



Remember -
our fallen heroes.
They are the reason
that we are free.

First Edition

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
OF
FIRST LUTHERAN

Recently I took another silent retreat. Two days of no distractions and plenty of time to rest with the Lord. I wanted to share with you a glimpse of what I experienced during that time. I arrived at the hunting shack and surrendered my time to the Lord. I prayed that even with all the distractions of life going on that God would teach me something about Himself through all of it. Sure enough, God used His creation to do just that. Much like last year's silent retreat, God taught me about His character through an unlikely creature: The hawk.

I sat on a chair looking out the window. The sun happened to be out during this particular time, and I noticed a hawk flying over the yard just above the treetops. It must have seen a meal running in the grass. For just a brief moment, the hawk flew in between my view and the sun, and I could see the shadow of the hawk on the ground as well.

Immediately after I saw this hawk, I noticed another one flying much, much higher in the sky. This hawk flew in between my eyesight and the sun. It was so bright I needed to look away. Once I looked away from that hawk, God instantly taught me something about perspective. One hawk appeared much bigger than the other hawk because it was closer to the ground while the one flying high appeared like a speck. The farther something away is from the earth, the smaller it appears.

Also, the hawks were probably close to the same size except one appeared smaller because it was closer to the sun. That is how it should be with us. The closer we get to the Son, the smaller we should appear. He must increase and we must decrease. Also, the closer we get to the Son, the light overtakes us. There is no shadow, or darkness. All people can see is the light radiating from us because of the Son. The closer we are to this earth, the more we indulge in material things and earthly pleasures, the bigger our shadow is. This is why we are instructed not to live in darkness and not satisfy the flesh.

How close are you to the Son? Are you so close that when people look at you all they can see is God's light radiating from you? Or are you closer to the world, being enticed by the pleasures and material things of it, casting a shadow and walking in darkness? It is my hope that day by day we all get just a little bit closer to Jesus. We must decrease and He must increase.

If you haven't done this before, take a moment and ask God to teach you something new today. It is amazing what God might reveal to you when your mind is ready and willing to learn. May all those who are reading this be blessed in your journey of pursuing the Son.

Pastor Matthew

PLEASE KEEP THESE PEOPLE IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

FOR THOSE WHO ARE ILL OR AT HOME

Bonnie Anderson
Tim Litsheim (cancer)
 Dan Long's nephew
Jessica Nornberg
Lindsey Kennedy (cancer)
 (Pat Long's granddaughter)
Roxann Kaiser (cancer)
Adam Long (grandson of Dan Long)

Sharon Doss (Leukemia)
Cindy Walgren
Amber Baerg
 (Chris & Julie Warren's daughter)
Darlene Zabel
JoAnn Artmann
 (Karen Fundine's daughter)
Ann Ness

ASSISTING LIVING/NURSING HOME

Riverside: Irene Pietz, Ken Kelling,

Harmony House in Brainerd: Char Brattlund

UPDATING

If the military, those who are ill or in the hospital, or people in nursing homes is not up to date or if names need to be added or deleted, please contact Sharon Gehrke so that these lists can be updated.
Thanks

Church Council

President: Bob Harmsen
Vice President: Dan Jacobson
Secretary: Tom Kavanaugh
Mike Bellos, Julie Hofius, Shirley Smith
Nicole Buersken

Pastor Matthew Sundquist

Office 218-746-3775

Parsonage: 218-746-3750

Pastor Matthew is graduating!!! The date is May 28 at 1 pm at Community of Grace Lutheran Church, 4000 Linden Street, White Bear Lake, MN 55110 We are hoping that we can join and support this milestone for Pastor Matthew and family. We would like to organize a carpool to have as many people attend as possible. If you are interested in attending, please sign below. If you can drive, please indicate that, and we will try to organize something. We would plan on leaving the church around 11 am. More details will follow as we find out how many would be planning on going.

MILITARY

Chad Hagg—Army, Son of Arlene Hagg, Nephew of Eileen Ausland

Joseph DeLude—Army, Grandson of Don DeLude

Isaac Jacobson—Navy, Son of Dan & Wendy Jacobson

Sonja Larson—Army, Granddaughter of Mel & Gwen Larson

PRAYER CHAIN

When you need prayer support, there is a group at our church who will pray diligently for whatever the need is. Please call Marlene Lindeman at 218-746-3541.

Check out our Website at

firstlutheranpillager.net

We also have a Facebook page to check out!!!! Please free to post anything or post comments!!! Facebook page search type in First Lutheran Pillager and this should take you to the page. The Calendar will be updated as the schedule changes! Thanks to Kirstie for keeping our Web page updated!



Our condolences go out to Shirley Smith and family because of the passing away of her grandson, David Meyer.

Congratulations to Jennifer Fundine on earning her Master's Degree!!!

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Congratulations to our 2022 graduates: Jada Bentson, Joseph Doucette, and Madalynn Fundine



On Sunday, March 27th, two new families joined our congregation. They are Bobby & Samantha Laughery with their children, Kalli and Michael, as well as Jim & Barb Hickman. We look forward to becoming better acquainted as we serve the Lord together.

Directory Update

According to our Universal Church Directories representative, First Lutheran Pillager should receive delivery of the entire congregation's shipment now in May. Upon arrival, the directories will be verified and distributed to family units by Wendy Jacobson. Thank you for your patience!

A Memorial Day Prayer

As our nation pauses today to remember those in the military who have given their lives for freedoms we enjoy, we pray you would have us all look to you for strength, comfort and guidance. Be with all who serve in our Armed Forces. Bless them and their families.

Grant your loving protection. Let peace prevail among all the nations, O God. Especially let your mercy rest upon our land, even as we acknowledge with thanksgiving your past goodness on this country.

If it is your will, preserve the lives of the men and women in uniform as they defend our citizenry. Most of all, we pray that you would turn the hearts of all - military and civilian - to your holy Word where we find the true peace for our sinful souls that surpasses all understanding. Keep us repentant of sin. Move us to know, take hold and treasure your saving grace. In this peace and hope for eternity, we pray.

- Author Unknown

Why Did Jesus Fold the Napkin?



Why did Jesus fold the linen burial cloth after His resurrection? I never noticed this....The Gospel of John (20:7) tells us that the napkin, which was placed over the face of Jesus, was not just thrown aside like the grave clothes. The Bible takes an entire verse to tell us that the napkin was neatly folded, and was placed separate from the grave clothes. Early Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, 'They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and I don't know where they have put him!' Peter and the other disciple ran to the tomb to see.. The other disciple outran Peter and got there first. He stooped and looked in and saw the linen cloth lying there, but he didn't go in.

Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying to the side. Was that important? Absolutely! Is it really significant? Yes!

In order to understand the significance of the folded napkin, you have to understand a little bit about Hebrew tradition of that day. The folded napkin had to do with the Master and Servant, and every Jewish boy knew this tradition. When the servant set the dinner table for the master, he made sure that it was exactly the way the master wanted it...

The table was furnished perfectly, and then the servant would wait, just out of sight, until the master had finished eating, and the servant would not dare touch that table, until the master was finished. Now, if the master were done eating, he would rise from the table, wipe his fingers, his mouth, and clean his beard, and would wad up that napkin and toss it onto the table. The servant would then know to clear the table. For in those days, the wadded napkin meant, 'I'm done.'

But if the master got up from the table, and folded his napkin, and laid it beside his plate, the servant would not dare touch the table, because..... The folded napkin meant, 'I'm coming back!' He is Coming Back!

What Makes a Quilt So Special?

by Debbie Anderson Searles

Surely, when the final stitch is entered and the needle laid to rest, only a quilter can know the feeling of pride soaring within her soul. She has the contentment of knowing that a long, hard journey has come to an end. She has conquered a challenge, and through her own patience and endurance, has created a loving work of art. It may well live on long after she has finished her walk upon this earth.

Perhaps what makes a quilt so special, is that pride a quilter knows — that deep in her heart she knows — some distant future generation might gaze upon her quilt, or touch its fragile threads, and still feel the love and care that she has sewn in every stitch.

THE PASTOR STOLE OUR SPOON!

A pastor had dinner at the home of a couple in his church. After he left, the wife said to the husband, "I think he stole our spoon!" This bothered her for a whole year.



A year later the couple had the pastor for dinner again. Unable to resist, the wife asked, "Did you steal our spoon last year?" The pastor replied, "No, I put it inside your Bible."

A little boy opened the big family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out of it.

He picked up the object and looked at it. It was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages.

"Mama, look what I found!" the boy called out.

"What have you got there, dear?"

In an astonished voice, he answered: "I think it's Adam's underwear!"

How Would You React If A Homeless Person Came To Our Church?

Pastor Jeremiah Steepok transformed himself into a homeless person and went to the 10,000 member church that he was to be introduced as the head pastor at that morning. He walked around his soon to be church for 30 minutes while it was filling with people for service... only 3 people out of the 7-10,000 people said hello to him. He asked people for change to buy food... NO ONE in the church gave him change. He greeted people to be greeted back with stares and dirty looks, with people looking down on him and judging him. He went into the sanctuary to sit down in the front of the church but was asked by the ushers if he would please sit in the back.

As he sat in the back of the church, he listened to the church announcements and such. When all that was done, the elders went up and were excited to introduce the new pastor of the church to the congregation... "We would like to introduce to you Pastor Jeremiah Steepok" The congregation looked around clapping with joy and anticipation. The homeless man sitting in the back stood up... and started walking down the aisle... the clapping stopped with ALL eyes on him... he walked up the podium and took the microphone from the elders (who were in on this) and paused for a moment.... then he recited from Matt. 25:34-40.

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

After he recited this, he looked towards the congregation and told them all what he had experienced that morning. Many began to cry and many heads were bowed in shame. He then said, "Today I see a gathering of people... not a church of Jesus Christ. The world has enough people, but not enough disciples... when will YOU decide to become disciples?" He then dismissed service until next week telling the congregation that being a Christian is more than something you claim... but it's something you live by and share with others.

This is a story that has been circulating through social media recently. I believe this is not a true story though it might have been based on a true story of a Tennessee pastor Willie Lyle of Sango United Methodist Church who lived as a homeless person for a week and preached a sermon based on his experience or it could have been based on the famous book called *In His Steps* by Charles Sheldon. Nonetheless, it speaks volume of how sometimes we, Christians, don't behave in a way that honors our heavenly Father. He is loving, compassionate, understanding, forgiving, patience and kind... and yet, we often judge quickly based on persons look, job, ethnicity, color of skin, or even other difference than of ours.

Today, I am praying that when a homeless person does come to our church that he/she would be welcomed and accepted without frowned upon or judged.



These beautiful windows were installed this past week by local artisan Greg Rosenberg of Shining Lights Studio.

Thank you to The Robert's family, our council, and member fundraising for funding this project.



First Lutheran Church Pillager

Meeting Minutes

April 12, 2022

Opening and Call to Order: The regular meeting of the First Lutheran Church Pillager was called to order at 6:35 p.m. on April 12, 2022

Present: Nicole Buersken, Pastor Matt, Dan Jacobson, Tammie Barnett, Kirstie Sundquist, Julie Hofius, Tom Kavanaugh, Connie Vieths, Bob Harmsen Absent: Shirly Smith, Mike Bellos (and Lilly)

Pastor's Report: Pastor is still not sure of the timing regarding the baby and how the actual Sunday's he'll be absent will fall. Next week is the Pastor's silent retreat and he will be out of contact on April 21 & 22. He finished his last big project for school. We discussed the 5 Sunday's he will be absent and has a few colleagues from school that may fill in and also the possibility of a young Ukrainian girl giving a presentation of the situation there on one of the Sunday's.

Treasurer's Report: Credit card for the church is on the way. Our discussion to Tammie's question on our Mission payments (from the pancake breakfasts) is that we will pay \$250 as it becomes available to our rotating group of mission targets (3). We also discussed the promotion of this a bit more and other ways of funding it. Bob also discussed designated funds which we will discuss a bit more in New Business. Dan made a motion to accept the treasurer's report and Julie seconded. Passed
Approval of Agenda and Secretary's Report

Nicole made a motion to accept with not changes / Tom seconded. Passed

Committees:

•**Worship/Music:** Lenten services completed with a final "community" service being held at First Lutheran Church on Wednesday, April 13 with us doing the music. Matt and Kirstie put together an estimate of items we need to improve our sound equipment which includes a Boom Mic, Additional clips, Transmitter for wireless (interchangeable for wireless and mic), New Cables, and a Combo Receiver. The estimate is \$1,375 and Tom made a motion to approve up to \$1,500 and Dan seconded. Motion carried and Matt and Kirstie will order the equipment. We also discussed communion bread and going back to a baked bread (Rosie had test samples for us) and Julie motioned to do this with a second by Nicole. Motion carried.

•**Youth/Family:** We are starting to plan for a Vacation Bible School in conjunction with our August Family Fun Night (potential August 10 date), this will continue to be planned with more information to come. Tom also made a request to begin doing some Children Sermons once again in the fall and that will move forward.

•**Communications:** Pens arrived and have been well received and being picked up. Bob is going to investigate finding lists of new residence (and existing) to start doing some regular mailings too and work at perhaps welcoming new members or old members back. As this project develops, we may in fact form a new committee of Evangelism.

•**Hospitality:** Soup and Sandwich suppers during Lent went very well with a nice sized group every week.

•**Sanctuary:** Nothing to report

•**Facilities/Building:** Discussed sound system items during music/worship.

•**Nominating:** Nothing to report

•**Call/Negotiating:** Bob, Dan and Julie will meet to discuss the Pastor's financial package and contract for the upcoming year.

•**Welcome/Visitors:** Next Pancake breakfast is May 8, the breakfasts have been going well and the April 10 event had a very good turnout and a great turnout of helpers as we look to get it back to being a Guys event. May will be the last one until fall. We are also going to start requesting greeters for the front door again (let us know if you are interested) as we just think it is a very nice thing (Pat Long, now retired from greeting, was always a joy to see in the morning at the door)

•**Missions:** Matt, Julie and Kirstie met and discussed some ideas and will meet April 18 which will be an open meeting from 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm. This will really set the tone on direction of some new Mission goals and direction. The hope is to also plan 1-2 meetings per year off campus to continue to really develop our Missions in the community and grow the program.

•**Pastor Support:** Has gone well and we were able to cover things pretty well during Bob and Rosie's absence.

•**Staff Updates:** Biggest things here involves getting more volunteers to learn the booth for services. Kirstie is really stuck each week on this and while Connie and Dan pick up some slack, we really need multiple members to learn and help on this. The plan is to produce and organize more "operation folders" for the booth as everything gets figured out. Thank Kirstie for all the great work she does on this!!

New Business: Pastor asked for a few gas gift cards to assist people that request help and we simply re-organized our Benevolence fund to help support this in a modest (less than \$100 account). Bob suggested we start collecting more towards a new Account called Building Maintenance Fund (combining Parking Lot, Furnace, and Storage Shed accounts). Tom made a motion to start taking 8% of our giving and putting it into this account each month and to evaluate that number quarterly to see if that percentage is working, this would be retroactive to January 1, 2022. Nicole seconded and the motion carried. Much of this stems from our discussion regarding the siding and roof on the church and knowing that we will have to start the process of at least getting an estimate as we move forward. A project like this would also most likely be funded with some form of bank loan.

Old Business: As previously discussed we need to make sure the booth at church is taken care of during Kirstie's maternity.

Next Meeting will be May 10, 2022

Adjournment: motion by Tom, second by Dan--Lord's Prayer

First Lutheran Church Pillager

Meeting Minutes

March 15, 2022

Opening and Call to Order: The regular meeting of the First Lutheran Church Pillager was called to order at 6:40 p.m. on March 15, 2022.

Present: Nicole Buersken, Pastor Matt, Dan Jacobson, Mike Bellos, Tammie Barnett, Kirstie Sundquist, Julie Hofius, Tom Kavanaugh Absent: Bob Harmsen, Shirly Smith, Connie Vieths

Pastor's Report: Pastor is winding down at school with graduation on May 28. Discussed Kirstie having the baby a bit early, and that Pastor will be taking 5 Sundays for maternity. Discussed the possibility of donating one of our extra speakers.

Committees:

•**Worship/Music:** Lent services are in progress, and we are doing the Holden Service. Still not sure regarding the community service. Potentially we were supposed to host but with Covid we are not sure of the plan. Pastor is checking on if and location.

•**Youth/Family:** Nothing to report.

•**Communications:** Discussed that we need to get a newsletter out and have had some people have asked. We should communicate anything we have going on and could include information on live streaming. The newsletter should have standing categories that we can easily fill.

•**Hospitality:** Soup and Sandwich is underway. Choir is doing the March 30 and Council is doing April 6. Tom will do soups for both.

•**Sanctuary:** Nothing to report

•**Facilities/Building:** Digital Horizons came and were able to fix our problems with our sound system. Heat is finally working well in church and problem seems to be solved. Discussed getting a better-quality cord for the piano sound. New sound system items (two wireless mikes) should be paid for out of Live Streaming fund. Light on outside of the Church, should we do it with a replacement bulb unless the photo eye is out. Dan is looking into it. Parsonage external lights but we can't find the correct switch to turn on.

•**Nominating:** Nothing to report

•**Call/Negotiating:** Nothing to report

•**Welcome/Visitors:** Next Pancake breakfast is April 10 and Bob should be back, but Tom K will still plan to do that one as well and will pick up supplies for it. A few of the Cub scouts helped with the March 13 breakfast so thank you to them. Still looking for a few more gentleman to assist with the pancake breakfast...May will be the last one until fall. Best set-up would be to have volunteers for pre-set-up, serving and clean-up.

•**Missions:** Matt, Julie and Kirstie met and discussed some ideas and will meet April 18 and we will announce in church to see if others want to be a part of the missions committee.

•**Pastor Support:** Dan and Wendy have been doing the Riverside visits and communion and the ride sharing seems to be going well. New communion cups are in for visits.

Staff Updates:

New Business: Nicole did some research on pens and pencils and the pricing seems to be similar in price. Julie made a motion to order 500 pens (\$.69 each) on the Easter Special from National Pen, Mike will second, passed 5-0.

Old Business: Stained glass windows have been installed and look great! Thank you to the Roberts Family, Quilters, and the Church for doing these beautiful windows.

Next Meeting will be April 12, 2022

Adjournment: motion by Tom, second by Dan--Lord's Prayer
Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Thomas Kavanaugh, Secretary