

June/July 2026

# the first messenger



# June/July Calendar

Watch for the latest updates in the Friday email & in the bulletins. A full calendar is on our website.

## Worship With Us!

Sundays in the Summer  
8:30am & 10:30am (outside)

### Rebekah Circle

June 8 @ 9am

### Ruth Circle

June 11 @ 1:30pm

### Pederson / Pearson Wedding

June 13

### Office Closed | Juneteenth Holiday

June 19

### Mountain Movers Vacation Bible School

June 22- 25 @ 9am - 3pm

### Vision Council Meeting

June 29 @ 5:30pm

### Office Closed | Independence Day Holiday

July 3

### Office Closed | Staff Development Day

July 7

### Rebekah Circle

July 14 @ 9am

### High School Pizza Lunch

at Woodfire Pizza

July 23 @ 12pm - 1pm

### Vision Council Meeting

July 28 @ 5:30pm

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## Weekly Activities

### Quilters

Tuesday @ 8:30am

### Men's Daybreak Bible Study

Wed @ 6:30am at the Holiday Inn

### Worship Team Rehearsal

Wednesday @ 5pm

### Women's Bible Study

Thursday @ 8am



firstlutheranchurch.com

218.847.5656



As we discern next steps with the Associate Pastor position, we are pleased to share that Barry Fewson has been appointed as our Synod Authorized Minister (SAM) to serve in the interim.

### What is a Synod Authorized Minister (SAM)?

A SAM is a layperson who, though not ordained, receives specialized training to serve a congregation in many of the ways a pastor does. SAMs complete a series of courses and are authorized by the synod's bishop to preach, preside at worship, officiate at funerals and weddings, and provide pastoral care, among other responsibilities.

The SAM program is an increasingly vital part of the ELCA, with more than 750 congregations across the country currently served by a SAM, according to a 2024 ELCA report. Many serve in rural areas, in multi-congregation settings, and many, like Barry, serve churches navigating a season of transition and discernment.

The SAM model reflects the church's willingness to adapt and evolve in meeting the needs of God's people, and it is an exciting way God continues to make things new.

### Welcome, Barry!


Speaking of God making things new, Barry Fewson, a longtime member of First Lutheran Church, has been approved as a SAM by Bishop Bill Tesch of the Northwest Minnesota Synod and by FLC's Personnel Team as of early June 2026.

Barry's covenant with FLC extends through May 2027, or until FLC calls an Associate Pastor. In this part-time interim role, he will focus on worship leadership and preaching, visitation and pastoral care, and funeral leadership.

Barry's office hours will typically be **Tuesdays through Fridays, 8:30 a.m. to noon.**

We are deeply grateful for Barry's sense of call to this ministry, for the Synod's guidance in shaping this role, and for the Spirit's timing in providing exactly the support our staff and congregation need at this time.

Please keep Barry, our staff, and our whole community in your prayers as we continue life together in the mission of Christ as faithfully and vibrantly as we can!



# Dream Big Revision Has Passed!

Our pivot and redesign resolution passed at our Annual Meeting on Sunday, May 17, and it did so overwhelmingly, with nearly unanimous support.

The revised design comes with a new project budget of \$2.2 million, achieving all four of our core goals from the beginning:

- **Fellowship Hall** expansion by relocating office spaces to the more practical west entry.
- **Kitchen upgrades** that involve modest expansion, new equipment, and a more optimal layout.
- **Education Wing** improvements that include new bathrooms, chapel enhancements, new classroom finishings, flooring, lighting, and more.
- Generational **mechanical** investments that involve boiler replacements, heating/cooling system advancements, elevator upgrades, and more.

As we move forward, we continue to rely on both your fulfilled pledges and new pledges to help make this incredible investment in the future of First Lutheran a reality.

What comes next? Throughout the summer, our Master Planning Team and architects will continue refining schematic designs in consultation with various ministry teams. Once that work is completed, we hope to move into construction documents by late summer/early fall and potentially solicit bids by October or November!

As we have learned throughout this multi-year process, precise timelines can be elusive. Still, we remain hopeful, grateful, and moving forward with momentum and purpose!

Thank you all so much. This is an exciting season for First Lutheran. Your generosity and prayerful support are THE reasons we are headed towards achieving big dreams for our future – for our community in Christ and God’s work in the world for generations to come.

If you want to learn more about Dream Big or see the revised floor plans, scan the QR code.



**DREAM BIG**  
EXPANDING WALLS • EXPANDING MINISTRY  
**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH**

# Christian Reflections

by Minister Barry

Judy and I have been watching a series on Prime Video called "It's Not Like That".

The show features a young, widowed pastor with several young children who lives next door to a young divorcee, also with young children who happen to be playmates. To complicate matters, the two families were extremely close while all spouses were still together. Add to the confusion that both adults now want to date other people while not so secretly being attracted to one another, well, you see where this is going.

Although a delightful family show with some humor and light drama, it brings to the surface a topic which is actually quite serious. That is, we tend to forget that pastors are people too. And as such, they are subject to the same temptations and transgressions as the rest of us. Indeed, pastors are sinners too can you believe it? And they live in glass houses that provide constant surveillance opportunities for the whole community!

Here at FLC, we have witnessed several examples of this over the years, one quite recently. And although you may consider it just plain bad luck in our church, you'd be amazed at how widespread such problems are, many of which are far worse than we've experienced. Child molestation and abuse, theft and embezzlement, elder abuse, and even bribery are not unheard of. Fortunately for us, the pastoral related problems we've experienced are mild by comparison. Nevertheless, sometimes our expectations are unrealistically high, and any deviation from normal, expected pastoral behaviors is met with judgment and scorn.

It's a good thing we are people of faith, right? As such, we are ready and eager to forgive, right?

*The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.*

*But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." - John 8: 3-7*

Perhaps it's a good time to reflect on our pastoral expectations. Please know that your pastoral staff tries hard to live up to your expectations. We endeavor to walk the walk. Please forgive us if we slip and fall from time to time.

Peace,

Barry

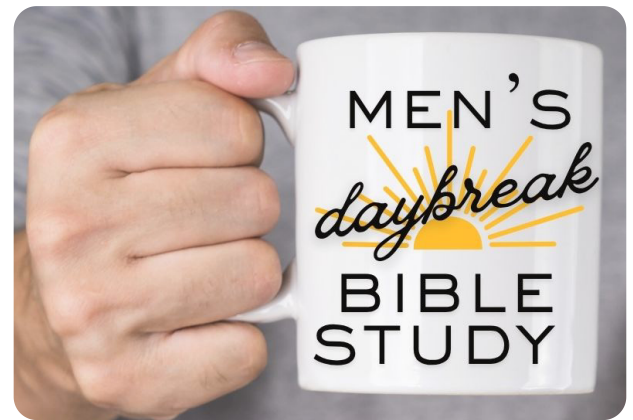
- April 12-22, 2027 -



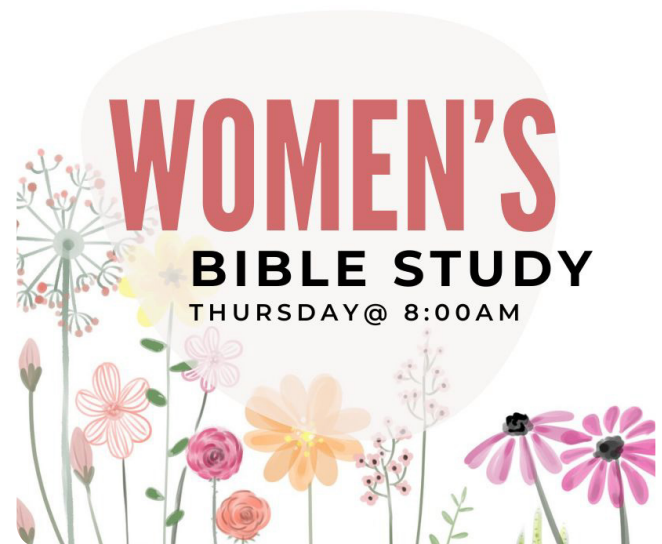
## IN THE STEPS OF MARTIN LUTHER

Hosted by Pr Wade & Holly Dutton

Visiting: Berlin, Wittenberg, Eisleben, Leipzig, Augsburg & more! More info in the church office.



Wednesdays at 6:30am @ the Holiday Inn





## Lead Pastor Report | Annual Report 2025/2026

Dear First Lutheran, as we come to the close of another programmatic year together, I want to share a few thoughts: First, I want to name my gratitude for this congregation, recall some staff highlights, touch on our Dream Big journey, and end with some statistical highlights and closing thoughts.

### Gratitude for Community At-Large, Office Staff, and Many Volunteers

Truly, thank you. Being church together is not a passive thing. It happens because you all show up. You pray. You worship. You serve. You feed. You have fellowship. You discern. You teach. You weigh options. You sew. You sing. You give. Being a member of a church is not the role of consumer. It is showing up. It is sacrifice. It is joy. It is service. It is the complicated work of loving real people in the imperfect life of community. Sometimes we get our way. Sometimes we don't. Sometimes we get it right. Sometimes we don't. To be healthy is to face that honestly and to remain committed to one another and the work of God, empowered and assured by God's unrelenting presence and inseparable grace.

Thank you for being a community committed to one another through imperfection and triumph, and through sorrow and joy. Thank you for finding footing in the love of Jesus and the baptismal call to love each other and our neighbors as ourselves.

With that general, but profoundly sincere gratitude, I now want to thank our lay leaders. Thanks to those of you who served in all sorts of capacities from the Vision Council to the buffet line, to the music room, to the classroom, to the AV Booth, to the flower gardens. I cannot name you all, but I take none of you for granted.

Alongside that, I want to name our staff. Their work is sometimes visible, and often it is not. The daily life of this place is sustained by people who are constantly tending to an intricate web of needs: coordinating events, responding to people in need, managing the building, stewarding your generosity with care, detail, and reverence, communicating our high volume of ministry goings on to a wide and diverse community, organizing volunteers, organizing classrooms and curricula, and quietly carrying the emotional weight that comes with serving a whole community. The staff here remains a critical asset and gift for mission.

This year, we also experienced transitions and additions within the staff. In July we welcomed Sonny Thomas as our Office and Volunteer Coordinator. Sonny has brought with him not only a wealth of experience, he brings a joy and relational warmth.

At the same time, we reconfigured Sara Peterson's role in response to staff transitions and emerging needs within the congregation and broader community of Detroit Lakes and Becker County. She remains our director of communications but has added the role of coordinating social assistance through our Agape Fund. Through Sara's leadership and the network of staff and volunteers around her (and your stunning generosity!), we are now serving well over 700 individuals annually through various forms of meaningful support from gas vouchers and clothing to onramps for more stable housing.

### Dream Big

Turning now to one of the most visible and defining efforts of this past year: our Dream Big building endeavor and capital campaign.

Here we must resist the urge toward overly simplistic narratives. This has been a sacred, imprecise, beautiful, messy, faithful endeavor, and we are moving ever closer to meaningful investments in our building that empower us for the near future and for decades to come.

By one measure, we fell short. Our initial goal of \$5 million towards a \$6.9 million project was ambitious, especially amid skyrocketing construction costs and an inexact estimation of what our community could afford. To date we have received \$1.61 million in pledges, with roughly \$170k dedicated to the kitchen on top of those pledges.

Although we fell short of our moonshot goal, that's not even close to the whole story of the success that our capital campaign and discernment process has been.

More than 160 households participated in this campaign, far exceeding what was projected in the preliminary feasibility study. On top of that, the average household pledge was nearly four times a typical annual household offering. Children gave. Families found ways to stretch. Individuals came in with remarkable gifts. Stories of faith were shared that reminded us of who we are and whom God calls us to be. It was a sacred experience to behold and I am so proud to be a part of First Lutheran Church in Detroit Lakes!

In the process, we've become clearer about capacity, pivoted, and remained steadfast to accomplishing our core priorities with impactful renovation designs (maintaining significant investments in mechanical, kitchen upgrades, fellowship hall expansion, and education wing renovations).

We remain in a position to make great investments in FLC's future, and we do so from a place that appears sustainable. We are financially stable. Vibes are strong. We are growing modestly in membership and engagement. So, we pivot not out of desperation but out of steady discernment.

**Some FLC data highlights for calendar year 2025 (Submitted to NWMN Synod):**

Ministry Numbers	Calendar Year 2024	Calendar Year 2025
Baptisms	16	<b>20</b>
Members Transferred IN	39	<b>37</b>
Members who died	16	<b>14</b>
Members who Transferred OUT	9	<b>13</b>
Newly Confirmed	15	<b>22 (*28 in '26)</b>
Avg (in-person) Wkly Attend	322	<b>327</b>
Total Membership	1,331	<b>1,361</b>

We are not the same congregation we were a year ago. And that is a good thing.

We are a people still learning how to love one another, love our neighbor, and love our God most faithfully – through thick, thin, sorrow, joy, steps back, and steps forward – reminded that whether it is thick, thin, backward, forward, up, or down, God remains steadfastly present and gracious (cf. Romans 8:38-39). So, we remain grounded in the Holy Spirit, in a faith that is honest and hopeful.

Once more, thank you. Thanks for your willingness to keep showing up for each other and for our neighbor. I pray that God continue to sustain you and bless the congregation of First Lutheran Church, all for the sake of God's glory and love of neighbor.

On ahead we go. Together. In Christ Jesus. Peace be with you

*The Rev. Joe Skogmo, Lead Pastor.*

p.s. Please check out the myriads of other ministry reports in our Annual Report by fantastic individuals and ministry teams at FLC, and after which, I believe you'll be enormously proud of your community!

# Youth & Family Ministry

Olivia Sauer, Youth & Family Ministry Director | olivia@firstlutheranchurch.com  
920.860.4655 | office hours : Mon-Thurs 8:30am-4pm



## YFM Needs You!

Summer may have just started, but our eyes are already on the fall! Soon the halls of the Ed Wing will be buzzing and overflowing with energy - we can't wait. Are you interested in helping the YFM program this school year?

We are looking for folks to teach or assist with:

**Wednesday School** | PreK-5th grade - 12 needed

**Pre Confirmation** | 6th grade - 2-3 needed

**Confirmation Small Group** | 7th & 8th grade - 6-8 needed

**The Vine co-leaders** | 9th-12th grade - 1-2 needed

### Can teens teach? YES!

- ✓ Must be 9th grade and older to teach Wednesday School
- ✓ Must be 11th grade and older to lead Confirmation

For more information, or to sign up, contact Olivia.

## Vacation Bible School

June 22 - 25 | 9am - 3pm

VBS week will soon be here!



## Free High School Lunch

July 23 @ 12- 1pm

at Woodfire Pizza

Current FLC High School students - this ones for you! Open to youth entering 9th -12th grade.

## Middle School Bonfire and Game-Night

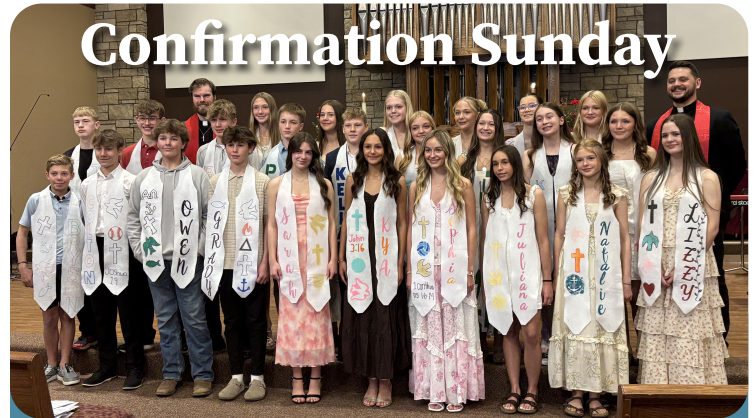
August 23 @ 6-8pm

Join Pastor Joe and Olivia outside on the lawn for an epic evening of lawn games and a bonfire!

## Confirmation Student and Parent/Guardian Orientation

September 2 @ 6pm

## Confirmation Sunday



Over the past two years, our confirmation students have put in a tremendous amount of work learning about Lutheranism and the Bible. Pr. Joe and I couldn't be more excited about their accomplishment. Please join me in welcoming our 25 newly confirmed First Lutheran Church members: *Kellan Ask, Ramsey Badurek, Lizzy Bergman, Katelyn Bjorklund, Juliana Evans, Kynley Gigstead, Colton Heden, Kynslee Klotz, Lena Lohnes, Brayden Malecka, Grady Marchus, Sarah Melbostad, Natalie Mork, Trevor Mosher, Morgan Mouw, Aliyah Okeson, Brennan Olson, Etta Rotter, Sophia Simison, Kya Smith, Hannah Sundby, Presley Swenson, Bryson Udby, Owen Vogt, and Parker White.*

## Teacher Orientation

September 2 @ 7pm

This is for PreK-5th Grade Teachers only.

## Registration for '26-'27 Programming Opens July 21

SUN/WED School (PreK-5th grade)

Confirmation (6th-8th grade)

The Vine (9th-12th grade)

*Congratulations  
FLC Seniors!*



## A Note From Olivia

Now that I've completed a full year of the YFM cycle, I can confidently say I'm exactly where I'm meant to be. I truly enjoy both the highs and the challenges that come with K-12 programming. As I continue to add my own touch and make thoughtful changes, it's helping us become more intentional and effective, while keeping our focus on what matters most—creating a loving and welcoming place of worship and community for every child who walks through our doors.

We want each child to know they are deeply loved—not only by God, but also by their church family. With the support and dedication of our teams, teachers, subs, church staff, and pastors, I believe we've made great strides toward that goal, and we can continue building on this mission for years to come.

Thank you all for your ongoing support, encouragement, and prayers for our Youth and Family Ministry.

## summer music opportunities

We're always looking for musicians to provide special music during our summer worship services! Whether you play piano or another instrument, sing solo or with others— all ages and groups are welcome.

Talk to Karen to schedule a Sunday and share your gifts with our church family.

Karen Bimberg, Music Ministry Director  
[karen@fristlutheranchurch.com](mailto:karen@fristlutheranchurch.com)



## Good Gifts

by Patti Cummins

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-25*

Poem: "High, Wide and Handsome", by Rhonda Gail Shelton-Flem

*High, wide and handsome. That's how life should be.  
Wide and high as a prairie sky; open, clean and free.  
Handsomely we gaze upon the God we understand.  
Sharing all the joy He gives and joining hand in hand.  
No more fences of barbed wire that entangle us with hate.  
Escape the enemy with the sword; it's there and never late.  
High, wide and handsome; honest, clean and free.  
As 'young as spring, adventurous thing' life should and life can be.*

What's offered in the Bible verse and poem are wonderful gifts we all want our children to have. I was reminded of that recently when Oaklyn said she was "going outside" on a drizzly day.

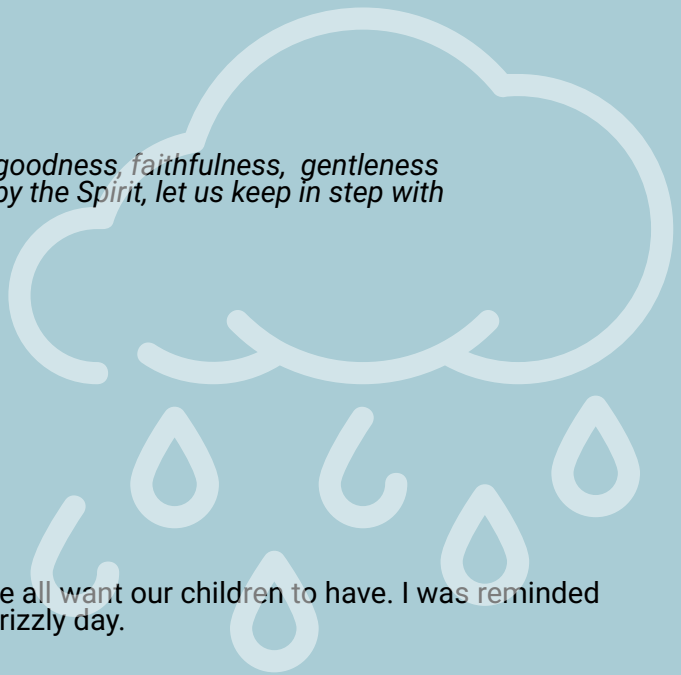
I asked, "Why do you want to go outside, it's raining?"

"Of course, I want to play in the rain!" It seemed so obvious to her.

It reminded me how much, as a child, I used to love dancing outside as raindrops softly fell, and how much my soccer kids loved slipping and sliding on a muddy field when it was warm enough to play in the rain.

God desires to gather His children under His wing as a protective hen. We are blessed to have others in our sphere who carry that God-instilled instinct -to protect, provide for, and nurture our children. We will soon have Luther Crest here for Vacation Bible School, as they follow God's example of leading "with cords of human kindness, with ties of love."

It's wonderful witnessing the transforming power of God's word and love for these kids, and I am grateful for all they are able to hold onto for future days.



## FLC Quilters

The FLC Quilters recently boxed up and shipped 44 quilts to Lutheran World Relief and donated 21 quilts to local organizations.

The quilters meet every Tuesday at 8am, all skill levels are welcome to join!



## Lutheran World Relief School Kit Collection

Before you know it back to school sales will starting! The Women of FLC will once again be collecting items to assemble School Kits. The following items are currently being accepted. New items only please.

- 70 sheet notebooks
- box of 16 or 24 crayons
- pencil sharpener
- 30 centimeter ruler
- blunt tip scissors
- unsharpened No. 2 pencils
- black or blue pens
- 2 1/2 in eraser

Items can be brought to the church office.

For more information on Lutheran World Relief or School Kits, visit: [www.lwr.org](http://www.lwr.org)



## Become a First Lutheran Church Helping Hand!

Helping Hands Ministry is a volunteer group established in 2002 at First Lutheran Church with a mission statement that says: "The First Lutheran Helping Hands exists to assist the frail, elderly, and disabled of the Detroit Lakes area with routine minor repairs and home maintenance, through recruitment, training, and the sending of First Lutheran members and friends in the spirit of Matthew 25:35 ". . . **for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me . . .**"

The original team consisted of 16 volunteers from First Lutheran. They constructed birdhouses, toolbox kits, handicap ramps, flower boxes, playground sets, repaired windows, doors, screens, steps, installed mailboxes, railings, curtain rods, Christmas lights, hung pictures, erected flag poles.

Maybe you have been a volunteer in the past or maybe you have been on the receiving side of a volunteer's efforts. This program has been dormant for a while and needs a boost! A new era of volunteers is needed! As you can tell, Helping Hands focuses on directly addressing immediate, practical household projects that require attention. These small-scale acts, when organized, provide significant support to congregational members.

If you would like to become a Helping Hands volunteer and are interested in further information, please contact Paul Weber, 218-849-4354.

Helping Hands is being resurrected by the First Lutheran Church Adult Faith Formation Team. They will seek to improve lives through compassionate action.

# Thank You!

We would like to thank everyone who donated items to the Lutheran World Relief Health Care Kits. We were able to ship a total of 67 kits.

Thanks!  
the Women of First Lutheran

# Adult Faith Formation

Looking ahead to this summer and the 2026 – 2027 programmatic year, here are some events that are currently being planned for your growth and enjoyment:

## Adult Vacation Bible School August 3 and 10 @ 5:30-8pm

This year's VBS will feature a study of the Book of Revelation, and will include music, art, food, beverage, and FUN! We will be meeting outside on the green space and in the dining room during this event. Connor Camrud is chairing this summer's Adult Vacation Bible School.

## The Life & Writings of St. Francis of Assisi Sunday, October 4 and 11 @ 10:30am

In memory of the 800th anniversary of St. Francis of Assisi's death, Dr. Roy Hammerling will present the life, writings, poems, and songs of St. Francis that have influenced Christians worldwide. St. Francis and his charismatic love of life drew followers; he founded the Franciscan Order which is the largest religious order in the Catholic Church. Lutherans owe much to St. Francis.

## The Chosen, Season 3 January | Dates TBD

Wade Dutton has agreed to lead season 3 of The Chosen starting in early January following the same format that has been used for the viewing and discussing of seasons 1 and 2.

More details will be shared as these and other events are offered. If you have ideas for book and Bible studies, films, activities, speakers that might impact the AFF ministry, please visit with AFF team members or FLC office staff. As tenure on the AFF team rotates as per the organizational charter, new members are needed. If you are interested in joining the team, let the FLC office staff know.

Thank you again for joining and participating as the Adult Faith Formation ministry here at First Lutheran Church grows and develops.

## Meals for Many



Food continues to be one of the most requested items by the guests served by the Agape Ministry. In the last 30 days over 60 frozen meals have been distributed those in need.

On May 19, twelve FLC volunteers gathered to chop, cook & assemble 60 home cooked freezer meals. A big thanks to Lisa Webber & Sonny Thomas who helped organize the event. *In addition, we received over 50 homemade, frozen meals from our friends at St. Luke's Episcopal Church ~~ Thank you to everyone who has donated time and resources to provide food for the hungry in our community!*

*If you are interested in making freezer meals, please contact Sara or Sonny to coordinate.*

Sara Peterson  
Director of Community Engagement  
[sara@firstlutheranchurch.com](mailto:sara@firstlutheranchurch.com)



## Thank You!

Thank you to the **Detroit Lakes Lion Club** for their generous donation of \$500 to the Agape Fund! Your contribution will go a long way to provide assistance to our neighbors in need!

# Noisy Offering Beneficiaries

April | Lakes Area YES! Network  
May | Lutheran World Relief  
June | Teac Haiti  
July | Lutheran Disaster Response

## Memorials

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

### Agape

*In honor of Grace Dunham*  
given by Terry & Sandi Kemmer

### Broadcast

*In memory of Judie Wood*  
given by the Ruth Circle

### Dream Big

*In memory of Helen Fasteen*  
given by the Dean & Sue Berg  
*In memory of Lavonne Askelson*  
given by the Pat Zurn  
*In memory of Darryl Swanson*  
given by the Pat Zurn

### General

*In memory of Judie Wood*  
given by Dean & Sue Berg

### Music

*In memory of Judie Wood*  
given by Brad & Erin Erickson  
*In honor of Grace Dunham*  
given by Rick & Shan Manke

### Undesignated

*In memory of Don Johnson*  
given by Adrienne Buboltz  
*In honor of Rich Johnson*  
given by Adrienne Buboltz

Shan & Belinda --  
keeping FLC looking  
good inside & out!



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

# SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Worship with us on Sundays  
@ 8:30am (inside) &  
10:30am *outside* on the lawn (bring a lawnchair!)

May 24 - Aug 30

## Thank You!

First Lutheran Church ,  
Thank you for partnering with White Earth Investment Initiative's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program during the 2026 tax season! Your generous contributions of meeting space and resources made a significant difference for families and individuals living in our communities!

## YOU'VE BEEN DRAFTED!

### FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

### MINISTRY BOOT CAMP

COME LEARN ABOUT

- USHERING (INDOOR & OUTDOOR)
- COMMUNION (INDOOR & OUTDOOR)
- FELLOWSHIP HOSTING
- SLIDE SHOW HELPER
- GREETING
- TEAM BUILDING AND MORE!

**JULY 2ND**

LUNCH AND DINNER PROVIDED!

0900AM-1200PM & 0400PM-0700PM

### SERVE WITH EXCELLENCE. LEAD WITH GRACE

MORNING AND EVENING SESSIONS

CALL OR EMAIL SONNY TO SIGN UP

SONNY@FIRSTLUTHERANCHURCH.COM  
218.847.5656



End of the year snapshots! We ended the year with full hearts ~~ enjoy the summer, we can't wait to start again in the fall! Save the Date: Rally Wednesday is September !



Stay Connected!



[firstlutheranchurch.com](http://firstlutheranchurch.com)

## Worship With Us!

Sundays | 8:30am & 10:30am (outside)

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

Online:  
[firstlutheranchurch.com](http://firstlutheranchurch.com)

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