

Grace and Peace to you as we begin another month!

I am writing this newsletter article in the midst of Holy Week—the time that happens each year when we turn our hearts to the core of Jesus’ life and ministry on Earth. We gather multiple times during this week to remember the main events that led to Jesus’ crucifixion, and then we sit and wait in the not-yet that happens between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We know the end to this story because we’ve heard it time and time again. We know and believe and confess that God so loved the world that Jesus came in order to save the world, not condemn it. We also know that waiting can be the last thing anyone wants to hear when life gets hard or when we’re just so excited for something to happen.

I remember counting down the days until my birthday when I was growing up, as I would get more and more excited as the day approached. Yes, I liked the presents I got, but I think the excitement was ultimately grounded in being together with family and friends and loved ones on my special day. Now, as a parent, I’m able to witness this excitement in Asha’s eyes and words: for months this year, she talked about wanting a “Cars” cake with chocolate, “banilla,” and strawberry, topped with red icing and Lightning McQueen (the main character of the Pixar movie). I made Asha’s birthday cake, and even though it didn’t turn out as I had hoped amidst a busy time, she loved it. Asha’s anticipation of her birthday as well as the grace she showed me gave me a glimpse into what it might have been like on that very first Easter morning.

Mary came to the tomb and found something she did not expect: a rolled away stone. Then, she met someone she did not expect—the resurrected Jesus disguised as a gardener. Mary came to the tomb to mourn over Jesus, her teacher and friend. She came prepared for one outcome and had her world turned upside down that morning when Jesus revealed himself as the risen Lord. Mary lived through a whirlwind of emotion in those moments—a whiplash not unlike UConn’s steal and last second three point shot to knock Duke out of the Men’s tournament this year. Mary began the day in sorrow and ended it in joy. This good news on Easter Sunday is what helps keep me grounded when times get tough and when life is good. It reminds me of the balance that is present in the natural order of things. And even more importantly, it reminds me that the risen Christ shows up when we least expect him to.

This Easter season, I invite all of us to lean into this sense of anticipation. To wonder what joy may look like as it breaks into our world. To witness the risen Christ in Kenyon, our state, our country, and our wider world. Take a look at the calendar and through the pages of this month’s newsletter to see glimpses of where God is already at work in our midst. Then, wonder where we may be called next.

Thanks be to God,
Pastor D.J.



This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it Ps. 118:24

First Ev Lutheran Church Council Minutes – March 18, 2026

Welcome and Call to Order: Eric Hoversten @ 7:27 pm

Devotions: Lenten service prior to meeting

Present: Pastor D.J. Chatelaine, Eric Hoversten, Susan Hoversten, Tammy Fletcher, Carmen Nesseth, Brad Nesseth, Bryana Lothert and Sherry Sathrum
(Our donations, Sunday coffee and noisy offering)

Approve Agenda: Motion to approve the agenda with additions. Carmen/ Bryana pass

Consent Agenda Items :

Secretary's Report: Reviewed as printed in the February newsletter

Treasurer's Report: Increased giving in February due to an individual donation. Quarterly insurance paid. Attendance down by about 9 people per Sunday possibly due to weather and lay led services with gradual increase so far this month. \$666.00 donated to ELCA Souper Bowl of Caring (Our donations, Sunday coffee and noisy offering).

Pastor's Report: Pastor has been busy. Continued home visits and heard appreciation for personally signed letters and notes that arrive in the mail. Planned and presided for LaVon Underdahl's Celebration of Life. Began Lenten Wednesday Night services, centered on the theme "Who is Jesus?" Thanks to all who have volunteered to provide meals for worship participants. Met with my first call cohort and participated in a continuing education retreat on the Enneagram. Met with Pr. Dwaine (Nerstrand) to learn about an opportunity to support migrant families in the area. Attended the Little Mermaid at the High School—cheers to Elsie (Ariel) and Lindsey (Flounder)! THANK YOU to Susan, Christine, and all involved with the Garage Sale! Resumed Grief Support Group and started Bible Study on Wednesday Night themes. Attended Council as Leaders and learned more about skills for effective storytelling in churchwide communication. Was invited by Claire Larson to speak to the band kids about factors behind homelessness. Also partnered with the High School and Holden to coordinate a blessing bag fundraiser for the Nonprofit "Chicago Lights." Attended briefing for the Palm Sunday service and procession that will take place in St. Paul, Rochester, and Mankato. Everyone is welcome.

President's Report:

Wow! What a month so far; and so much more in the works. Our own version of "March Madness" with opportunities to join in ministry serving our congregation, local, and broader communities. A little something for everyone; and maybe even an opportunity to invite someone new to our ministry community; or maybe to invite someone back to if from whyever.

The Congregation held its 2nd-annual garage sale on March 7. While there were too many instrumental volunteers to name or thank individually without hazard of leaving someone out; clearly we owe enormous thanks to Susan and Christine for the months of work they poured in to the event. And, to all the rest who helped in so many ways, Thanks and Well Done! This ministry event served every corner of our community by providing an affordable source of quality clothing, housewares, toys, and even a few chatskies to those facing difficult financial challenges in the present time; and others found just what they had always been looking for - whatever that may have been. When it was all said and done this activity also raised close to \$3,500 for general repairs earmarked for replacement of another boiler.

Thanks to the Property Maintenance Committee for getting the screen brackets mounted in the North and South-east corners of the sanctuary. I am excited to see how we incorporate the video screens into our worship to enhance the experience for everyone. It is wonderful to have such talented trades persons in our midst to do these kinds of tasks around the campus.

To respond to food insecurities and participate more broadly in MN Food Share Month, the north and south halves of the congregation have been pitted against each other in a hard-court styled food drive. At last glance at the scoreboard, the half-time score was tight; and now we have some work to do to catch up from cancelled worship on "Sno-magedon" March 15th...

Awareness and action combine to provide much needed inventory for the Kenyon Food Shelf to help the many families right here among us who experience food insecurity in their households. And, when it is all said and done - we will all win together.

Lent Worships on Wednesdays continue with supper, the addition of a short bible study, and worship. It has been fun to see new meal providers and new menu choices each week and the expansion away from the soup-only themed focus of the past is delightful. The enhanced study of the text for each week has added greater depth to the worship experience for its participants, and it is always amazing to see our youth participate in the general worship ministry.

On March 14, Pastor DJ and I participated in the Synod "Council as Leaders" event at St Olaf Lutheran in Austin. What an amazing line up of workshops and breakouts. Our Own Chris Cordes was a guest presenter for the Council Presidents' breakout and then he joined the second session as a general participant as well. All together we learned about the unique role of Council Presidents, how to work through mission and visioning activities for long range planning, and how to improve messaging through story-telling. Each of these offered opportunities to benchmark actions other congregations have taken to achieve improved communication.

We cancelled worship on March 15 due to the weather - and this was a good call.

Forthcoming activities include: The Youth March Madness watch party on March 19. Concession stand themed food, popcorn, cotton candy, sodas...and whomever is still in the bracket that night on the big screen. What a great way for the kids to come together and hang out, watch the game and enjoy the snacks -all in the presence of God; and a great opportunity for parents to join in as well. The Youth Breakfast Roll Sale is alive with ordering ongoing and pickup after brunch on Palm Sunday. Orders include a tray of 6, ready-to-bake caramel or cinnamon rolls. Look for opportunities to help prep them the afternoon of Sunday March 22. Everyone's past behavior when these are served at coffee after church would indicate a ravenous appetite for these, so get your orders in and enjoy. Perfect for your Easter Sunday family breakfasts. Palm Sunday will also bring our annual Brunch. There will be an excellent variety of family- favorite egg bakes at the core of the menu. There are many ways members can join in to support this ministry to include sign up for rolls, muffins, and other breakfast pastries, prep and serving, and clean-up. Look for signups. Susan and I attended a field "action leaders' informational meeting for an experiential worship opportunity in the afternoon Palm Sunday. There will be a processional worship at the Capitol at 3:00 PM to re-enact the procession into Jerusalem by Christ on Palm Sunday. This looks to be an amazing way to experience Palm Sunday the way its original participants did. I was excited to see an announcement and interest call for another "flash-mob" choir to enhance our Holy Week worship. Vibrant music during worship is always gratefully received. Each of these events offers an opportunity for us incorporate new members of our existing congregation into the rewarding work of our ministry; or past participants in our ministries back. They are also opportunities to invite others from our community into our ministry. But most importantly, they are acts of ministry that allow for us to do the work Christ calls us to do when he charges us to do these things on to the least of these. Please consider how these activities can become a meaningful part of your worship and join or continue as workers in the vineyard.

Ongoing items:

1. Membership statistics: Susan, Tammy and Erica continue to work on the process. No new updates.
2. Sanctuary Screens: Brackets have been mounted and now waiting for electrician.
3. Continued need for Vice President.

New items:

1. Immigrant Ministry- As stated above, Pastor has had communication with Pastor Dwaine and will obtain more specific information about needs.
2. Choir director- currently looking for volunteers for Hallelujah Chorale for Palm Sunday and interest in a more permanent choir.
3. FLCW met on 3/1/2026. Audit completed by Christine Erslund. Garage Sale Bake Sale March 7, 2026- bring individually wrapped items with free will donations.
4. Palm Sunday Brunch: will send out sign up for donations of food. Discussed senior gifts with Tanya and Susan volunteering to purchase.
5. Farmer's Market will participate on the third Thursday in June and look into banner/table cloth to increase visibility.
6. Other events: Synod Assembly on May 2, World Quilting Day on 3/21 (will display quilts in church), Cannon River Conference on April 25 our commitment.
7. Pastor DJ shared idea to potentially utilize a St. Olaf student for choir director role if there is enough interest for a choir. Would then look into financial support.
8. Copier- Brad was contacted regarding current copier and the potential difficulty in obtaining parts in the future. Council members decided to continue to pay for current maintenance agreement vs purchasing new.

Youth Report:

Not present. Basketball and wrestling banquets are done. Spring musical was a success. Baccalaureate service at First on May 13 at about 7:15 pm. Will ask neighboring churches to help with bars. Senior Recognition May 10.

Committee Reports:

FLCW: FLCW met on 3/1/2026. Audit completed by Christine Erslund. Garage Sale Bake Sale with \$155.00 profit. Palm Sunday Brunch: Susan is working on getting volunteers via reaching out to congregation members. Discussed senior gifts with Tanya and Susan volunteering to purchase. Farmer's Market will participate on the third Thursday in June and look into banner/ table cloth to increase visibility and will ask congregation for crafters, bakers and artists to share their gifts. . Other events: Synod Assembly on May 2, World Quilting Day on 3/21 (will display quilts in church), Cannon River Conference on April 25.

Worship/ Evangelism: Lent services going well with Pastor DJ using visio devina for message, Bible study prior to service during meal. For Easter service will provide opportunity for Hallelujah Chorale and determine interest for director/ ongoing choir. Will utilize screens to enhance services, hopefully starting Easter Sunday. Supporting Maundy Thursday with stripping the altar and then a processional on easter Sunday to restore altar. Continued discussion regarding blended services, using different Bible versions for readings. Our committee will represent FLC at the June 4 Farmer's Market.

Property and Management: Committee did not meet however projects are being worked on. A special 'thank you' to Kevin Mallory for his expertise installing a new drinking fountain in the church basement. 2 wall mounts are now in place in the sanctuary needed to support large screen TV's as recommended by the Worship Committee. An electrician has been consulted and hopefully power will be in place later this month. Unfortunately snow removal continues to be a necessity. Special 'thank you's' to Randy Eggert, Troy Estrem and Dan Lexvold for their continued volunteer services.

Stewardship: Souper Bowl of Caring was able to donate \$737.00 to ELC World Hunger. March Madness has currently had 92 lbs donated. Discussion of distributing offering envelopes not yet picked up at church.

Youth and Ed: Caramel & Cinnamon Roll Fundraiser currently running, orders due by Wednesday March 18th. Youth & Parent volunteers needed to prepare rolls Sunday March 22nd 10:30 am Pick up frozen rolls Sunday March 29th 10am-11am. March Madness watch party Thursday March 19th 3:15 pm Palms Sunday Brunch, Easter Egg hunt, noisy offering- March 29th Finals week care packages for our young adults will be sent out mid-April. SPRING DITCH CLEAN UP APRIL 26th - ALL ARE WELCOME TO HELP!! Farmers Market JUNE 4th FLC will be selling burgers, brats, beans, chips pop/water. Volunteers needed. Looking for any members with Thrivent grant dollars to help purchase food & drinks. *EdYou purchased a much larger popcorn machine, this will help drastically during our events we use it. Reminder this is for everyone within FLC to use for events. VBS: Tentatively scheduled for JULY 12th- 16th. Good Earth Village, partnering with area churches. First Lutheran will host VBS this year. We will be looking for Host families once GEV confirms our dates. Free little Library- received through FREE LITTLE LIBRARY Blessing box- Possible project for Summer Stretch, eagle/boy scout, or our handy dads & grandpas of our FLC congregation :) Materials: cement, landscape rock, landscape edging, wood, hardware, etc.

KAIC: Soup Fundraiser April 12 @ Gol, 11:30 am to 1:30 pm.

Long Range Planning/Personnel/Endowment/Committees-Did not meet.

Synod Assembly is May 2, 2026.

Next meeting: April 14 @ 6:00 pm

Devotions: Carmen

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn

Carmen/Tammy/pass Time: 8:53 pm

Closing with the Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted,
Sherry Sathrum, secretary

April 2026

LITURGICAL SEASON: M.Thurs/G.Fri =White/No Colors)
Easter/White



			1	2 <i>M.Thursday</i> 6:30 HC Worship	3 <i>Good Friday</i> 7 <i>Good Friday Service @ VANG</i>	4
5 <i>Easter Day</i> 9 <i>Easter Day Worship w/HC</i>	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 <i>Easter 2</i> 9 <i>HC Worship</i> 10 <i>Coffee</i> 10 <i>Sun School</i> 10:15 <i>Revelation Bible Study</i> 11:30 – 1-30 <i>KAIC Soup Fundraiser</i>	13	14	15 5:30 <i>Confirmation</i> 6 <i>Council</i>	16	17	18
19 <i>Easter3</i> 9 <i>HC Worship</i> 10 <i>Coffee</i> 10 <i>Sun School</i> 10:15 <i>Men's Ministry</i>	20 2 <i>Grief Support at Area 57</i> 5 <i>Worship/Evangelism</i>	21	22 5:30 <i>Confirmation</i>	23	24	25
26 <i>Easter4</i> 9 <i>HC Worship</i> 10 <i>Coffee</i> 10 <i>Sun School</i> 10:15 <i>Revelation Bible Study</i> Spring Ditch Clean Up	27	28	29 5:30 <i>Confirmation</i>	30		

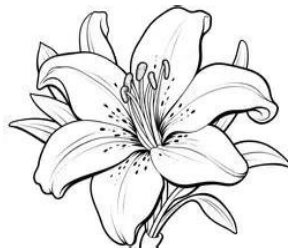


MAY DATES
 May 2 Synod Assembly/Mankato
 May 9 Willie Dahl Funeral 11 am - Visitation 9:30 Lunch @ VFW
 May 10 HS Senior Recognition
 May 13 Baccalaureate

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
309 FOREST STREET, KENYON, MN 55946
PHONE: 507-789-5261
E-MAIL: firstlutherankenyon@gmail.com
WEBSITE: flckenyon.org

April

Newsletter



Happy Easter !