



# 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

I am excited to bring you news of a special form of ministry we hope to provide at First Lutheran. Notice that I did not say “new” form of ministry because it is over two thousand years old. Please take a moment to read James 5:13-18.

We already have one aspect of this going well. We regularly gather to sing praises to God for the many blessings He showers upon us that make us cheerful. What we want to focus on is for the times in our life when we are suffering or sick.

Not long ago the Elders gathered with me for a morning of study on these verses. We are on the same page as we consider the importance of what God offers in this wonderful ministry in our local congregation. We hope that one by one more and more people under our spiritual care will use to great advantage this God-given provision for healing and health.

We thank God for the skill of doctors and other medical staff. We should give God the glory for the advances in medical research, medicines, and procedures. Who among us has not benefited from the care of skilled doctors? God has given them their healing hands and hearts. They are certainly instruments in His loving hands.

These verses in James 5 give us another dimension to God’s provision – a biblical one – one largely unknown to most Christian people. This is why we are making known to *you* what God has provided.

May 2019



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How does this work? What does it look like? It starts with each of us at those times when we are suffering or sick. We are well conditioned to reaching for a pill bottle or, if it is really bad, making an appointment to see your doctor. Here is another option. **Call** the Elders. The blessing begins when you initiate contact with the spiritual leaders of the church to come to your aid under the guidance of God's healing hand. Your call, sparks your faith in this God-given process. It also generates the faith and compassion of those who are called upon to be the hands of God working on your behalf.

The Elders will come and pray with you and for you. They will listen to your needs and bring them before the Lord in prayer. Sometimes those needs are physical, at times they are rooted in troubled emotions. Still other times they are spiritual problems. They will lift up your burdens and concerns to the Lord – the healer.

They will also anoint you with oil in the name of the Lord Jesus. There is nothing special in the oil, just as in Baptism there is nothing holy about the water, but in both cases being **obedient** is the key that unlocks the door to God's blessings. To our modern minds this does not make much sense. We may need the reminder that as followers of Jesus we walk by *faith*, not by *sight*. When it comes to God's promises, the more we

trust what does not make sense the more we show our willingness to obey. Remember that in all of Jesus' miracles He required people to show some step of faith which triggered the healing. In this case calling the Elders and allowing them to anoint you is that step of faith.

There is also the opportunity, in a most confidential setting, to confess sins which can often weigh us down with enough guilt or shame to make us sick. Lifting that burden off our heavy hearts is in itself a healing touch from God.

When we are obedient to call the Elders to pray, we must also be faithful in letting God be God. We cannot force Him to do our will. Rather we seek Him that His will be done (sound familiar?). There have been times I have seen things that are nothing short of miraculous. I myself was prayed for when I faced a diagnosis of cancer. The next day, the first words I heard after surgery was that there was no trace of cancer. There are other times when a slower form of healing takes place. Most often I have witnessed people comforted with the peace of God which passes all understanding and they had strength, comfort, and peace to face the challenges without being overwhelmed by the circumstances in front of them.

Your Elders are caring souls who are committed to helping you in your times of need. Multiply that by an infinite

number to measure God's willingness to bring His healing touch to you. Please digest this information and strongly consider using this divine provision as you have needs. By no means should you throw your doctor overboard. At the same time, don't overlook prayer as a vibrant option.

**PASTOR ZEIGE**

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**HEALTH E LIVING:** On April 13<sup>th</sup> there were 20 people who gathered to hear Dave Lutz share his seminar about living healthy. It was very enlightening and beneficial. It focused on healthy eating, several different exercise routines, and a very good session on strengthening our balance to prevent falls. If you would like to tap into any of these programs you can download on your computer for free any of the materials for your use. The website is: [www.healthehorizon.com](http://www.healthehorizon.com).



**2019 CONFIRMATION CLASS:** This year we have six students who have completed three years of Bible study and catechism review. On Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup> we received into communicant membership:

- \* Madelynn Rose Broberg
- \* Hayden William Davis
- \* Abigail Jo Serfling
- \* Alexa Rose Urevig
- \* Alexander Caiden VanHout
- \* Shara Marie Venditto

We commend them for their diligence and encourage them to continue in their Christian growth through every stage of life that lies before them.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL



April showers bring May flowers, but that is not all that spring brings to us. More importantly, it brings to each one of us, the promise that Jesus has risen from the dead. And because of this, we have the assurance that we too, will be resurrected from our own death and will live with Him forever in the mansion He is preparing for us.

The Christian message all of our children learn and continue to receive is that Jesus loves us so much that he willingly suffered, died and rose again for all of us. As he lives again, so will we!. This is also the message we want all of the children attending VBS to know. Help us to bring this message to them. How can you be a part of this important ministry?

Our last day of Sunday School will be May 19<sup>th</sup>. We pray families continue to see the need for their children and they too, will continue worship on a regular basis and grow in their relationship with our Lord and Savior. We again thank all who were involved in that important ministry with our children and their families.

Please continue to keep all aspects of our ministry 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:**

*Library Volunteers: Janie Carlson, Sheila Cline, Darlene Baltus*



In a world that often rewards those who seize whatever they can grasp, how powerful acts of love and sacrifice can be! Such deeds are much more than mere symbols. That

reminded me of the book I just read called **STARDUST**, by Carla Stewart found at 813.6 Ste. Georgia Peyton buries her unfaithful husband, invites her mother-in-law to live with her and her two daughters, and remodels a rundown motel while thinking about her “lost” parents. One thing is certain: under the flickering neon of the Stardust motel, none of their lives will ever be the same. Reviewed by Darlene Baltus

**NUMBERS:** We like to compare one year to the next. We have totals for Jan, Feb, March for library usage and it is up from last year!!! Thanks again to all those who donated to our library!

- JAN 2018 17 books checked out
- JAN 2019 24 books and 5 DVDs
- FEB 2018 13 books checked out
- FEB 2019 35 books and 12 DVDs
- MAR 2018 13 books checked out
- MAR 2019 47 books and 3 DVDs

How interesting that our Portals of Prayer author, Sarah E. Baughman, who is writing devotions in the April – June issue

also wrote the book, **A Flame in the Dark**, 813.6 Bau, which just happens to be on our new book shelf thanks to the LWML! Check it out!

New books: **COUNTERFEITER – HOW A NORWEGIAN JEW SURVIVED THE HOLOCAUST** by Moritz Nachtstern and Ragnor Arntzen found at 940.53. A gripping first-hand account of fortitude and survival during World War 2. Nachtstern was one of a total of 771 Jews deported to concentration camps during the years of 1940 – 1945 from Norway. This was an amazing book and the basis of the major motion picture, **THE COUNTERFEITERS**.

*Reviewed by Corinne Hultman*

**BETWEEN HEAVEN AND THE REAL WORLD** by Steven Curtis Chapman found at 92 CHA. Chapman is sharing his life’s story in a compelling account of his music, love, success and tragedy. Emotional turmoil hit with the loss of his young 5 year old daughter. The story tells how we too, can see God’s presence in the amazing highs and the faith-shattering lows that we all experience in our lives. I loved this book..it’s easy to read and hard to put down!

*Reviewed by Corinne Hultman*

**DEADLY PROOF** by Rachel Dylan found at 813.6 Dyl. Standing for what’s right could cost her everything. This is a

legal thriller that will keep you turning pages into the night (for those of you who can't sleep!) We also have the next 2 books in the Atlanta Justice series:

**LONE WITNESS** and **BREACH OF TRUST**. All 3 look very interesting and if you desire to take all 3 out at one time, we allow it! These may appeal to fans of Irene Hannon and Terri Blackstock. These are also on the new book shelf.



## *Release Time*

What is religious release? The State Statute states: "A child may be excused from attendance part of the time a public school is in session if he participates in a Released Time program [§120.10 (3) (3)]". We are so blessed to be able to take the children out of school and teach them more about Jesus.

We have collaborated with the combined churches program to house them here at First Lutheran. We had the space and it saved on cost with buses.

Just about every Wednesday from 12:30-2:00 we have children here

learning about Jesus. Rotating between the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade one week and 6<sup>th</sup> grade the next. Both sections meet roughly twice a month.

If you stop in on a week when the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade meet, you will notice every room is being utilized including the fellowship hall. It is quite the sight to see with almost 90 youth learning more about Jesus. The energy and excitement they bring puts a smile on your face.

We had a total of 31 children sign up this past year with 21 prayer partners. At the last session, 17 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders met with their prayer partners again and filled out a survey.

This is what we found out:

- 10 said they made a new friend.
- 15 said they feel more comfortable sharing the love of Jesus with their friends.

When asked what their favorite part of release time is, the majority answered with:

- Movies, learning about Jesus, prayer partner, snack, learning about the Bible.

When asked what they are looking forward to next year in release time, they answered with:

- Prayer Partners, having fun, learning about Jesus, making new friends, and watching movies.

These answers tell us that the children have fun, learned more about Jesus, and they can share the good news with their friends. That is amazing to know how they feel and what we are doing here is making a difference.

Thank you to Pam Clairmont, Corrine Hultman, Sue Thorson and Brad Benson for teaching and Sue Zeige and Kathy Hohenstein for subbing. Thank you to our helpers Darlene Baltus, Kathleen Schroeder, Mary Buech and Laura Bundy. We can't forget about all of you that donated snacks, thank you.

I am looking forward to next year when we share the love of Jesus with more children.

*Jessica Pellinen  
Family Ministry Program Director*

*“Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belong the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”*

**Mark 10:14-15**



## **JUNE “FIRST FRUITS” ARTICLES**

**April “First Fruits” items are  
Due by MAY 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**To Submitting Articles  
For First Fruits**

E-mail them to Debbie at  
[debbie.robertson@hotmail.com](mailto:debbie.robertson@hotmail.com)

*To all the Mothers:*





## PREGNANCY CARE CENTER

Caring for Women, Men and Families

April 17, 2019

What an exciting first quarter for New Beginnings! Your donations helped us to provide 259 services to 44 families. These services included 10 car seats, 8 ultrasounds, 86 Earn While You Learn classes and 60 boutique visits for necessary infant and child care items already this year.

Board and Staff attended the Annual Planning Meeting and special meetings to discuss plans for our new location and have made a decision. Prayerfully, we have decided to purchase the Wheelock Chiropractic Building from Dr. Gary and Lynn Wheelock to have a more permanent home for our clients. Please contact us if you are interested in being a remodel volunteer or making a building fund donation.

We are starting our Annual Baby Bottle Drive from Mother's Day until Father's Day. The baby bottles you fill with your check, cash, and coins make a huge difference in helping our community.

Thank you for your prayers and support these past several months. Many people have been touched through New Beginnings because of your generosity.

I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.  
Psalm 9:1

Amanda Jo Grovenburg and Kathy Metzger 218-326-0404

[www.newbeginningspregnancy.com](http://www.newbeginningspregnancy.com)



*“Sharing the Love of Jesus”*  
CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES -  
UNAPPROVED  
APRIL 9, 2019

Present: Tom Lattimore, Gary Rosin, Jessica Pellinen, Greg Taylor, Dwight Kessler, Ann Hauser, Les Flem, Jennifer Flem, Pastor Zeige, Molly Goplin, Debbie Robertson, 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 a devotion and prayer from Mark 1:14. Stop believing the bad news and believe the good news. Believe in the Gospel. We have to try hard to maintain perspective and balance. The church must strive to be among the believers.

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Approval of Minutes – Tom L. commented on the table from the March Minutes regarding the LED lighting behind the altar cross. A motion would have to be made to put it back on the table. Would need a second. No discussion and a majority vote to pass.

\*\*\*Motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the Agenda and Minutes.

Oral Reports of Boards and Committees

1. Boards of Christian Education & Youth: Report in packet. Ann H. – The heading of Release Time should be changed to VBS and the training meeting for teachers will be May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

They are planning for another Camp Bluewater trip for the Youth.

2. Board of Elders: No April meeting. Les F. – There was an Elders Retreat in March with a bible study on James 5.
  3. Boards of Human Care & Missions: Report in packet. Molly G. – Two Hundred eighteen pounds of food was donated to the Food Shelf in March.
  4. Board of Stewardship: No Meeting. Doug C. – The Financial Review Committee (Douglas C. Carlson, Guy P. Clairmont, Jr. and D. Edward Ames) had completed their review. A copy of the report will be filed with the minutes.
  5. Board of Trustees: Report in packet. Gary R. – The minutes were corrected. Terrorism/Risk Insurance does not need to be added to our policy. It is already included in our insurance.
  6. Revolving Trust Fund Committee: No meeting since January. Greg T. – Next meeting will be in May
  7. Wiebe Grant Committee: No requests. Greg T.
  8. Direction and Planning Committee: No meeting. Greg T.
- Family Ministry Program Director’s Report: Report in packet  
Pastor’s Report: Report in packet  
Financial Secretary’s Report: Report in packet. Deb R. reported that we are ahead of our budget.

YTD income 2019: \$ 76,684.64 YTD income 2018: \$68,776.46

Treasurer's Report: Report in packet.

Jennifer F.

As of: March 31, 2019

General Fund Chkg: \$38,223.37

Building Fund Chkg: \$47,633.57

Mortgage loan balance: \$27,266.97

Revolving trust fund Chkg: \$278,626.00

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

Correspondence - None

Unfinished Business

1. New Media Update – There will be an Information Meeting for the congregation on April 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:30PM. Les F. will give an update on the organ repairs. Tom L. will discuss the plan for the sound system. A representative from the AV company will be here to answer questions. There will be a Special Voters Meeting after church on Sunday May 5<sup>th</sup> to vote on the proposed sound system.
2. Personnel Manual Update – The update is done. The committee (Greg Taylor, Dwight Kessler, Jennifer Flem, Les Flem, Tom Lattimore) will review the update.
3. Capital Project Updates – Summer of 2019 Completion Date. The east entry door has been ordered. Construction of the garage will start as soon as the frost is out of the ground.

4. Constitution Update – Received an email stating that the Constitution and By-Laws will be taken

to the District with the recommendation to approve. Should be completed by June.

5. Church Building Usage Schedule Update – Everyone using the church building has been

contacted and given us the requested information. Shirley will put together a calendar.

6. Kitchen Air Conditioner Update – To be taken back to the Trustees for discussion.

7. Lawn Mower Bids Update – To be taken back to the Trustees for discussion.

New Business

1. Dimes for Missions

\*\*\*Motion was made, seconded and passed that on Dimes for Mission Sunday (the second Sunday of each month) all loose change and any other checks/currency specifically designated for Dimes for Missions will be included in the Dimes for Missions contribution.

2. Security cameras outside our building – Because of egging problems, the Trustees will be looking at possible outside cameras for our security system.

Caring and Sharing

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 6:40PM.

The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted, Linda Urevig,  
Recording Secretary

## COMING EVENTS

Easter Sunday – No Sunday School

April 28<sup>th</sup> – Confirmation Sunday

May 17<sup>th</sup> – Youth Group Bowling

May 19<sup>th</sup> – Last Day of Sunday School

April 25<sup>th</sup> – Informational Meeting for AV System and Organ Repair Update 6:30PM

May 4<sup>th</sup> – Church Grounds Cleanup Day 9AM to Noon

May 5<sup>th</sup> – Special Voters Meeting

May 7<sup>th</sup> – Board Meetings 6:30PM or as decided by each Board

May 14<sup>th</sup> – Council Meeting 5:30PM (note time change)



**NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER:** You are invited this Thursday to gather at noon on the front lawn of the Itasca County Courthouse. Christians will gather to pray for America

**MAY 5<sup>TH</sup> IS THE MS** Walk in Grand Rapids. Please think about the folks you know who deal with MS on a daily basis. You can either walk or volunteer. Contact [diane.j.meyer@gmail.com](mailto:diane.j.meyer@gmail.com) or register at [walkms.org](http://walkms.org)

**WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK:** On Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00p.m., the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual gathering to honor our law enforcement officers, fire fighters and First Responders will take place. Come To Assemblies of God to show your support



◀ April		~ May 2019 ~					June ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
			<b>1</b> To witness to our God in the Lesson 1 Take-Home Point: God made me.	<b>2</b> For God's blessing as the leaders prepare for Lesson 1.	<b>3</b> That we grow in God's Word through the Lesson 1 Bible Memory Verse: God Made the Universe.	<b>4</b> For the plans for VBS "extras," such as the closing celebration and picnic.	
<b>5</b> Thankfulness for God's blessing of rest.	<b>6</b> To witness to our God in the Lesson 2 Take-Home Point: God Keeps His Word.	<b>7</b> For God's blessing as the leaders prepare for Lesson 2.	<b>8</b> That we grow in God's Word through the Lesson 2 Bible Memory Verse: God Promises a Savior	<b>9</b> For all Opening and Closing singers and musicians.	<b>10</b> For those preparing and serving Snacks to students and staff.	<b>11</b> For those serving in Storytelling	
<b>12</b> To witness to our God in the Lesson 3 Take-Home Point: Jesus came for me.	<b>13</b> For God's blessing as the leaders prepare for Lesson 3	<b>14</b> That we grow in God's Word through the Lesson 3 Bible Memory Verse: Jesus the Savior is Born	<b>15</b> For those leading Games	<b>16</b> For the Bible Challenge Leaders	<b>17</b> For the Early Childhood Site Leaders and Team Leaders	<b>18</b> To witness to our gracious God in the Lesson 4 Take-Home Point: Jesus Saves Me.	
<b>19</b> For God's blessing as the leaders prepare for Lesson 4	<b>20</b> That we grow in God's Word through the Lesson 4 Bible Memory Verse: Jesus the Savior is Risen	<b>21</b> For kids to invite their friends and neighbors.	<b>22</b> For our Pastor	<b>23</b> For those in the congregation who donate to our VBS program.	<b>24</b> To witness to our God in the Lesson 5 Take-Home Point: Jesus is coming for me	<b>25</b> For God's blessing as the leaders prepare for Lesson 5.	
<b>26</b> For those planning and preparing for Bible Challenge	<b>27</b> For grandparents who bring their grandchildren to VBS	<b>28</b> For kids who are invited by a friend to come and learn about Jesus, their Savior	<b>29</b> For the church staff that helps in so many ways	<b>30</b> For the registration and planning team	<b>31</b> For those who will plan and put up decorations	<b>Notes:</b>	