make a great community event for families.

# Holy Faith

February has been a month full of activity for the kids of First Lutheran. On Wednesday, February 11<sup>th</sup> we provided free childcare for 21 students after school from noon to 5:30pm. Students worked on completing a variety of art projects, played outside in the snow and a variety of gym games before we transitioned to WAFL worship.

That evening we hosted the Valentines Dinner for the family members of the WAFL students. There were 75 family members in attendance. It was a great turnout and the kids really enjoy the opportunity to serve their families. The WAFL teachers helped to prepare food, serve and clean up. This event would not have been possible without them.



The WAFL students had a Mardi Gras/Lent party on Ash Wednesday. They learned about Lent, received ashes, wrote out/decorated prayer cards and made a prayer chain. They also decorated Mardi Gras masks, frosted donuts, made mardi gras necklaces/bracelets, jester hats and more. Finally, the WAFL students have been working on expanding the wall mural located in the gym. Make sure to check out the new tiles of artwork.



As for the older students, the youth group kids have been playing Survivor and completing a variety of challenges on a weekly basis. We celebrated 'fat Tuesday' with a road trip to Taco Bell and had two students complete the babysitting certification course put on by the YMCA. Currently I have 4 middle school/high school students that are looking for some babysitting work. If you or someone you know are looking for reliable childcare please let me (Missi) know and I can line you up with a student sitter.

Also this month, we took 8 students skiing out at Andes and got an informative tour of the Battle Lake Food Shelf from Pete Eggen. The students learned about the value and importance of the food shelf in our community.





Northwestern Minnesota Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Grace and peace to you.

Congratulations on being selected as a recipient of the ELCA Daily Bread Feeding Ministry Grant. This partnership between the Northwestern Minnesota Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through ELCA World Hunger is one of the many meaningful ways we live out what it means to be church together.

Your ministry has been awarded \$500 in support of your feeding ministry program. This year, more than 1,000 requests were received, and every effort was made to allocate as much funding as possible to support this vital work. With so many families experiencing increasing need in the face of economic strain, it is an honor to partner with ministries like yours that serve as a beacon of hope.

Enclosed, you will find your \$500 grant check in support of your feeding ministry. We are grateful for your faithful work and honored to stand alongside you in it.

We would love to hear how these funds are making a difference. Please share your stories and photos with us so that we can celebrate this good work together and lift up your ministry across the Synod. You can send them to Morgan Olson at [morganolson@cord.edu](mailto:morganolson@cord.edu). Thank you so much!

Please reach out if we can be of any assistance. It is GREAT to be church together!

Until all are fed,

Pr. Rebel Hurd and the NW MN Synod Hunger Team  
Associate to the Bishop for Mission/DEM  
Northwestern Minnesota Synod



February 9, 2026

First Lutheran Church  
505 W Holdt St  
Battle Lake, MN 56515-4208

*Thank You*

Dear First Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your generous gift of \$475.00 to ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) through ELCA Good Gifts.

*"From [Christ's] fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."  
-John 1:16*

As a church, we are empowered to love and serve our neighbors as Christ first loved us. Your gifts to the ministries of the ELCA help people around the world feel the power and hope that flow from God's full, boundless love. Drawn together and guided by the Holy Spirit, we accomplish together what none of us could do alone, grace upon grace.

Your Good Gift is a very good gift indeed! Through resources such as seedlings and seminary courses, vaccinations and vegetable gardens, Bibles and blankets, you equip God's people — around the world and around the corner — with what they need to live abundant lives.

Thank you for your gracious gifts. You make God's love real.

With gratitude,

*Rachel Wind*

Rachel Wind  
Executive for Development

*P.S. Please see the reverse side of this letter for your official receipt.*



*Family of First Lutheran Church,  
We want to thank you for all  
that you did for our Mom. Her love  
for the church was deep.  
Thanks again for all your care,  
support.*

*Love  
Michelle + family  
Allen + family*

*As difficult as these times seem to us now,  
our sorrow turns to strength  
because of friends and family like you.*

*Thank you for your kindness.*

*The family of  
Mary Lundquist*

# Worship and Music



## THANK YOU!

Thank you so much Cindy for all your work on putting together the men and women's choirs. It was such a joy to be able to all sing together and show our love in Christ through music. We look forward to doing more!!



**NOW ACCEPTING CAMPERS!**

## Living Hope Camp

PROVISIONAL RESPITE FOR CAREGIVERS

Are your days filled with caring for someone? Need a break, time to shop, go to appointments or just get out of the house? Living Hope Camp will provide you with that break so you can take care of yourself.

### Why Choose Us?

- Licensed RN caregiver
- Free will offering
- Flexible Scheduling
- Compassionate care

### Contact Us

Call Number:  
**218-864-5686**

[jwilmore890@gmail.com](mailto:jwilmore890@gmail.com)

**First Lutheran Church of Battle Lake**



The Altar Guild will be celebrating Easter with a variety of colorful Spring plants. If you would like to order one in honor or memory of someone, Fill out this form and return to the office. The cost is \$18 per plant. Orders need to be in by March 20th.

Cyclamen-pink, white, red, or fuschia

Easter Lily

Mums – Yellow, White, or lavender

Begonia – Red, pink, yellow, or orange

**Number of plants and which ones:**

\_\_\_\_\_

In Memory Of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor Of: \_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Paid \_\_\_\_\_ Cash/Check

## SHARE AND CARE GROUPS:

Group Two, March, April, & May

### March

Gerald Holo  
Jeri Wilmore  
Sandy Schatschneider  
Grace & Tom Stoebe  
Nelda & David Eitreim  
Robert & Karen Wasson  
Ambrose Everts  
Rezin Everts  
Seversons  
Jim & Julie Gronbeck  
Jim & Julie Aamot  
Warren & Carol Boese  
Tim Underhill  
David & Sharon Hanson  
Sonja Peterson  
Bonnie Pfeffer

### April

Gordy & Marie Fuchs  
Nancy Rodgers  
Chelsey & Derek Tysdal  
Gerald Holo  
Jeri Wilmore  
Sandy Schatschneider  
Grace & Tom Stoebe  
Nelda & David Eitreim  
Robert & Karen Wasson  
Ambrose Everts  
Rezin Everts  
Tom & Ann Rasmusson  
Dennis & Nancy Quam  
Nancy Senyk  
Henry & Mary Jane Peterson  
Vicki Hull

### May

Gordy & Marie Fuchs  
Nancy Rodgers  
Chelsey & Derek Tysdal  
Gerry & Barb Nelson  
Leigh & Stacy Shebeck  
Gail Nelson  
Angie Abram Family  
Hugh & Beth Warner  
Dean & Mavis Nordstrom  
Kim & Gary Peterson  
Dennis & Cherryl Pederson  
Peter & Carol Boyum  
Dennis & Becky Jorud



## MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

**First Lutheran Men's Fellowship met Thursday, February 5, 2026 at the Shoreline with 10 members in attendance. We dispersed \$3000 to our budgeted non profits in January. On Sunday, April 5th, we will serve the Easter breakfast between services. Some of our members wanted to unify and serve a Lent soup supper which we will do Wednesday, March 11th. Our food shelf project has collected 441 pounds of food and \$113 in cash donations so far this year. Our next meeting will be Thursday, March 5, 2026 at the Shoreline**

Women <sup>of the</sup> **ELCA** 

**WELCA Board – March 2nd @ 1 pm**  
**Naomi Circle – March 10th @ 10:00 am**  
**Lydia Circle – March 10<sup>th</sup> @ 9:30 am**  
**Mary Circle – March 11<sup>th</sup> @ 9:30 am**  
**Evening Circle – March 15<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30 pm**

Women of the



**ELCA**



If I Had My CHild to Raise Over Again.....

- I'd finger-paint more and point the finger less
- I'd do less correcting and more connecting
- I'd take my eyes off my watch, and watch with my eyes
- I would care to know less and know to care more
- I'd take more hikes and fly more kites
- I'd stop playing serious, and seriously play
- I'd run through more fields and gaze at more stars
- I'd do more hugging and less tugging
- I would be firm less often and affirm much more
- I'd build self-esteem first, and the house later
- I'd teach less about the love of power and more about the power of love.

Written by Diane Loomans

I wish I had had these words of wisdom when my children were young. Enjoy.

Blessings.

Jeri, Parish Nurse



**I am excited to host our newest get-together. I am hoping this will be an opportunity for us to get to know each other better. I ask that you bring a treat to share, but if that is a problem, then just bring yourself. If you have any ideas of how this group could spend the time, please let me know. We will do this on the first Friday of each month at 11 am. I look forward to visiting with you.**

**March 6<sup>th</sup> will be our next Meet & Eat!**

**Jeri Wilmore**

## Summary February 2026 unapproved minutes

Meeting held February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Minutes and the financial report were approved.

Motion to set the thermostats lower and check for comforts.

Exit signs and sensor lights at the back door have been donated and are ready to install.

Cameras for 3 doors to be accessed by phones when not in the office in sight of other cameras, have been donated and will be installed.

Checking in to motor on the compressor as it has burned out.

Pricing has been done on purchasing a new industrial vacuum, as the old one is not worth fixing anymore. Will be brought before the congregation.

Discussion on pricing for people or groups that want to use our church building for their events or usage.

We are looking into updating our building use policies and the fee schedules.



## Spiritual Practices

Spiritual Practices cultivate a deeper connection with yourself, others, and the divine. It is one way to know God better - rather than just knowing facts about God.

Each week in 2026, we will be adding a spiritual practice to our bulletins. It may surprise you how easy it is to practice spirituality!



# Financial Updates

January 2026 Finances: YTD Budget Tracking:

Income \$ 45,018 Budget \$319,552/ 19.99%

Credit Line -0

Expenses \$ 27,657 Budget \$319,552/13.47%

Net \$ 16,347

**Haven't filled out a pledge card to support our 153rd year of ministry?**

**No worries - you can still pledge toward 2026.**

## **153<sup>rd</sup> Year of Faithful Ministry** Estimate of Giving Card

*"This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."* Joshua 1:9

I/We support First Lutheran's Pastor, Staff, Building, and Ministries and intend to give: \$\_\_\_\_\_per Week Month Year

I/We understand that this is a faith commitment and the amount above can be changed due to changing circumstances many change the amount.

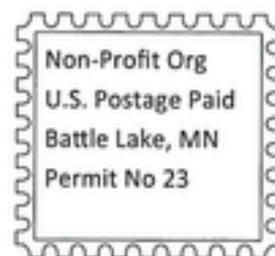
Name\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

# March 2026

# First Lutheran Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10 am Worship/Communion 11 am Fellowship Movie Night	2 9 am Quilters 12 pm OE 1 pm WELCA Bd.	3 1 pm WELCA Study 2 pm Worship & Music BLOOD DRIVE	4 3:15 WAFL 5:30 Confirmation 5:30 Soup Supper 6:15 Lenten Service 7-9 Youth Group 7:30 NA @ Sr. Ctr.	5 8 am TOPS 8:30 am Men's Fellowship	6 7 pm AA & Al-Anon 11 am Meet & Eat	7
8 Daylight Savings 9 am Sunday School 10 am Worship 11 am Fellowship	9 9 am Quilters 12 pm OE 2:30 pm finance	10 9:30 am Lydia Circle 10 am Naomi Circle 5:30 pm Faith Formation 6:30 pm Council	11 9:30 am Mary Circle 3-15 pm WAFL 5:30 pm Confirmation 5:30 soup supper 6:15 Lenten Service 7-9 Youth 7:30 NA @ Sr. Ctr.	12 8 am TOPS	13 7 pm AA & Al-Anon	14
15 10 am Worship 11 am Fellowship 6:30 pm Evening Circle	16 9 am Quilters 12 pm OE Newsletter articles due	17 St. Patrick's Day	18 3:15 pm WAFL: 5:30 pm confirmation 6:15 pm Lenten Service 7-9 Youth 7:30 pm NA @ Sr. Ctr.	19 8 am TOPS	20 7 pm AA & Al-Anon 5-8:30 Escape Room	21 10 am Lake Ave Apt Communion
22 10 am Worship/Communion Creation Worship 11 am Fellowship	23 9 am Quilters 12 pm OE	24	25 10 am Good Sam 3:15 pm WAFL: 5:30 pm Confirmation 5:30 soup supper 6:15 Lenten service 7-9 Youth 7:30 pm NA @ Sr. Ctr.	26 8 am TOPS	27 7 pm AA & Al-Anon	28
29 Palm Sunday 10 am Worship 11 am Fellowship/potluck	30 9 am Quilters 12 pm OE	31				

First Lutheran Church  
505 Holdt St. West  
Battle Lake MN 56515  
218-864-5686  
[www.blfirstlutheran.org](http://www.blfirstlutheran.org)



Address Service Requested  
Newsletter

**Sunday Worship 10 AM**

**Communion 1st & 4th Sundays**

**Coffee/Fellowship 11 AM following service**

**Online worship @ Youtube-First Lutheran Church Battle Lake and Facebook**



**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
BATTLE LAKE

First Lutheran Church Staff

Pastor: Pastor Lynn Melchior : [pastorlynn@blfirstlutheran.org](mailto:pastorlynn@blfirstlutheran.org)

Office Secretary: Laurie Hanson-Zelinsky: [office@blfirstlutheran.org](mailto:office@blfirstlutheran.org)

Parish Nurse: Jeri Wilmore: [parishnurse@blfirstlutheran.org](mailto:parishnurse@blfirstlutheran.org)

Faith Formation: Missi Abfalder: [waf1@blfirstlutheran.org](mailto:waf1@blfirstlutheran.org)

Website: [www.blfirstlutheran.org](http://www.blfirstlutheran.org)