



# THE FIRST FRUITS

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



*P*astor's Corner

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

**February, 2020**



### Inside this Issue

Pastor's Corner .....	1-2
Lenten Series .....	2
Youth .....	3
LWML .....	4-5
Sunday School .....	5

## OUR BEST FOOT FORWARD

We are in a transition at First Lutheran Church. By the time you are reading this I will have been serving you as Pastor

for two years now. It has been my privilege and pleasure to continue to use my God-given gifts and abilities among you. Some may remember when I first started that a goal we looked at together was three years. That was not set in stone and the reason I have announced my retirement at this two year mark is so that you could begin the process of calling another pastor. It is *possible* that we could have an acceptance by another pastor sooner, rather than later. It is more *probable* that this vacancy period could stretch into a third year. We will see.

In the meantime, I am committed to serving you as best I can while the search is on. I have had some health issues that could change this plan and the status of my voice is another concern to consider – but, I will put my best foot forward to provide quality pastoral ministry to you. I am trying to work a bit less than full-time. My goal is to work an average of 30 hours a week between Sunday through Wednesday. Of course, if there are emergencies or funerals, etc., I will be ready to serve those needs on other days of the week. That's the plan from my point of view in this meantime.

As we look forward to the next pastor's coming I want to put out a strong word of encouragement to each and every member of our church to put their best foot forward as well. This is not a plea to look good for the next pastor. We all know that wouldn't work anyway. Any attempt to be on good behavior for another person would be rather short-lived. We don't usually change our actions for other human beings.

There is a commonly accepted concept known as the “80/20 principle.” It applies well to church and other organizations. It means that about 20% of the people in a congregation do about 80% of the work to keep things running. It didn’t take me two years to figure out that First Lutheran fits this description well. It is like pulling teeth to get people to volunteer for boards and committees. We are in danger of not having a successful Vacation Bible School program for lack of teachers willing to share God’s Word with our young children. These are just a couple of examples we can cite. There are many others as well.

While we are not likely to have scores of people jump up to dig in and make sure that our ministry grows and thrives to impress the next pastor, how might it make a difference if more and more people changed for God’s sake? The Bible is loaded with passages that assure us that the Holy Spirit gives gifts, talents, and abilities to all believers. Let’s connect the dots: if you are a believer in Jesus *you have gifts, talents, and abilities*. Are you using them to God’s glory? Are you willing to be His instrument to reach out to others with the hope, peace, encouragement, strength, and grace that you have come to know? Would you serve the Lord by using your God-given qualities to expand that meager 20% to ever growing numbers of

willing workers for the kingdom of God? Would you put your best foot forward to grow in grace and enhance the ministry we can do together to the glory of God?

I know that all this might sound to many as being idealistic. It is very realistically true, however, that if more and more people are willing to gather for worship, willing to care for one another, be involved with meaningful ministry, it will look more appealing for a prospective pastor to leave a warmer climate to move to northern Minnesota. Why? Because a good pastor thrives on the thought of leading people who are actively and faithfully following our Lord Jesus Christ. And that’s the way it is!

**IN CHRIST’S,  
PASTOR ZEIGE**



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**LENTEN SERIES:**

Beginning on Ash Wed., February 26<sup>th</sup>, we will once again offer an invitation to one and all the gather for a special mid-week worship

service. Our general theme will be: “We Are the Body of Christ.” We will examine each week: Jesus’ feet, eyes, hands, mouth, ears, and heart and make connections with how our Lord draws us into loving service for Him. Join us at 6:30 p.m. each Wednesday.



The board of youth have several events planned for the next couple of months. For more information on these events and what we have been up to please watch the bulletin, Facebook page, Facebook group “First Lutheran Youth Group”, website [flcgr.org](http://flcgr.org), Instagram “firstevlutheranyouth”, and the bulletin board outside the youth office. We also send out an email, to join the email newsletter, email your address to [firstevyouth@gmail.com](mailto:firstevyouth@gmail.com)

**Family Sleigh Rides and Snow Tubing:** February 29<sup>th</sup> from 11:00-4:00. Join us for a sleigh ride in Blackberry, have lunch, then head over to Mt. Itasca for snow tubing. The sleigh rides and tubing will be covered by the board of youth. Lunch options: bring a sack lunch or you can purchase lunch in Blackberry.

**Family Easter Egg Hunt and Game Day:** March 29<sup>th</sup> after second service. Join us for a Potbless meal, Easter egg hunt then join in on your favorite board games. Everyone is welcome!

**Mercy Me, Jeremy Camp and David Leonard Concert:** April 4<sup>th</sup> at the Amsoil Arena in Duluth starting at 7:00. Tickets are \$34 a piece, if interested in a ticket let Jessica know by January 26<sup>th</sup>. The youth can use their youth account. We will go down early for dinner, please watch for more information on this.

**Family May Baskets:** on May 3<sup>rd</sup> after second service we will make May baskets for the shut-ins and deliver them. It was such a success with the cookies and caroling the children want to do it again. Lunch will be provided.

**Youth Sundays** will be on February 16<sup>th</sup>, March 15<sup>th</sup> and April 5<sup>th</sup> (Sunday School singing only), April 19<sup>th</sup>, and May 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Confirmation Sunday** will be held along with youth Sunday on Palm Sunday April 5<sup>th</sup>.

May you see God’s blessings in all that you do this month.

*Jessica Pellinen*



**LWML First Lutheran Women in**

**Mission:** Here are the highlights of what the LWML (Lutheran Women's Missionary League) at First Lutheran has been doing to serve The Lord and our church. As you may know we are focused on missions, in our church, our community and the world. Many of the activities we do throughout the year support these missions.

1. Our Mite Box contributions are submitted to LWML MN North District. The district keeps 75% for our district mission grants and 25% is sent to the national LWML to support their mission grants. In 2019 our Mite box Offerings were \$569.93. Posted on the bulletin board by the fellowship hall are the mites collected by month for 2019 and also a listing of the district mission grants the mites are supporting 2018-2020. FYI at our District Convention in June the delegates will be voting on new mission grants for the 2020-2022 Biennium. At last report we were about \$9,000.00 from meeting our District mission grant goal.

2. Our "Cookies for Coins" freewill offering in October was \$474.32. These funds were designated for mites only. These funds were submitted to LWML MN North District for our District Mission Grants. Thank you to everyone who baked, bought or contributed to this.

3. Our 2019 society missions were supported by the following activities. These funds are designated for our society missions only: Summer Concert Series Lunch-\$411.39, Sunday morning coffee-\$749.85, December bake sale-\$512.25, Red Stocking offerings-\$238.79, Lenten supper-\$146.00 & Advent supper-\$172.36. Our First Lutheran LWML Executive Board met January 8, 2020 and decided on distribution of our society mission funds as follows: Concordia Seminary-St Louis, Food Bank-\$500.00, Concordia Theological Seminary-Fort Wayne, Food & Clothing Coop-\$500.00, Elder Circle Assisted Transportation-\$230.00, Grace House of Itasca County-\$200.00 and \$800.00 designated to sponsor a college student(not determined yet) for Alaskan Mission Trip in June 2020.

4. In 2019 our funeral ministry served 8 funeral lunches. Thank you to everyone who helped with this ministry to our members' families. Each year we donate \$15.00 per funeral to our library

to purchase a memorial book/books in memory of our members who have passed away.

5. We served the youth of our congregation breakfast at their lock-in. We hosted a birthday party one month at Grand Village. And we bought kitchen supplies and equipment for the kitchen.

If you have any questions regarding our society and what we do, please ask. Remember all the ladies of our church are members of our society here at First Lutheran.

The Lord has blessed our activities. Thank you for your support of our mites for missions and our society missions. First LWML Women in Mission  
Serve the Lord with Gladness

**THE LWML MN NORTH DISTRICT CONVENTION IS BEING HELD IN GRAND RAPIDS JUNE 22, 23, AND 24, 2020** and is hosted by Our Redeemer, Cohasset and First Lutheran, Grand Rapids. Sunday, June 21<sup>st</sup> the District Board Dinner will be held at First Lutheran and jointly prepared by Our Redeemer and First Lutheran women. All other events will be held at the Timberlake. There are several committees needed to make this convention come together. Irene Eckert from Our Redeemer and Carla Taylor from First Lutheran are the

convention co-chairs. We both have been working to find people who are willing to chair committees or to be a member of a committee. Some of the committees are the Board Dinner, Exhibits, Ingathering, Mite Walk, Registration, Sales, Servant Events, and Hostesses. If you have an interest in being a member of one of these committees or have questions, please contact Carla Taylor at 218-326-1843 or 218-259-4080. Thank you!

**TO THE WOMEN OF FIRST LUTHERAN:** The MN North LWML District Board has candidates for three of the four open positions on the LWML District board for 2020 – 2024. The remaining position that needs to be filled is our Regional Vice President. Sue Zeige currently fills this position and her term is up in June, 2020. Please prayerfully consider serving as our LWML Regional Vice President. Always remember, “I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.” Philippians 4:13. God bless you for prayerfully considering this opportunity to serve our Lord through the LWML. Please contact Carla Taylor with any questions. Copies of the Regional Vice President job description can be found on the counter outside Shirley’s office.

**BOARD OF HUMAN CARE: PRAYER CHAIN:** I am updating the Prayer Chain roster and I am wondering if anyone might be interested in joining our prayer chain. It involves having your name and

phone number available to other members of the group, so that whenever a prayer request comes up we can notify each other to pray the request. Sometimes the request can wait until we have a quiet time to pray, at other times an urgent and immediate prayer may be needed. There are no meetings to attend. There are four groups, each with a chair and a co-chair whose purpose is to notify others in his or her group of each prayer request. You will be asked when you sign on if you prefer a text or a phone call. The groups are divided up accordingly. Please prayerfully consider this ministry. You will be given a brief list of instructions if you join us. Please call or text Corinne Hultman at 612-390-2739 within the next two weeks, if this interests you. Thank you. I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

**TO ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN OF FIRST LUTHERAN** – We have many members who have been very faithful in their worship and giving of their time and talents at First Lutheran over the years. They now find themselves homebound and unable to attend church services regularly and some not at all. **Cards are very much appreciated** and If you are interested in sending them a card there is a list of parishioners in Shirley's office. First Lutheran has a Homebound Ministry Team and if you are interested in more information about this group please call Carla Taylor at 218-326-1843.



Happy Valentine's Day to Everyone! Isn't it wonderful that we don't have to wait until February 14<sup>th</sup> to have God say to us "Be My Valentine, I Love you so very much!" Perhaps it is time for all of us to once again read, I Corinthians 13! It is one of the greatest chapters in the Bible that speaks of love and what it should be all the time. After reading it—ask yourself "Do I really love like this at all times?"

We continue to share our love and God's love in Sunday School, Release Time and Confirmation. We are so blessed to have such compassionate and caring staff and volunteers in all areas of Christian Education.

May we never take that blessing for granted. All we have to do is stop and take notice of the evils in our society that would like us to conform to. Our Sunday School will continue to share this gospel message through songs on each Youth Sunday.

Let us all, also remember the important message they shared with us at the Advent Worship service that they were part of "God's Son was given for us. We have the promise of eternal life with him because of that blessed Christmas Gift.

May all your days be filled with God's lover and let us show that lover to people whenever and wherever we go each and every day.

*In Christ, Mary Buech  
Sunday School Superintendent*

**LIBRARY CORNER FOR FEB, 2020  
NOAH BUILT HIS ARK IN THE**

**SUNSHINE** by James Moore and found at 248.421 Moo. This title jumped out at me in the library after having just returned from the Ark Encounter. On the back cover it indicates that Noah "prepared in advance for the storm that

was to come. He didn't wait until the last minute. He used those bright days in the sunshine to get himself ready, to build up resources he would need when the dark floodwaters came." The book includes a study guide that can be used at home or with a group. There are 15 chapters that cover the things we need to build our own ark in the sunshine so that we're ready when troubles come. Perhaps there are members who would like to get their own copy of the book and meet to discuss it together? – Janie Carlson

**CALLING ALL THOSE SERIOUS ABOUT CHANGING THEIR DEVOTION HABITS:** We have an unused treasure in our library!

**TREASURY OF DAILY PRAYER**

found at 242.8 Kin. It takes us on a daily journey of Psalmody (Psalms), Old Testament readings, New Testament readings (using NIV), short sermon, Hymnody (short stanza from LSB), Prayer of the Day, and suggested readings from Book of Concord. There are also other helps too numerous to mention. Check it out!

**IN EVERY PEW SITS A BROKEN HEART**

by Ruth Graham (daughter of Ruth and Billy Graham) found at 248.8 Gra. The broken heart in your pew may be the woman sitting next to you who struggles with breast cancer. It may be the middle-aged man at the far end

whose alcoholism has torn his family apart. Behind every face is a story, and the story is not always pleasant. But God knows how to write our stories with redemptive ink, and He can heal our broken hearts. Ruth Graham has found through bitter personal experience that God does His great work in the ruins of our lives.

**THINKING OUTSIDE OF THE BOX AND INSIDE THE BOOK** by Paul

Dorochoer found at 248.8 Dur. In the author's forward he says: "The intent of this book is meant to be a popular and practical hands-on-book which demonstrates biblical principles in real life situations." Topics covered are Priorities, Happiness, Marriage, Children, Education, Money, and Rest – all contained in 175 pages!

**ROLLING IN THE CHURCH**

**AISLES** found at 248.8 Chr. When there's something funny going on in church, it's a good thing! Laughter and joy can be found anywhere you worship: in church bulletins, sermons, Sunday school lessons, even in the parking lot or the Fellowship Hall after services. A spiritual smile spreads happy faith far beyond the doors of the church. So laugh you way through the day with some holy humor. One of the jokes: "The blessing of the pets will be followed by a hot dog lunch."

**FOR THOSE WHO LIKE**

**STATISTICS:** We at First have been blessed with many new books given by our Angelz to our library. Perhaps that is why our readership numbers have changed.

A PARTIAL USAGE TOTAL FOR BOOKS FOR 2017: 131; TOTAL USAGE FOR 2018: BOOKS 257, DVDs 42; TOTAL USAGE FOR 2019: BOOKS 448, DVDs 44. We love to see those numbers increase!

Janie Carlson, Shela Cline and Darlene Baltus

*I am a reader, not because I don't have a life, but because I choose to have many.*

*"Sharing the Love of Jesus"*

**CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES -  
UNAPPROVED  
JANUARY 14, 2020**

Present: Tom Lattimore, Gary Rosin, Greg Robertson, Debbie Robertson, Molly Goplin, Greg Taylor, Jennifer Flem, Les Flem, Dwight Kessler, Pastor Zeige, Jessica Pellinen, Doug Carlson, Linda Urevig

Call to order: Tom Lattimore called the meeting to order at 5:30PM.

Opening devotion and prayer: Pastor Zeige led us in devotion and prayer from Romans 12:6-8. The Holy Spirit gives differing gifts. Everyone in our church has gifts. How do we tap the potential



and encourage everyone to use their gifts for the Lord?

#### Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Approval of Minutes

\*\*\*Motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the Agenda with one addition to Unfinished Business (6. 2020 Budget) and one addition to New Business (6. Men's Club) and to accept the Minutes as written.

#### Oral Reports of Boards and Committees

1. Boards of Christian Education & Youth: Report in Packet. Greg R.
2. Board of Elders: Report in Packet. Les F.
3. Boards of Human Care & Missions: Report in Packet. Molly G.
4. Board of Stewardship: Report in Packet. Doug C.
5. Board of Trustees: Report in Packet. Gary R.
6. Revolving Trust Fund Committee: Greg T. The committee met today and reviewed our financial situation.
7. Wiebe Grant Committee: No Requests. Greg T.
8. Direction and Planning Committee: Greg T. Did not meet but will be scheduling a meeting soon.

Family Ministry Program Director's Report: Report in Packet.

Pastor's Report: Report in packet. The spelling of one member transferred out will be corrected.

Financial Secretary's Report: Report in Packet.

YTD income 2019: \$302,040.31

YTD income 2018: \$298,466.18

Treasurer's Report: Report in Packet

As of: December 31, 2019

General Fund Chkg: \$28,040.43

Building Fund Chkg: \$48,070.57

Mortgage loan balance: \$87,117.93

Revolving trust fund Chkg: \$138,889.51

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

Correspondence - None

#### **Unfinished Business**

1. Call Committee Update – Tom L. stated that the committee has met with Pastor Becker the Circuit Visitor and Pastor Anthony who will be the new Circuit Visitor. At the next meeting (January 20, 2020) the committee will go over the top six candidates that were chosen by the committee members.
2. Phone System Update – Jessica stated that the phone has been installed. For an outside line we need to dial 8.
3. Lift Update – Gary R. stated that the lift is working now. It hasn't

gone back into Failure Mode. If it does, we will call Larson Elevator Company in Grand Rapids.

4. Shirley's Office Lights – Venture Electric will be installing LED panel lights in Shirley's office.

\*\*\*Motion was made, seconded and passed to pay \$498.00 for LED panel lights and installation to Venture Electric from the Hron Fund.

5. **Organ Update** – The first payment of \$20,000.00 is due in January and the second \$20,000.00 payment is due in May when the teardown begins.

\*\*\*Motion was made, seconded and passed to pay the first payment of \$20,000.00 from the Organ Fund in the Revolving Trust.

6. 2020 Budget – Elders budget has been revised for the costs of the Vacancy Pastor and the potential Pastor. Trustees budget has added an additional amount of \$2,400.00.

\*\*\*Motion was made, seconded and passed to present the Revised Budget to the Congregation at the Annual Voters' Meeting.

### **New Business**

1. Youth Tithe Account (possibly used to purchase new pew cushions)

\*\*\*Motion was made, seconded and passed to let the Youth Group research costs for new pew cushions (both doing

them ourselves and manufactured ones) using their tithe money.

2. Audio Visual Committee – A memo from Tom Latimore is attached to the minutes outlining the reasons for the committee, committee members and duties of the committee.

3. Annual Voters' Meeting – Reminder to have written reports to Shirley before Thursday when the meeting packet will be put together.

4. Snow Plowing – Gary R. stated that he has been plowing along 8<sup>th</sup> Street and removing the snow to have better parking.

\*\*\*Motion was made, seconded and passed to continue plowing along 8<sup>th</sup> Street for safety reasons.

5. Red Cross Blood Drive – The Red Cross has requested to do a Blood Drive at our church on May 28<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*Motion was made, seconded and passed to verify information for cleanup issues and if that is satisfactory, go forward with the Red Cross Blood Drive.

6. Men's Club – A Boy Scout is wanting to do an Eagle Scout Project to rebuild the props for ATV training at a cost of \$850.00 for materials. A request has been made to have a chili feed fund raiser at our church.

\*\*\*Motion was made, seconded and passed to have the Men's Club sponsor the Boy Scout chili feed fund raiser in our facility.

### Caring and Sharing

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 8PM.

The meeting was closed with prayer.  
Respectfully submitted, Linda Urevig,  
Recording Secretary

**ATTENTION PUZZLE PLAYERS:** We are setting up a puzzle exchange table for the months of February and March. Please leave one of your jigsaw puzzles and take a different one to help pass these next two snowy months until Spring! Check out the table by the fireplace. Thank You, Janie and Darlene.

### COMING EVENTS

January 31<sup>st</sup>-February 1<sup>st</sup> – Youth Lock-In

January 20<sup>th</sup> – Call Committee Meeting

February 4<sup>th</sup> – Board Meetings 6:30PM  
or as decided by each Board

February 11<sup>th</sup> – Council Meeting  
5:30PM

**VOTERS MEETING:** Will be held February 9<sup>th</sup> with a Potbless. Bring a dish to share.



**American Red Cross**

Date : 5/28/2020

Start Time : 08:00 AM

End Time : 02:00 PM

Where : First Evangelical Lutheran Church

Address : 735 NE 1st Ave , Grand Rapids, MN 55744



Contact Shirley at 999-4101 or stop by the office, to schedule a time to donate Blood.

♥ Happy Valentines Day ♥



**FEBRUARY  
"FIRST FRUITS"  
ARTICLES**

December "First Fruits" items are  
**Due by February 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**ALL ARTICLES NEED TO BE  
EMAILED TO  
Debbie.Robertson@hotmail.com**

