

MARCH 2026

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

the first messenger ●

OPENING DOORS
TO LIFE IN
CHRIST



FLC Happenings

Watch our Friday email and the bulletins for the latest updates

Worship together

Sundays 9:30am Wednesdays 6pm

Lenten Worship Services

Wednesdays @ noon
February 18—March 25

Holy Week

March 29-April 3

March 3

Rebekah Circle @ 9am
The Chosen Bible Study @ 1pm

March 5 & 19

Theology on Tap @ 7pm

March 7-8

Middle School Lock in @ 8pm—8am

March 8

Join the Discussion @ 10:30 in the library

March 10

The Chosen Bible Study @ 1pm

March 11 & 15

Spring Break | No Oasis or Kids Fellowship

March 12

Ruth Circle @ 1:30pm

March 24

Vision Council @ 5:30pm

March 29

Palm Sunday ~ Holy Week Begins

Weekly

Kids Fellowship | Sunday @ 10:30am

Quilters | Tuesdays @ 8:30am

Men's Bible Study | Wed @ 6:30am

Oasis Meal | Wednesday @ 5pm

Worship Tm Rehearsal | Wed @ 5pm

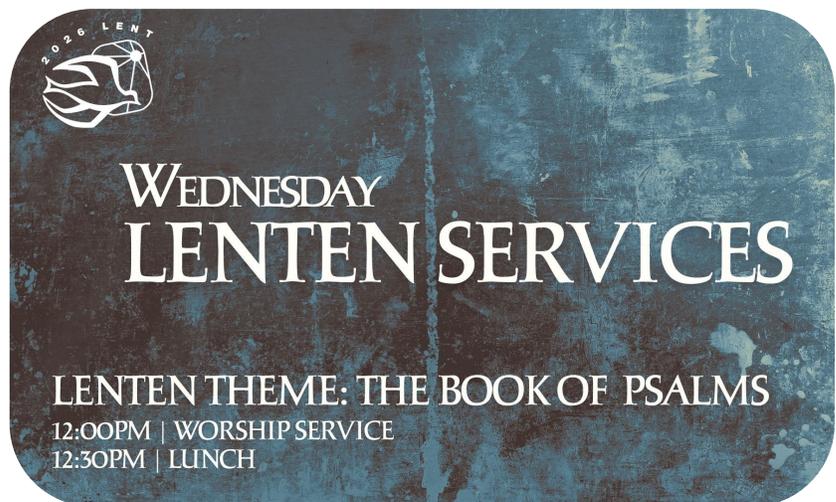
Wednesday School, Confirmation &

Youth Group | Wednesday @ 6:30pm

Jubilate Choir practice | Wed @ 7:15pm

March

Sunday	Mo	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fr	Sat
1 <i>Communion</i>	2	3 1pm The Chosen Bible Study 9a Rebekah Circle	4 <i>Communion @ 6pm</i> 12pm Wednesday Lenten service 12:30pm lunch	5 7pm Theology on Tap	6	7 MS Lock In 8pm-8am
8 <i>Daylight Saving</i> 10:30am AFF Confirmation Question Discussion	9	10 1pm The Chosen Bible Study	11 No Oasis—spring break 12pm Wednesday Lenten service 12:30pm lunch	12 1:30pm Ruth Circle	13	14
15 <i>Communion</i>	16	17	18 <i>Communion @ 6pm</i> 12pm Wednesday Lenten service 12:30pm lunch 6:30pm 2nd grade Service Project	19 7pm Theology on Tap	20	21
22	23	24 5:30pm Vision Council	25 12pm Wednesday Lenten service 12:30pm lunch 6:30pm Confirmation "refresh"	26	27	28
29 <i>Palm Sunday</i>	30	31				
<i>Holy Week</i>						



Join us Wednesdays in Lent for worship and a study of the book of Psalms.

Following our worship service, delicious soup and sandwiches are served in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone welcome!

President's Message

by Tom Neuenfeldt, Vision Council President

Gifted for Service

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

Many years ago, a friend and I were discussing stewardship. He was a faithful steward of his resources; however, he was quite clear that when it comes to stewardship of his time, he was not even close to where he thought he should be. Not too long ago, another friend told me that for good mental health a person needs to be involved in something that is bigger than themselves. I think these two themes are related under the umbrella of time management and giving of ourselves to a higher purpose.

Properly managing our time allows us to stay focused on what truly matters. Effective time management can help us reduce stress and alleviate the pressure of looming deadlines. Allocating time for rest, family, spiritual growth, and service to others enriches our lives.

We are given the gift of time from God. How we choose to spend that time is important not only to our mental and physical well-being but also important to those around us. We could choose to spend our time trying to improve our own selves and position, but I don't think that's good for us in the long run either personally and corporately.

First Lutheran has many different opportunities for us to use our gifts and invest our time. When we volunteer to help, in whatever capacity, small or large, it benefits our mental well-being and benefits the whole faith community. When we are involved in the ministry of FLC, we are not only developing relationships and building a faith but also ministering to our faith family and to our community.

Volunteering at First Lutheran means being part of something bigger than ourselves. Investment of time and talents at FLC and in the community is sound stewardship of our giftedness.

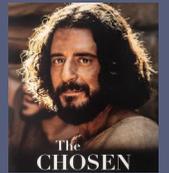
Each one of us, gifted for a purpose and gifted for service, has the opportunity to give glory to our Lord.

See you in Church!

Adult Faith Formation

"The Chosen" | Video Bible Tuesdays at 1 pm—3pm through March 10.

Only few more sessions left! Join us as we watch and discuss this acclaimed video series about Jesus and his chosen



disciples. The viewing and conversation afterward can help us discover our own "chosen-ness" as followers of Jesus. If you are not able to come each week, each video stands on its own. Or watch online anytime at: **Home Page | The Chosen**

Join in the Discussion

Sunday, March 8 & 12 @ 10:30am in the library

As you know, Pastor Joe, Pastor Matthew and the confirmation students have been sharing questions with the congregation on Sunday mornings. Now you have an opportunity to **join in the discussion**. On **Sunday, March 8 and April 12**, there will be that opportunity join the discussion in an informal, relaxed, and fun environment! Refreshments served. See you there, it will be fun!

We are so thankful for our members and are always ready to welcome new members into the life of FLC!



**New Member Welcome:
May 3 & 6**

Want to become a member?

TO LEARN MORE & REGISTER

SCAN, OR CALL THE OFFICE



Dear friends,
We have had a successful, widely participated capital campaign that has fallen short of making an ambitious project a reality.



As of February 2026, here are the numbers:

- Preliminary Goal: \$5 million to pursue a \$6.9 million project
- Total Pledges to Date: \$1.61 million

We fell short, and this was still a success. We did not know what was possible, and we shot for the moon. We dreamt big and here's what happened:

- 160+ households pledged and/or gave to the campaign (when our feasibility study predicted 129 households would give)
- The average household pledged roughly \$9,700 – which is INCREDIBLE, because that is more than four times an average household's annual offering
- Our total pledges are more than double our annual revenue of \$744k
- Dozens of our youngest children directly or indirectly gave to this campaign!
- We had multiple members share faithful stories that reminded us of who we are and who God is calling us to be
- We grew closer as a community and have remained faithful to the gospel of Jesus

We fell short of a number, but we did not fall short of being a strong, healthy, and faithful community. Our campaign clarified where we are and where we can try to go. The original dream was ambitious amid soaring construction costs and is beyond our reach.

Now it is time to pivot, and we do so from a place of stability and even modest growth. Our numbers in weekly worship continue to grow modestly year after year. Revenue has continued to meet expenses and grown modestly in each of our recently completed fiscal years. So, we pivot from a place of stability and health

Here's what is next: we have been in conversation with our architects to discern what projects are feasible – perhaps prioritizing critical mechanical investments, substantive renovations to the kitchen and education wing, etc. There will be additional announcements to come and likely multiple options for what you can do with your pledges or money given to this point. There may even be another congregational vote down the line.

This is all to say: THANK YOU for a sacred and inspiring campaign. Our total pledges to this point put us in a position to make some major and necessary improvements. Stay tuned!

Pastor Joe Skogmo

Theology on Tap

First & third Thursday | 7pm
@ Bucks Mills Brewing



Theology on Tap (ToT) is a fun time to come in fellowship with other members of the wider community, have a beverage of your choosing, and discuss some of the big questions about God, Life, the Bible, the Universe, and what wacky aspects make up this thing we call "faith". We have had representatives from First Lutheran, Trinity Lutheran, Holy Rosary, The Vineyard, as well as some folks who have found God outside of organized religious buildings.

Some of the big questions from our January and February meetings have been, How do denominations perform baptism? Why or why not, is Baptism important? How is God continuing to act in the world? Why does war happen, if God calls Christians to love? These are just a few of the questions that we have tackled.

So, if you have a burning question, want some simple fellowship on a Thursday night, or just want to slake your thirst, stop by ToT on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays every month @ Bucks Mills Brewing Co. at 7pm.

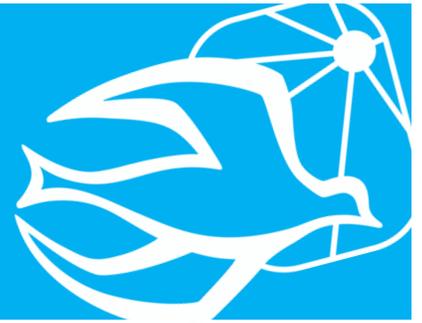
*Submitted by
Pastor Matthew Rossler, Associate Pastor,
ToT organizer & deep
thinker*

**BUCKS
MILL**
BREWING

Items Collected All Year

- We Care Receipts (from Central Market)
- Children's Christmas Store Items
- Blessing Closet Supplies (clothing, blankets, toiletries, etc.)

Bring your donations to the church office. Thanks!



ORDER EASTER FLOWERS

cost : \$14 each. deadline to order is march 22
order forms are on the information table
or scan qr to order



Every year the FLC flower team offer the opportunity to sponsor flowers in honor of/in memory of loved ones. The flowers will be used to decorate the sanctuary for our Easter morning celebration worship service. Sponsored flowers may be picked up after the 10:30am worship service.

In memory ____ In honor ____

Name of memorial/honoree (please print) _____

Given by: _____

Type of Flower: Azaleas ____ Asiatic Lily ____ Mums ____

Attached is \$ _____ for the total order above.

Checks can be made out to: *First Lutheran Church* and write *"Easter Flowers"* in the memo line.

Youth & Family

Olivia Sauer, Youth & Family Ministry Director | 920-860-4655
email: olivia@firstlutheranchurch.com | Typically in office M-Th 8:30am-4pm



FLC_YFM

Wednesday Service Projects

Service Projects are held on select Wednesdays throughout the school year, from 6:30-7:30pm in the chapel. Each grade level is given an opportunity to learn about a nonprofit organization in our community, given a Biblical reflection, and learn ways to help those in need. Then they participate in a group project to benefit the featured organization. Parents and Guardians are encouraged to attend with their child.

In January, our 5th graders learned about the Lakes Area Crisis & Resource Center. After the presentation, they created homemade crayons and stress balls to make into crafting kits for the children of the Crisis Center clients.



Upcoming Service Project Dates:

March 18

2nd Grade - Helping Animals w/ the Humane Society of the Lakes



April 22

1st Grade - Helping our Planet w/ Becker Co. Soil and Water



Middle School Lock-In

March 7/8, 8pm-8am

Sixth-eight graders, get ready for a night to remember. Join us for an epic filled lock-in here at FLC, with tons of activities, games, fellowship, and pizza!

Parents – Be sure to register your child here



RSVP HERE

Pie and Baked Goods Auction

Sunday, March 22

Our annual Pie Auction Fundraiser is coming up soon! You are invited to join us after worship on March 22 for this fun and delicious event. All funds will go towards our upcoming summer high school trip to Would Ridge. Want to support



this event? We Are looking for donations of pie & baked goods to auction off. A signup is at the information table outside of the church office.



Senior Recognition Sunday | April 26

Join us as we recognize our graduating high school seniors and pray a special blessing on them as they prepare to embark on their new journey.



Our Senior Recognition Sunday will take place on April 26 at our 9:30am worship service with a special fellowship time to follow. More information will be sent to graduating seniors' families.

If you would like to take part in this special day, we are looking for individuals or families to carry on the tradition of creating a homemade blanket to gift to a graduating senior. Sign up for blankets will come out in mid-March.

Confirmation Sunday May 3

We invite you to consider attending this special service to congratulate our 2026 confirmands on the work and dedication they put into their faith journey. Our Confirmation Service will take place on Sunday, May 3 in the sanctuary at 12pm. Photos and light refreshments to follow.

High School Summer Trip July 19-23

This summer, we will be taking current 9th-12th graders to Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center in Finland, MN. While there, we will explore how our environment and nature connect and intertwine with our faith. Cost is \$300 *Scholarships and/or financial help is available; reach out to Olivia-YFM Dir.



"At Wolf Ridge, nearly all of our activities and classes take place outdoors, embracing an experiential learning model that engages participants through direct interaction with the natural world. We cover a wide range of subjects, including environmental science, cultural history, contemporary environmental issues, personal growth, team building, and outdoor recreation. Wolf Ridge is more than just a learning destination; it's a place where curiosity is sparked, and minds are opened to the joy and wonder of nature." (Wolf Ridge Website - <https://wolf-ridge.org/>)

High School Pizza Lunch with the Pastors has had an amazing turnout the past couple of months, with an average of about 10 - 14 High School students coming each time. Getting to share in pizza, conversation, and just a short time to hang out, has been a great break from a busy day, and a long day at school.

For all those in High School and wanting to take part, check your phones for updates on when the next lunch will be. - Pr. Matthew

Save the date!
**VACATION
BIBLE SCHOOL**
JUNE 22-25

OPEN TO KIDS COMPLETING
GRADES K-5



At the February **Just Be** session, our Confirmation students used their quiet time to write their own Psalms. How cool is that?

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS | If you are a High School Senior who plans to attend an ELCA Lutheran college - *good news!* There is a scholarship available for you through the Women of the ELCA. Applications can be picked up in the church office, and must be submitted by April 30.

Baptismal Changes

by Olivia Sauer

It is always difficult when a ministry comes to an end, especially one that has been part of our church's life for so long. For many years, it has been a meaningful tradition in our congregation that when an infant is baptized, they receive an embroidered lamb bearing their name and baptism date. For a time, this gift also included an embroidered bath towel, which was discontinued in 2024. We are deeply grateful to have been able to carry on this tradition for so many years.



As we move forward and find new ways to welcome and celebrate our newest members, I want to take a moment to thank everyone who has played a role in this ministry over the years.

The full history of the lambs is somewhat unclear, as no one can point to a definitive beginning. What we do know is that many years ago, an elderly member of our congregation began making embroidered lambs to give to families at baptism. These lambs were then pinned to a banner displayed in the sanctuary, serving as a reminder of our shared responsibility as a congregation to watch over, love, and nurture our youngest members in faith. Over the years, the timing of when children received their lamb back varied—some may have received it when they began children's ministry, others at confirmation, or even at high school graduation. Regardless of timing, the lamb was returned as a tangible reminder of their baptism and the promises made to support them in their faith journey.

**If you have any information about the history of the lambs, please reach out to Olivia, YMF Director.

While this tradition has been a beautiful part of our church's story, staff transitions and the passing of time have led us into a new season. We extend heartfelt thanks to those who began this ministry, those who sustained it through the years, and all who supported our children along their faith journey. Though we may no longer have a physical symbol to see each week, our calling remains the same—to love, support, and walk alongside our baptized children as they grow in faith.

A Note of Thanks!

Thank you to everyone who saves their Central Market We Care receipts and gives them to the Rebekah Circle. Over the years we have given money benefiting organizations locally, nationally and worldwide, including:

- The Agape Fund
- Cornerstone Café, Frazee
- ELCA Good Gifts: 2 goats
- Becker County Food Pantry
- FLC Radio Broadcast
- WELCA School Kits
- National Youth Gathering

We Care receipts are good for one year and must have the "We Care" stamp on the receipt to be valid. The receipts are counted and turned in quarterly (March, June, September, December) with the earnings check sent out the following month. *In our last We Care check, we received \$121! WOW!* Thank you for your continued support.

Jean Benson, Rebekah Circle

We Need Your Help to Make Personal Care Kits



The Women of FLC are now collecting items to make Personal Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief.

A collection box will be available outside of the church office through the end of May.

Agape Update

By Sara Peterson,

This past month I had the joy of hosting LeAnn M's Confirmation students in the office. They helped sort and process donated clothing items, while other students made peanut butter protein balls or fleece tie pillows. They were so much fun— Thank you for your help, you are all welcome back to volunteer any time you want!

Speaking of volunteers, I have had several people ask if we ever need more help. The short answer is—yes, always! **Do you like to cook? Currently we are seeking volunteers to help us prepare freezer meals.** With the requests for food going up, we are giving out more meals. We have the food and the containers, we just need the hands to help! *If you are interested in helping, please contact the office. Food must be prepared in the FLC kitchen, if you are with a group or organization that would like to prepare food at a different location, you must contact the Sara in the office first.*

Thank you for your continued support of the Agape Ministry!



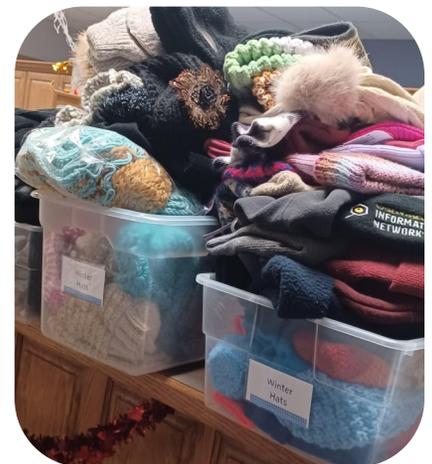
January numbers

Over **50** guests assisted

62 frozen meals given

35 visits to the Blessing Closet

3 bill pay assistance.



A story to brighten your day...

3:00 PM (2 hours ago) ☆ 😊 ↩ ⋮

I must share a quick story: Last night while I was shopping for this week's Oasis meal, a stranger at Aldi asked why I was buying so much pizza. I told him it was for our Wednesday church meal and explained I was shopping early in the week to make sure we could get enough. He chuckled and walked away... but a few minutes later, he came back and handed me a \$100 bill to contribute! I told him how grateful we all were, wished him God's blessings, and said he was truly an angel. SO AMAZING!!! Generous people are everywhere!

MEMORIALS

Thank you to those who gave in honor or memory of their family and friends.

AGAPE

*In memory of Ted Heisserer,
given by Marc & Sandy Guiley*

*In honor of Hazel's 107th Birthday,
given by Claire Beardsley*

*In honor of Marlys Douglas' 90th Birthday,
given by Michael & Andrea Storey*

UNDESIGNATED

*In memory of Dewey Fingalson,
given by Leon & Barbara McGinley*

*Reminder: when giving memorials to the FLC Foundation
or FLC Quilters, please make separate checks.*

Noisy Offering Totals

January | going to **Global Refuge** was **\$696.39**

February | went to **Lutheran Social Services.**

March | will go to the **Becker County Food Pantry**

January Financial Snapshot

YTD Actual Revenue: \$408,254.41

YTD Budget Revenue: \$437,456.00

Favorable/(Unfavorable) (\$29,201.59)

* Unaudited

Composting at Church



Reminder: Help us sort our waste properly!

Green Bins = COMPOST

Food scraps, coffee grounds, napkins, paper towels,
& compostable cups and cutlery.

Blue Bins = RECYCLING

Paper, soda cans, plastic bottles, & other recyclables.

Black or Grey Bins = TRASH

All other waste.

Thank you for your help!

Annual Meeting Agenda Notice

In accordance with bylaw C10.01.B24 of the Congregation Constitution, only submissions received in writing by the church office no later than April 17, 2026 will be considered for inclusion on the Annual Meeting agenda. No additional agenda items will be accepted from the floor at the meeting.



Worthy Women

Contact: Gretchen Henrikson, WFLC Coordinating Council President

The Women of FLC invite you to join them for food, friends & fellowship!

Rebecca Circle | meets the 2nd Tuesday at 9:00am

Ruth Circle | meets the 2nd Thursday at 1:30pm.

Circles study the lessons in the Gather Magazine, enjoy treats, and work on service projects including Baby Kits, School Kits, Fabric Kits and Personal Care Kits.

FLC Quilters | meets every Tuesday 8:30am in the recreation room. Newbies always welcome!

Women's Bible Study | Meets every Thursday at 8am in the church library



What Kind Am I?

Submitted by Patti Cummings

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. 1 Thessalonians 2:13

"Grandma, what kind am I?"

Oaklyn's question could have several answers. When my sons were young, they once asked me why I made them so plain like everyone else at school, why I didn't give them red hair and brown skin and green eyes. As they grew, their interest in nationality also grew, but they had reached the age of wanting to be like everyone else and felt fortunate to claim Scandinavian and English/Irish heritage.

"What do you mean by the word 'kind' Hon?"

"Well, when I'm with you, I go to your church, and you take me to Bible school in my town. When I'm with Papa Allen I go to his church, and another church with Grandma Bonnie, and a different church with Papa Chuck. So what kind am I?"

Her pensive question deserved a thoughtful response. "The church we attend is Lutheran, and so are Papa Allen's and the church in your town. I don't know what the other two churches are, but you are probably more Lutheran." I did not complicate the matter by explaining that two churches were ELCA and one was MC.

She delved further. "What does it mean to be Lutheran?"

"It means you believe in God and Jesus Christ and how Lutherans follow God's word in the Bible. I am sure Grandma Bonnie's and Papa Chuck's churches also believe in God and Jesus Christ and that the Bible is God's word. Churches that believe in Christ are called Christian. I guess you could say you are a child of God."

No more questions came from Oaklyn, but the pensive look on her face foretold questions to come. And I had better be prepared. Lent is always a good time to dig more deeply into God's word. I do not know what prompted her question, but I am thankful she contemplates God in her life and what that means for her personally.



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join us this
EASTER

Holy Week | March 29 - April 3
Maundy Thursday Services @ 12 & 6pm
Good Friday Services @ 12 & 6pm

Easter Sunday | April 5
Worship Services @ 8:30, 9:30 & 10:30am

Congregational Staff

Lead Pastor:

Pastor Joe Skogmo

Associate Pastor:

Pastor Matthew Rossler

Director of Operations:

Paul Haarstick

Community Relations Director:

Sara Peterson

Youth & Family Ministry

Director: Olivia Sauer

Office & Volunteer Coordinator:

Sonny Thomas

Worship Music Coordinator:

Karen Bimberg

Adult Choir Director:

Kathy Larson

Bell Choir Director:

Carla Hansen

Vision Council

President: Tom Neuenfeldt

President-Elect: Kari Stattelman

Secretary: Beth Tinjum

Treasurer: Kevin Shipley

DeAnne Udby, Jon Freeman,

Catharine Weisenburger, Jeff

Sliper,

Sue Quam, Ryan Bjorklund

Foundation Board

President: Ryan Manke

President-Elect: Les Perry

Secretary: Patti Cummins

Treasurer: Susan Schaffer

Shar Arvig, Alex Hagedorn,

Pam Orth, LeAnn Mouw,

Chad Carlblom

Our worship services can be found on:

**KDLM-1340 AM and
93.1 FM radio
Sundays at 10:00 AM.**

**On the church website:
firstlutheranchurch.com**

**on TV: Saturdays at 9:00 AM
on Arvig Cable channel 14.**



First Lutheran Church

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OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Thursday
8:30 AM to 4:00 PM
Friday
8:30 AM to 12:00 PM



First
Lutheran
Church

The First Messenger is published monthly. Articles for publication are to be submitted to the church office by the 20th of each month.