

The Friendly Visitor

First Lutheran Church

March 2025



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The Pastors's Message

Lent is a 40-day season of spiritual preparation leading up to Easter. It begins on Ash Wednesday and concludes on Holy Thursday. Sundays are excluded from the total number of days. The season is marked by practices of prayer, fasting, and generosity that encourage individuals to reflect on their lives, repent for their sins, and grow closer to God. Many choose to abstain from specific behaviors or habits, mirroring Jesus's 40 days of fasting in the desert. Ultimately, Lent serves as a time for introspection and renewal, culminating in the celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday.

The Sunday before Ash Wednesday is Transfiguration Sunday. The disciples experience Jesus glowing as a bright light up in the mountain with Mose and Elijah stand next to him. They are having a mountaintop experience. The disciples who were with Jesus knew that God was with them. This is the goal of Lent, to experience the presence of God.

There are two basic ways to experience God's presence. One is to fast from certain foods or items and increasing our dependency on God. This dependency helps people draw closer to God. A second way is to start a new spiritual practice. This included but is not limited to daily prayers, daily reading of scripture and other meditation materials, keeping a journal, volunteering or taking a daily walk in nature.

I encourage you to begin a new practice. Develop a spiritual practice that makes you feel closer to God in your daily life. I've never had much success giving something up for Lent. Now that I'm in my 50's I am already starting to give up things I enjoy. One of the most meaningful experiences I have had during Lent was starting something new. One year we invited everyone to pair up during Lent. Once a week for coffee I met with the person I was paired with. We shared prayer concerns and discussed how we had experienced God that week. Sometimes we shared questions about our faith. There was no curriculum. Just a time of deep sharing.

What opportunities are out there for you to draw closer to God? What new habits might you consider adopting as you prepare to celebrate Easter? I will be praying for you and hope that you have a meaningful Lent!

Blessings,

John



The President's Message

Spring is arriving and I am sure many will agree with me that it cannot come soon enough! I often remind myself to appreciate the cold weather because in August it will be so terribly hot. But I find I can tolerate hot weather better than cold and I believe this is because summer brings the benefit of the garden. I love to garden, although my method is barely controlled chaos. I hope each and every one of you is feeling the stirrings of spring and can get outdoors when it is nice.

Sharon Lillie

Message from the Call Committee

I'm sure some of you have been wondering about the status of our search for a new pastor. A Pastoral Call Committee has been assembled, chaired by Larry Askins, and a few committed and brave members of the congregation – Nancy Brian, Ron Caron, Doug Gill, Jay Lillie, Stephanie McCoy, and Paul Nellis.

As confidentiality is of the utmost importance, we can only outline the process without divulging any information about the candidates.

1. A Ministry Site Profile was amended from the data used when hiring Pastor Bell and sent to the Indiana-Kentucky Synod, where Bishop Tim Graham approved the document.
2. On the other end of the search process, candidates searching for a call have completed a Rostered Minister Profile which is on file with Synod. Synod then compares the needs and wants of the church and those of a potential candidate, and sends the candidate's information to the Call Committee.
3. As of 02-20-25 the Call Committee has received our first candidate and has scheduled an initial interview with that candidate.
4. As a courtesy to the applicants we are obligated to interview each and every one, preferably in person. In the event of an out-of-town candidate, our interview will be held via Zoom.
5. At the initial interview, a brief opening prayer is given, followed by an exchange of questions and concerns between committee members and the candidate. We will draw from a list of questions suggested by Synod, as well as our own "outside the box" questions. The interview concludes with a closing prayer.
6. One or more interview sessions may occur before the Call Committee moves forward in the process. In the event the candidate is deemed to be a poor fit, we release their application back to Synod and we wait for the next candidate. Should the candidate be deemed a good fit, the committee recommends the candidate to Council, who in turn has an interview with them.
7. The final step before officially offering a call to a candidate is to present the candidate to the congregation, usually in the form of the candidate presiding over a worship service. A two-third's

majority of the congregation is required to officially call the candidate. The candidate then has a finite time to accept or reject the call.

Your input is essential as we move forward in this hiring process. It is a God-given gift and ask for your prayers in guiding us to find someone who will faithfully serve the people of First Lutheran Church. With a new pastor, we aim to continue to grow in the likeness of Christ and be a beacon of love and hope to our community and to the world.

Please feel free to contact any member of the Call Committee with your questions and concerns.

Larry Askins
Chair, Call Committee

Bulletin Board Photos Update

Please send a photo of your family, either by dropping it in an envelope at the office or into the offering plate, to update the bulletin board at Easter.

Note

- Provide a 3x5 or 4x6 photo of your family and place it in an envelope.
- Update photos on the bulletin board.

Position Available

We are looking for a new office administrator. This person keeps record of the finances, prints off the bulletins, answers the door and phone and serves as the main communicator between members, staff and Pastor. The hours are flexible but working on Friday is required due to the printing of the bulletin. Please keep your eyes and ears open for someone suitable that may be interested. A copy of the job description is available through the office.

Food Pantry News

The food pantry is off to a great start this year. We have seen a slight decrease in our traffic, mostly due to folks from Dosker Manor being moved to different locations. Some have returned to visit us, since their new home may not be near a pantry. We continue to have a great group of volunteers!

Sharon Lillie

We are sorry to report that Millie Conway entered the Church Triumphant on March 5.



At First Lutheran Church we believe that God delights in the diversity of all creation. As a Reconciling in Christ community, we welcome all into fellowship; recognizing the dignity of every human being regardless of gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ability, economic status, race, or any other identifier. You are accepted and welcome here, no matter where you are on your spiritual journey.

If you need to contact one of the church's committee chairs, here is a list of all the committees and their chairs. Please let them know if you have any problems, suggestions for improvements, or compliments.

Building Users	Vicky Frank
Christian Education	Lori Caron
Endowment Funds Subcommittee	Harley Butler
Finance	Drew Wartschlager
Food Pantry	Sharon Lillie
Membership	Vicky Frank
Property	Paul Nellis
Social Ministry	Stephanie McCoy
Vision and Outreach	Paul Nellis
Worship and Music	Nancy Brian



THE FRIENDLY PUZZLER

Find the underlined words amongst the letter grid at the bottom.

The remaining letters will reveal a hidden message.

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

"When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess and you possess it and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, 'Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us.' When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, you shall make this response before the LORD your God: 'A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me.' You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.

D N A E M A R A O P P R E S S I O N
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T O G E T H E R D F M D E C L A R E
P L A C E C E L E B R A T E O H A B

March 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
23 10:30am Worship Service	24 Food Pantry closed 8:30am Catholic Charities 5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here 7:30pm LYG	25 8:30am Catholic Charities 10:00am Food Pantry	26 8:30am Catholic Charities 10:00am Food Pantry 6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial 6:30pm LYG 7:00pm Chancel Choir rehearsal	27 8:30am Catholic Charities 4:00pm Food Pantry	28 Food Pantry closed 9:00am Catholic Charities 6:00pm LYG	1 12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire
2 10:30am Worship Service	3 Food Pantry closed 8:30am Catholic Charities 5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here 7:30pm LYG	4 8:30am Catholic Charities 10:00am Food Pantry 6:00pm Zoom Study Group 7:30pm NA	5 ASH WEDNESDAY 8:30am Catholic Charities 10:00am Food Pantry 4:30pm LYG Staff Meeting 6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial 7:00pm Chancel Choir rehearsal 7:00pm Worship Service	6 8:30am Catholic Charities 4:00pm Food Pantry	7 Food Pantry closed 9:00am Catholic Charities 6:00pm LYG	8 12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire
9 9:30am Breakfast 10:30am Worship Service	10 Food Pantry closed 8:30am Catholic Charities 5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here 7:30pm LYG	11 Food Pantry closed 8:30am Catholic Charities 10:00am Food Pantry 6:00pm Zoom Study Group	12 8:30am Catholic Charities 10:00am Food Pantry 6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial 6:30pm LYG 7:00pm Chancel Choir rehearsal	13 8:30am Catholic Charities 12:00pm Craft Day 4:00pm Food Pantry 7:00pm Worship and Music Committee Meeting	14 Food Pantry closed 9:00am Catholic Charities 6:00pm LYG	15 12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire
16 10:30am Worship Service 12:00pm Council Meeting	17 Food Pantry closed 8:30am Catholic Charities 5:30pm NA - Why Are We Here 7:30pm LYG	18 8:30am Catholic Charities 10:00am Food Pantry 6:00pm Zoom Study Group 7:30pm NA	19 8:30am Catholic Charities 10:00am Food Pantry 4:30pm LYG 6:00pm NA - Escape from Denial 7:00pm Chancel Choir rehearsal	20 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 8:30am Catholic Charities 4:00pm Food Pantry	21 Food Pantry closed 9:00am Catholic Charities 6:00pm LYG	22 12:30pm NA - Lose the Desire 1:00pm Women's Retreat
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