



THE FIRST FRUITS

Serving Christ by proclaiming Christ crucified in the
Minnesota North District of the LCMS

First Evangelical Lutheran Church; Grand Rapids, MN
A member of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod



*P*astor's Corner

RESPECT

Respect seems to be an endangered species in our world today. It's easy to point out a myriad of examples of lack of respect. They're everywhere – at home, in schools, on the job, toward elected officials, in the church, and on the road, especially where rage sets the tone far too often.

Let us together see if we can impact the world around us to restore respect. Consider the following ingredients as steps toward restoration.

RESPONSIBILITY

When our focus centers on privilege, without adding the ground work of responsibility, the balance is thrown off and becomes self-centered. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you as much as you can learn about the joy of accepting responsibility as a means toward being personally fulfilled and as an avenue of service. Follow the example of Jesus, who came not to be served, but to serve. What you learn, teach others.

April, 2019



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EDUCATION

Ask the Lord to deliver you from two extremes: thinking you already know all you need to know and not caring enough to learn more than you know. Look upon life as a learning experience and see the world as a great big school of life. Present yourself daily to the Holy Spirit to be your teacher. Don't hesitate to gather with fellow students to share insights.

SUBMISSION

God loves us so much, He created authorities and placed them over us for the good of our society and for the sake of order. Anyone can criticize our leaders. It is our calling as children of God to pray for them that they lead well and earn the respect of those they serve. Show a humble readiness to be under their authority. Practice this in whatever stage of life you are now and for the rest of your life.

PRIORITIES

We make time for what we want. If respect has a chance of making a comeback, our attention must be riveted on the things which are important to God. Choosing instead the things that satisfy our creature comforts is a poor second best and turns us inward. Anyone who is wrapped up in himself makes a very small package.



ENERGY

The Bible is summed up in two parts: Love God with all your might and love your neighbor as you love yourself. Isn't it amazing that when we dedicate our energy to serving our own needs and pleasures we are exhausted? When our energy goes into serving others, we experience a surge of renewed power and purpose.

CONFIDENCE

Disrespect is spawned by insecurity. When we perceive others as having something we do not have, it stirs up jealousy and anger and our world is shaken. Confidence means "with faith." Live life with the confident faith that you are missing absolutely nothing. God's provision is your security. Now others are not a threat to you. You can respect them.

TIME

When you take the time to get to know people, relationships develop. The time spent interacting and communicating erases misunderstanding and diminishes the distance between us. Acquaintance buds into friendship, which flourishes into love. In time, there is no room for disrespect. This is the goal.

It would be easy to say, "Parents, teach your children respect." It is not just children who need to recapture this priceless commodity. Learn well, that we might, by God's grace, lead respectful lives.

RELATED TO “RESPECT”

Those of us who have to use both hands to count the decades we have lived life remember forms of respect differently than how we see things today. Those days are long gone. One of the things we cannot afford is for us “older folks” to be overly critical of what we see in younger generations – especially when we are talking about it while sitting in church shaking our heads over what we see and hear in church.

Wouldn't it be better if we focused more on the good things we see our children and youth doing around the church? Let's be encouragers to our young people. Thank them for participating in Youth Sunday as readers, acolytes, ushers and singers. When is the last time you expressed gratitude to our Sunday School children when they sing for us to praise God? Let's commend our confirmation students for the meaningful Statements of Faith they are sharing with us. By all means enjoy the Lenten Soup Suppers they serve us. Look for other ways to compliment them. Let them know that we are so glad they are learning to be active in the life of our church. They are our future. If we have an outburst of crying now and then, remember back to when we were raising our kids. Church might be a lot quieter with no children learning how to sit still, but then again, it might be too quiet ten years from now.

(If you would volunteer to be a reader, please call the church office and ask to be included on our schedule. Thank you so much)

PASTOR ZEIGE

SUNDAY SCHOOL



Blessings to all our Families. Spring will be coming soon! It really will.

Time goes by so quickly.

April means that our Release Time classes will be ending. We pray these students will continue to remain and grow in their relationship with our Lord and Savior. A huge Thank You to all involved in that ministry --- our wonderful teachers and helpers, those who were prayer partners, those who provided treats and those who helped financially. We really appreciate all of you.

Sunday School is going well. Our staff and volunteers are so dedicated in this important ministry. The children will be singing at the 10:30 Service on Palm Sunday; April 14th.

We ask for your prayers and support for our VBS program this June. We still need teachers, assistants and people to bring cookies/bars for those involved during the week and cookies for the Friday picnic. A signup sheet will be in the folder by the office.

Please continue to keep all our children, families and staff in your prayers.

*In Christ,
Mary Buech
Sunday School Superintendent.*



The Board of Human Care will be sponsoring a Bake Sale at First Lutheran on **Sunday, May 19th.**

All donations will be welcome! Proceeds will go to the Crisis Nursery, New Beginnings, and Grace House.

Please bring baked items to church on Saturday, May 18th from 12-2pm or Sunday morning.

Thank you everyone in advance.



LIBRARY CORNER:



THE SONS OF ISAAC by Roberta Kells Dorr found at 813.54 Dor. This is a newer book reviewed by Shela Cline.

Of all of Isaac's sons, who will receive the Blessing? His wife, Rebekah, has waited over 20 years for a child. Will he need to give the Blessing to one of his sons from another wife? This is a great expansion of the Bible story of Abraham's descendants which will strengthen your faith.

Another review of a newer book titled **INVISIBLE** by Ginny L. Yttrup is found at 813.6 Ytt. This is a fascinating story of a friendship between 3 women. As their lives intertwine, they begin to recognize themselves as being created in God's image. Reviewed by Shela Cline.

Reviews from the past:

If you have time and would like to get out to enjoy the scenery before summer's hot days come, take the book **COUNTRY ROADS OF MINNESOTA** found at 917.76 Hin and enjoy! The author, Martin Hintz describes 11 areas of Minnesota from Superior National Forest and the Boundary Waters Canoe area in northeast Minnesota to the Luverne-Pipestone area in southwest Minnesota. He gives directions to interesting places, tells about people and things to do. Mentioned are places to eat, pottery works, and history of a stagecoach stop. We remember Mavis Connolly who wrote this review.

THE SHUNNING by Beverly Lewis at 813.54 Lew. This is the first book of The Heritage of Lancaster County series of three. We have many books written by Beverly Lewis and they have remained popular. Katie, a 22-year-old Amish woman is living a simple life when the love of her life is accidentally drowned. She could not forget him, his guitar and his love of music that she shared. Music is not part of the Amish world. Katie refuses a wedding to the Bishop to provide a mother for his children, so she is shunned by the church and community.

This was also reviewed by Mavis Connolly. (NOTE: We also have book 2 **THE CONFESSION** – “She left behind the Amish ways to pursue a life she’d never known...” and book 3 **THE RECKONING** – “It is a life she’s always dreamed of, yet her Amish roots are calling her home.”)

THE BEACH HOUSE by Sally John found at 813.4 Joh Bk 1. Four women are celebrating their 42nd birthdays at a beachfront reunion. They discover that each has been struggling with life-challenging situations including faith issues. As God said, “Be still and know that I am God.” Their answers came unexpectedly. Reviewed by one of our faithful readers!!!

Christ
is
Risen!



**FINAL GIFTS: UNDERSTANDING
THE SPECIAL AWARENESS,
NEEDS AND COMMUNICATIONS
OF THE DYING** 236 Cal, written by

Maggie Callahan and Patricia Kelley, two hospice nurses who share their intimate experiences with patients at the end of life. Filled with practical advice on responding to the requests of the dying and helping them prepare emotionally and spiritually for death, this book shows how we can help the dying person live fully to the very end.

We have the new LWML memorial books on the card catalog ready for check out. This is one way we remember the saints who have left us the previous year.

Library Volunteers: Janie Carlson, Shela Cline, Darlene Baltus

STEWARDSHIP



“ Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out” (Deut 28:3-6).

This is God’s promise to the Israelites as they stood beyond the Jordan outside of the Promised Land. He promises blessing to His people. He will make them prosper, whether they are in the city or the field. He will make their fruit of their work to prosper, whether from the ground or their wombs, their flocks or their herds. He will make them to prosper in all things, whether upon their coming in or their going out.

But there’s a catch. He would do this for Israel only “if you obey the voice of the Lord your God” (Deut 28:2b). If they did that, He would cause that “all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you” (Deut 28:2a).

If they didn’t obey the voice of the Lord, if they didn’t keep the commandments of the Lord and walk in His ways (Deut

28:9), they would be met with curse and woe. The blessings would be replaced with curses. Everything that the Lord promised to prosper and bless would be cursed and fail.

Thanks be to God that our Lord Jesus Christ has come into our flesh, fulfilled the law for us – in our place and for our benefit; died for us – in our place and for our benefit; and is risen from the dead for us – in our place and for our benefit.

By this we have justification before God. We are forgiven, clean, holy, and righteous. The blessing of God is promised to us in Christ Jesus. It depends upon His work and not ours.

All this is ours in Holy Baptism. For in Holy Baptism, God claims us as His own, makes us His children, His heirs, His holy people. And so it is that the work of our hands and its fruit is holy because we are holy in Christ. It is pressed into His service, and thereby it becomes a blessing to us and to our neighbor.

For this great gift, our reception of the blessings of God because of Christ Jesus our Lord, it is our duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him. This is not in order to receive blessings but because in Christ we already have.

It is with this in mind that we sit down on the first day of the week and set aside as He has prospered us to give to His church for His work of blessing in our midst (1 Cor. 16:2).

NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING



Minneapolis Convention Center from July 11th-15th, 2019 is where you will find two teens from First Lutheran Church along with 25,000 other teens learning more about our REAL.PRESENT.GOD. This is the year of the National Youth Gathering. We are so blessed to have it in our home state and have Abbie Serfling and Tijanna Lattimore attend.

The National Youth Gathering happens every three years and in various parts of the country. This year the theme is REAL.PRESENT.GOD. Focusing on Psalm 46 and working through the rest of the Psalter to see where those initial ideas are supported, challenged, pushed further, or clarified. Each of the three theme

words has the potential to convey many different ideas.

REAL: God is Real; Real people...real problems; Real life is broken and messy; Because Jesus is real, I can be real.

Present: God is Present; God's presence is our refuge and strength no matter what; God is present in His Word (Jesus, Scripture, Sacraments, proclamation) and through His people.

God: God is God; God is all powerful; God is all personal; And this God is for us in Jesus.

If you don't know Tijanna and Abbie, let me tell you more about them. They both have a heart of gold, always willing to do what is asked and stepping up when no one else wants to. They are a joy to be around, and they always stand up for what they believe in. Last year we got to hear Tijanna's Statement of Faith from confirmation and this year we heard Abbie's. What we learned from that is their faith is strong.

When asking Pastor Zeige about Tijanna he said that "After being confirmed Tijanna has been diligent and faithful in continuing her worship and growing her faith." She does this by attending Church service, being active on youth Sundays and being involved in the youth group. Tijanna is excited about attending the NYG to have the experience, hang out with Abbie and meet new people who

have the same religious beliefs. Her hobbies include cheerleading and science.

Pastor Zeige said that “Abbie is always willing to volunteer and answer questions without hesitation during confirmation.” She is also very active in the youth group. Abbie said ”I am excited for the opportunity of going to the Youth Gathering, but the things I’m most excited for are meeting new Christians and making new memories. I am also excited to express my love for God in exciting ways. I think it would be cool to meet other Christians from all over the country that share the same love for God that I do.” Her hobbies include lacrosse and making memories with her friends.

Please help us support these two girls by praying for them. If you are interested in making a monetary donation to help them offset the cost of their trip, you can make the check out to First Lutheran Youth and put in the Board of Youth’s mailbox.

The soup supper on April 10th will be in support of their trip.

Psalm 46:10-11 *“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”*
The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our fortress.”

Jessica Pellinen

Family Ministry Program Director

“Sharing the Love of Jesus”
**CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES -
UNAPPROVED
MARCH 12, 2019**

Present: Doug Carlson, Gary Rosin, Tom Lattimore, Dwight Kessler, Debbie Robertson, Mary Buech, David Storrs, Greg Robertson, Pastor Zeige, Jessica Pellinen, Les Flem, Linda Urevig
Call to order: Tom Lattimore called the meeting to order at 5:30PM.

Opening devotion and prayer: Pastor Zeige’s devotion and prayer were from Mark 10:13-16. The disciples were not happy with the children crowding around Jesus. Jesus said, “Let the children come to me”. From Jesus example, we learn to value and appreciate the children in our midst. Jesus blessed them. Children are precious.

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Agenda
 2. Approval of Minutes
- ***Motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the Agenda with additions made to New Business and to accept the Minutes.

Oral Reports of Boards and Committees

1. Boards of Christian Education & Youth: Report in packet. Greg R.
2. Board of Elders: Les F. The Health E Living Seminar will be held Saturday, April 13th starting at 9AM. Les stated that Elders may be leading services when Pastor is on vacation.

3. Boards of Human Care & Missions: Report in packet. Mary B.
4. Board of Stewardship: Report in packet. Doug C.
5. Board of Trustees: Report in packet. Gary R.
6. Revolving Trust Fund Committee: No meeting
7. Wiebe Grant Committee: No meeting
8. Direction and Planning Committee: No meeting

Family Ministry Program Director's

Report: Report in packet. The VBS Kickoff will be March 31st.

Pastor's Report: Report in packet.

Financial Secretary's Report: Report in packet. Debbie R.

YTD income 2019: \$44,886.07 YTD
income 2018: \$42,248.36

Treasurer's Report: Report in packet.

As of: February 28, 2019

General Fund Chkg: \$28,620.50

Building Fund Chkg: \$49,549.57

Mortgage loan balance: \$31,992.17

Revolving trust fund Chkg: \$270,949.04

***Motion was made, seconded and passed to accept oral and written Board and Committee Reports.

Correspondence - None

Unfinished Business

1. New Media Update – August completion date.
Written A/V Update was presented and will be filed with the minutes. It

will be available to the congregation before the A/V information meeting.

***Motion was made, seconded and passed to present to the congregation an A/V Information Meeting on Thursday, April 25th at 6:30PM before the May 5th Voters Meeting.

2. **Personnel Manual Update** – April completion date.
3. **Capital Project Updates** – Windows will be rebid. Summer of 2019 completion date.

- a. East Entry Door
- b. Pastor's Office Windows
- c. Small Office Windows
- d. East Sanctuary Windows
- e. Moving Garage

5. **Constitution Update**

6. **Church Building Usage Schedule update** – Gary R. is working on the schedule.

7. **Health E Living Seminar** to be held Saturday, April 13th at 9AM.

8. **Snow Plowing & Hauling Update**

***Motion was made, seconded and passed to pay Gary R. \$50 a load for hauling 81 trailer loads of snow from the parking lot.

***Motion was made, seconded and passed to pay Lease Landscaping \$750 for renting the ASV machine.

New Business

1. **Altar Windows** – Discussed closing and insulating the side altar windows. There was a discussion about using LED lights behind the cross.

***Motion was made and seconded to table the discussion about Led lighting. Motion passed with a majority vote.

***Motion was made, seconded and passed to remove the altar side windows, insulate and add appropriate lighting.

2. **Kitchen Air Conditioner** – Damaged from winter plowing. June completion date.

3. **Garage** – Discussed building a new 26 X 28 garage. Total cost would be \$27,300. \$27,300 minus \$11,800 (cost to move current garage to the church property) for a cost difference of \$15,500. The new owners of the property would like to keep the garage.

***Motion was made, seconded and passed to build the new 26 X 28 garage on the church property.

4. **Study Bibles for Confirmands**

***Motion was made, seconded and passed to purchase Study Bibles for the confirmands using funds from Youth Family Ministry Budget.

5. **Movie “He Leadeth Me”** – Story of the Prodigal Son to be shown at our church in September. The cost for the showing is \$400. Stephanie & John Schroeder will pay \$200 and the church will pay the remainder.

***Motion was made, seconded and passed to show the movie “He Leadeth Me” in September with Schroeder’s’ paying \$200 and the church paying \$200.

6. **Lawn Mower** – Gary R. will be getting bids for a new mower

Caring and Sharing

Adjournment

The meeting was closed with the Lord’s Prayer

Respectfully submitted, Linda Urevig,
Recording Secretary

COMING EVENTS

March 27th – Lenten Soup Supper to benefit the Youth

April 7th – Easter Egg Hunt

April 10th – Lenten Soup Supper to benefit the National Youth Gathering participants

April 2nd – Board Meetings 6:30PM or as decided by each Board

April 9th – Council Meeting 5:30PM (note time change)

April 13th – Health E Seminar 9AM



MAY

“FIRST FRUITS”

ARTICLES May “First Fruits” items
are

Due by April 15th.

To Submitting Articles
For First Fruits

E-mail them to Debbie at
debbie.robertson@hotmail.com

VBS PRAYER CALENDAR



~ April 2019 ~						
← March						May →
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 That our gracious God bless our preparations for Miraculous Mission VBS	2 Our Theme Bible Verse: John 3:16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.	3 For God's wisdom as we identify the goals and purpose of our VBS	4 That our VBS gives God glory!	5 For kids who don't know Jesus to come to VBS and learn of Him	6 For strength from God the Father, joy from Jesus, and inspiration of the Holy Spirit as we prepare
7 Thankfulness for our facilities in which to hold VBS	8 For hearts of service for those being asked to serve on the VBS staff	9 For those getting the word out to the congregation and community about VBS	10 Thankfulness for the VBS leaders as they plan and prepare	11 Thankfulness for God's Word, the power for salvation	12 Thankfulness for parents who register their kids early, on time, or even late	13 For our pastor, who proclaims God's Word among us
14 For the leaders of our church as they guide us	15 Thankfulness for all the different ways our church supports VBS ministry	16 That VBS registration is easily available for parents/adults to register their kids	17 For joy and accuracy for those doing registration	18 For those planning VBS music	19 For all those who will be Team Leaders to be identified and to say "YES!"	20 For this great opportunity to invite friends and neighbors to learn about God's promises
21 For those planning and preparing VBS Crafts	22 For those planning and preparing Snacks and Games	23 For those planning and preparing Music, Openings, and Closings	24 For those planning and preparing for our Mission Project	25 For those planning and preparing for Storytelling	26 For those planning and preparing for Bible Challenge	27 Thankfulness for those who generously donate time, money, and effort to VBS
28 Thankfulness for those who pray for VBS	29 Thankfulness for a great publicity person for our VBS.	30 God's blessing on our preparation with eight weeks left before VBS	Notes:			