October 2026

the first messenger



First Lutheran Church

Opening Doors to Life in Christ

September Calendar

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

Worship With Us!

Sundays @ 9:30am & Wednesdays @ 6pm

Theology on Tap
October 1 @ 7pm at Bucks Mill Brewing

St Francis of Assisi
October 4 & 11 @ 10:30am

New Member Welcome
October 7 & 11

Ruth Circle
October 8 @ 1:30pm

Office Closed | Indigenous People's Day
October 12

Rebekah Circle
October 13@ 9am

No Oasis - Fall Break
October 14 & 15

Theology on Tap
October 15 @ 7pm at Bucks Mill Brewing

October 22
High School Pizza Lunch

Vision Council Meeting
October 27 @ 5:30pm

Weekly Activities

Quilters
Tuesday @ 8:30am

Men's Daybreak Bible Study
Wed @ 6:30am at the Holiday Inn

Wednesday Night

Oasis Meal 5-6pm
Worship Service 6-6:30pm
Wednesday School, Confirmation &
The Vine 6:30-7pm
Jubilate Choir practice @ 7:15pm

Worship Team Rehearsal
Wednesday @ 5pm

Women's Bible Study
Thursday @ 8am



CHRISTIAN REFLECTIONS

As I was driving to church this morning, I was thinking how truly blessed we are living here in Detroit Lakes (ask me in February if I still feel this way). I mean, think about it. The leaves are beginning to change and soon there will be radiant colors of yellow, orange and red. How truly glorious!

And the weather! Comfortably warm days and cool nights, perfect for the best sleep of the year with windows open.

And the sports! Football and cross country, hunting, late season fishing… plenty of opportunities for watching and participating.

And the opportunity to worship! Diversity of churches and places of worship, the ability to pick and choose.

It all reminds me of a Norman Rockwell print (younger readers may want to research this artist if you're unfamiliar), where life is indeed grand.

Now contrast this picture with other places in our world today. Air raid sirens going off at all times of day and night, warning of incoming missiles. Major flash floods bearing down from surrounding hills, threatening the very existence of our town. Hurricanes, fires, or anything else that causes us to fear for our very lives.

AND MOST IMPORTANT, we don't have to worship in secret because we have religious freedom! Not all are so fortunate.

My friends, we are truly blessed to live in this place. Where we can enjoy our surroundings, where we can live in peace, where we can worship the God that loves us.

Part of this may be "luck of the draw". Our geographical placement is not necessarily preordained. But our "spiritual placement" is a different thing altogether. As people of faith, we believe that our good fortune is not random, but rather the result of God's love for us.

In Isaiah 32: 18 we read:

"My people will abide in a peaceful habitation,
in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places."

And another of my favorites: Matthew 6:33:

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Yes, my friends, we are truly blessed. In part it's because of where we reside. But mostly because we are loved, and Jesus walks with us always.

May God's abundant blessings be with you all….happy autumn!

Peace, *Barry*



Summer Book Reviews

by Lead Pastor, Joe Skogmo

***The Bible Says So* by Dan McClellan** | Over the summer I read a book by a biblical scholar that, if you're not ready for it, might be quite challenging, if not destabilizing. It challenges a lot of assumptions many of us Christians make about Scripture, but in so doing, empowers a person to interact with the Bible with greater depth and intellectual honesty.

Dan McClellan's + is a thoughtful, accessible, and eye-opening guide to how the Bible actually works. McClellan is a trained biblical scholar and public theologian who brings clarity to the complexities of Scripture, without turning it into a weapon.

In the book, I think he does two important things: 1) he neither hides from the ugly parts of the Bible, 2) nor does he insert into Scripture what is not there.

I appreciated his approach to Scripture (rooted in context, biblical languages, and history), which aligns surprisingly well with how we Lutherans already read the Bible: Christ-centered, careful interpretation, and aware that Scripture is both divinely inspired and deeply human.

On that note, a quick reminder: we Lutherans do not worship the Bible. We worship the One the Bible reveals. We do not see the Bible as the Truth itself, but a witness to it…and like all witnesses, Scripture must be read carefully, with attention to context, perspective, and intent. Scripture is authoritative and of utmost importance, but it is not a magical object (and certainly not a weapon).

So, for those who take the Bible seriously but not simplistically, this book is a gift. It challenges assumptions; it asks us to grow in our understanding of it, not abandon it. And, again, reader beware. This book doesn't aim to offer a devotional experience. This is not for the faint of heart, but what it might lack in devotional warmth, it makes up for in wisdom.
It's not a "feel good" read, and it doesn't offer the kind of spiritual intimacy you might find in a daily devotion, but I still think it equips the reader with confidence. Confidence that Scripture can handle our questions, our curiosity, and even our disagreements, because God's Word is living and transcendent, not merely confined to ancient texts.

Next Review: *Christ in the Rubble* by Munther Isaac | Did you know there are Lutherans in Gaza? This powerful book is more than theological musing, but a practice of listening to a pastor whose congregation is living through war, displacement, genocide, and profound loss. Writing from Bethlehem, Palestinian Lutheran pastor, Munther Isaac, offers an urgent plea for the global Church to see, name, and grieve the suffering of the Palestinian people.

He argues that too often Christians have overlooked, or even justified, their suffering. So, with impressive precision, Isaac reflects upon history, biblical theology, and current horrors to challenges readers to ask what it means to proclaim the gospel when entire communities experience violence and genocidal occupation. Whether you agree with every conclusion Isaac reaches or not, his witness deserves to be taken seriously by all who claim to be Christians in God's universal church.

Isaac's witness emphasizes core Lutheran theologies, most notably, Luther's theology of the cross. Luther's theology of the cross teaches us to look for God not first in power, victory, or certainty, but among the broken and suffering. Isaac presses that core theology into the present atrocities in Gaza, reminding us that Christ knows what it's like to be oppressed. Isaac's central claim is intentionally provocative: if we confess Christ crucified, then we must also be willing to recognize Christ wherever people are crucified by injustice, violence, genocide, and indifference.

In this way, Isaac's work also echoes Jürgen Moltmann's conviction that the crucified God is not detached from human agony but enters fully into it, feeling it with those who suffer.

This is not an easy book, nor is it meant to be. It will challenge many readers, particularly where theology and current politics intersect. I found it compelling, deeply informative, and impossible to dismiss. Christ in the Rubble offers an important reminder that following Jesus means refusing to look away from human suffering, and asking where the crucified and risen Christ is calling the Church to stand today.

Next Review: *God and the Gay Christian* by Matthew Vines | This is one of those books that might feel controversial or ideological, but my basic review of this book is: whether you agree with his conclusions or not, Vines offers impressive biblical scholarship that serious Christians must wrestle with if they are to have biblical and theological integrity.

This book is written by a Christian who identifies as gay and who has spent years studying Scripture and engaging questions of faith, sexuality, and the Church. Vines offers a thoughtful and deeply personal argument that faithful Christian discipleship and a gay Christian identity are compatible.

Again, whether you agree with his conclusions or not, this book invites us to listen carefully to the experiences of LGBTQ Christians who are seeking to follow Jesus with sincerity and devotion.

At its heart, this book is about the interpretation of Scripture. Vines examines passages traditionally used in discussions about homosexuality and argues that many Christians have misunderstood their historical and cultural contexts. His conclusions challenge long held interpretations within much of the Christian tradition, and readers from different theological perspectives will engage his arguments differently.

As Lutherans, we confess that we are justified by grace through faith, not because we have perfectly understood every theological question, but because God's love in Christ comes to us as a gift. We also confess that Scripture is the living Word of God, to be read with humility, prayer, and a constant focus on Christ. Questions about Scripture and human sexuality deserve that same careful attention. Vines' book invites the Church to consider how we speak about one another and how we interpret Scripture.

This is not a book that will answer every question or resolve every disagreement, but it is a book that encourages Christians to move beyond assumptions and into conversation. At its best, the Church strives to be a place where difficult questions can be had in ways that echo Christ's love. God and the Gay Christian is an invitation to listen more deeply, engage Scripture with humility and openness, and remember that every person we encounter is someone for whom Christ died and, therefore, someone Christ loves to death.

***With all three of these books, I suppose I could close out by saying this: Because we trust Christ, we don't need to fear complexity, and sometimes faith is about maturely dealing with difficult questions with an open heart, even if we never fully find the answers.

I read a couple of other stirring books this summer (Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, Paulo Reire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, John O'Leary's *On Fire*, and Joel Whitebook's biography of Sigmund Freud). Perhaps I'll offer some reviews on those in coming newsletters. Let me know if my book reviews would be of interest and I'll try to keep them coming!

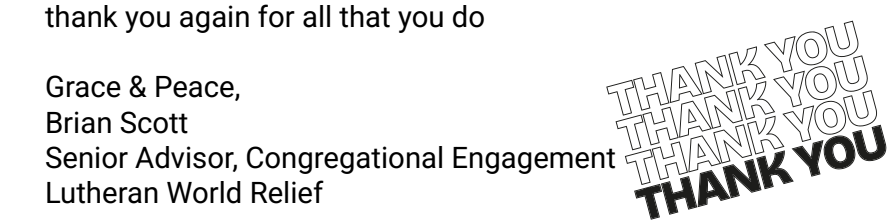
Peace,
Pr. Joe

Pastor Joe & Barry,
I owe you and the people of First a big thank you! Thank you for the recent gift ($784) your congregation shared with LWR this month (August). It has been a summer of emergencies - both global and domestic - and your support is now more important than ever. Thank you for partnering with us in sharing the love of God in tangible ways with people all around the world.

And thank you as well for your partnership over the years - at least since 1999! The generous compassion of your congregation has made it possible to do such things as educate girls in Sierra Leone, help farmers in Peru and Indonesia, offer hope to displaced children and families in the D.R.C. and care for children in Tanzania.

I hope you enjoy these last days of summer. I look forward to my next visit with you and the people (and Trolls) of Detroit Lakes. Until then, blessings on your ministry and thank you again for all that you do

Grace & Peace,
Brian Scott
Senior Advisor, Congregational Engagement
Lutheran World Relief

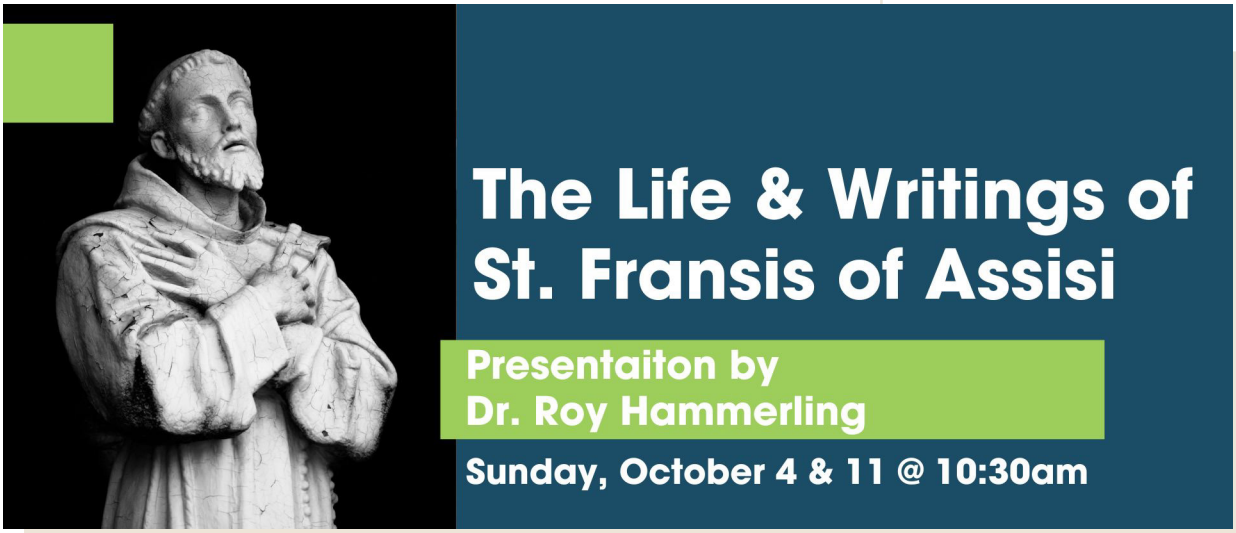


Agape Blessing Closet Needs

As our weather cools, the needs of our Blessing Closet quickly change. Currently we are in need of the following cold weather items:

- winter jackets
- winter boots and shoes
- warm socks
- long sleeved shirts & sweatshirts
- gloves
- blankets / sleeping bags

Other items always needed
- reusable shopping bags
- soap, shampoo, conditioner, lotion, lip balm, deodorant, etc.



Join us in October for a two part series celebrating the 800th anniversary of St. Fransis death.
St. Francis of Assisi is one of the unlikeliest saints and heroes of Christianity. Born into a wealthy family, Francis gave away all his riches to the poor and lepers and lived the life of a beggar. A lover of God's creation he had a unique relationship with animals, founded the largest religious order in the Catholic Church, and even Lutherans have pastors who belong to the order of St. Francis. His famous song, "The Canticle of Creatures," is still sung in Lutheran churches. In 1979 Pope John Paul II declared him the Patron Saint of Ecology. A famous prayer, "Lord make me an instrument of your peace," is attributed to him and is a staple of Lutheran worship. October 4th, the anniversary of his death, is celebrated yearly in churches as the blessing of animals' day. Many of his disciples, like Roger Bacon (the famous scientist), Maximillian Kolbe (who was martyred in a Nazi Concentration Camp), and Richard Rohr (who is a popular spiritual author today) continue to spread his influence.

Dr. Roy Hammerling will be leading the following sessions, we look forward to seeing you in October!
October 4: The Life of St. Francis
October 11: The writings, poems, and songs of St. Francis: reflect his influence in our world

Youth & Family Ministry

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

Fall Kick-Off





Thank you to all who made Rally Sunday/Wednesday possible. Psst, that means you! I know I had a blast, and hope you all did too. We are in the thick of this programming year now, and oh how I have missed it. I'm looking forward to another amazing year with all of our FLC children and youth.

Registration fun facts!

- We have over 150 students registered
- Our high school youth group has doubled in size over last year
- There are 20 high schoolers teaching Wednesday school!

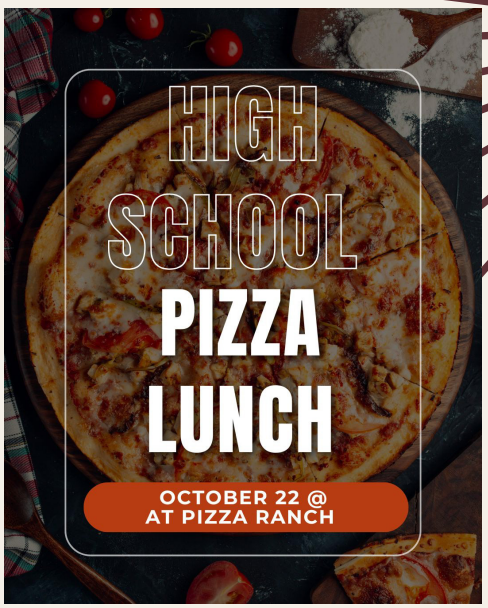
PreK-5th Grade Service Projects '26-'27

Parents and Guardians are encouraged to attend with their child.

10/7 | Kindergarten - *Helping those in Crisis w/ Essentia EMS*
11/4 | 3rd Grade - *Helping the Homeless w/ FLC's Social Assistance*
1/13 | 4th Grade - *Helping the Elderly w/ FLC's Visitation Team*
2/24 | 5th Grade - *Helping Victims of Abuse w/ Lakes Crisis*
3/18 | 2nd Grade - *Helping Animals w/ Humane Society of the Lakes*
4/21 | 1st Grade - *Helping our Planet w/ Becker County Environmental Services*



In September, some of our littlest friends at First Lutheran had the opportunity to participate in a service project that focused on helping the hungry. Together, with the the Becker County Food Pantry, we made birthday boxes for their guests. These boxes have all the essentials to throw an awesome birthday party for any age!



High School Pizza Lunches Are Back!

October 22 & November 19
@ Pizza Ranch

All FLC high school students who are able to leave campus during lunch are invited to join Pr. Joe, and other church staff at Pizza Ranch for a free lunch!

Imagine More! ELCA Youth Gathering 2027

Every three years, thousands of high schoolers and their adult leaders from across the ELCA come together for the ELCA Youth Gathering. It's not just an event but a movement in which faith ignites and community comes alive. Through inspiring speakers, experiential learning and transformative connections, young people experience the church in bold, unforgettable ways.

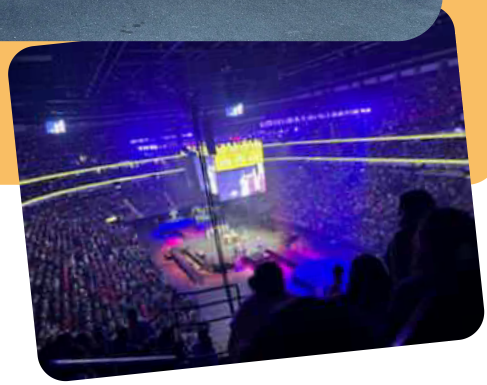
Each night, participants share a unique faith experience through high-energy worship and powerful storytelling. The Gathering is an opportunity to ask big questions, grow in faith and be part of something bigger than yourself.





2027 Youth Gathering - Imagine More!
Minneapolis | June 28 - July 22
Open to all current 9th-12th graders
Cost: $200; $50 down payment at registration.
Watch for sign-up information in mid October!

To God – whose power now at work in us can do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine. - Ephesians 3:20 (Inclusive)



Looking Ahead

October 7 | ***Kindergarten Service Project*** - Helping those in Crisis - Essentia EMS
October 14 | ***MEA Break;*** No Oasis, Worship, or PreK-12th grade programming
October 18 | ***MEA Break;*** No Kids Fellowship
October 22 | **FREE High School Lunch** | at Pizza Ranch. All FLC High school students invited.
November 18 | ***Turkey Bingo 5-7:30pm*** | *more info coming* | This will be the only event taking place. No worship or PreK-12th grade programming.
November 19 | **FREE High School Lunch** | at Pizza Ranch. All FLC High school students invited.
November 25 | **Thanksgiving Break**; No Oasis, Worship, or PreK-12th grade programming

Noisy Offering Beneficiaries

September | FLC Youth & Family Ministry
October | Churches United

August Financial Snapshot

Actual Revenue, YTD*:	$114,133.06
Budgeted Revenue, YTD:	$112,345.00
Favorable/(unfavorable):	$1,788.06

*unaudited

Congregational Life

Baptisms
10/4 - Harrison Bergquist
10/11 - Coleman Green



The Tooth

by Patti Cummins

I lift up my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. Psalm 121:1-2

“Grandma, I really don’t want to do this” Oaklyn stated emphatically.

We were on our way to the dentist to have a stubborn tooth pulled. Oaklyn had loosened and pulled other teeth out herself, but this one was stubbornly refusing to leave so the new tooth underneath it could grow into its own.

“I know Hon, but you know it has to come out, you just got over an infection because of it.” Rationalization does not work well with 8-year-olds facing an unknown experience. Encouragement and confidence were my next tactic. “I know you can do this and how strong you are. After this, you will know you can do hard things.”

Fear brought forth a robust “I still really don’t want to do this!” with just the slightest bit of resignation in her voice.

That broke me. “Grandma will be with you the whole time.” The rigidity in her body and tension in her voice and breathing diminished slightly knowing she would not be alone

The tooth proved to be more tenacious than the dentist or her assistant anticipated. Soon, their voices took on their own tension. The anesthetic was not up to the task, and Oaklyn’s wringing and twisting hands divulged her distress.

Her hands started to relax as I wrapped mine protectively over hers. Warmth started seeping in to replace the cold clamminess. Her body started relaxing. The tooth finally surrendered and allowed the dentist to wriggle it out. The dentist and others who came to see it declared they had never seen a tooth that looked so small above the gum have such long, wide, curved roots.

Oaklyn felt somewhat vindicated. But she also felt the care and support of those surrounding her. She acknowledged her next appointment as a matter-of-fact, but once in the car headed home, she expressed her relief, “Next time I only have to get my teeth cleaned.”

We all face hard things. Whether it is a difficult situation beyond our control, something we carry that we want to overcome, or a significant decision we need to make, sometimes we forget where our help comes from.

It could be a professional like the dentist who used her knowledge, skill, and compassion to help Oaklyn. It could be the community around us that acknowledges, encourages, and supports us. And we always have God’s words: Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

When I walk through hard things, the Lord’s Prayer comes to me over and over again. And it reminds me that, in my distress, I am never alone. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER?

Simply sign up - it's that easy!
Scan the QR code or contact Andi in the church office: 218-847-5656.

Our next New Member Welcome is October 7 & 11.



Children's Christmas Store

December 5



What is the Children's Christmas Store?

The Children's Christmas Store (CCS) is a Ministry within First Lutheran Church in Detroit Lakes that began in 2008. The CCS is a year-round ministry that debuts one day per year by inviting low-income children in to Christmas shop for members of their family and learn the spirit of giving. The Children are paired with a shopper helper that walks them through the "store" and helps them shop for the people on their list. Each gift in the store costs $1, keeping the entire experience affordable for each family. After shopping each child is taken to the wrapping room and each gift is wrapped and labeled for them to take home to put under their Christmas tree.

The CCS is completely run by donations from the congregation and community. During the "off season" the donations need to be recruited, organized, cleaned, fixed and paired with others. There is also networking that happens year-round to get monetary donations, donation of gifts and connecting with organizations who work with low-income children that can benefit most from the CCS. Come fall, the planning starts to recruit volunteers, advertise the event and invite children.

Who can attend?

Anyone can attend but the store intentionally advertises to children of low socio-economic status.

How can I help?

- **DONATIONS!** We'll take almost anything you clean out of your home. The children will be shopping for kids of all ages and adults.
- *We do not take clothing, shoes, etc that would require the child to know a specific size.*
- You can also **buy new or used items** when you are out and about and find a good deal.
- Check out our amazon wish list for items you can order for the store or ideas of what we need. (Scan QR code at the top of this page)
- We are always low on items for **teen males and men.**
- **Volunteer** for the event on the set up crew, a gift wrapper, shopping helper, welcome table, cashier or one of the many other roles! Sign up coming in November.



Memorials

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

Agape
In memory of Ruth Olson, given by Susie Reitmeier, Carl & Janice Fingalson | **In memory of Betty Fischer,** given by Dean & Sue Berg | **In memory of John & Evelyn Gro,** given by Ardys Horner

Building
In memory of Betty Fischer, given by Adrienne Buboltz

Dream Big
In memory of Ruth Olson, given by Rick & Shan Manke, Barry & Judy Fewson, Gail Colby | **In memory of Betty Fischer,** given by Dean & Sue Berg

General
In memory of Betty Fischer, given by Dean & Sue Berg

Music
In memory of Ronald Sauer, given by Karen & Cliff Bimberg

South Lawn Trees
In memory of Ruth Olson, given by Les Heimark,Terry Tellmony, Cheryl Olson, Paul & Brenda Muckenhirn, Jim Pukarski, Shawn Wischnak, Dick Arnston, Jim Anderson, Paul Stender, Larry Bauder Holly Heisserer, Jess Schewe, Lita Jensen, Gretchen & Gordon Henrikson, Ardys Horner, Mary Schutz, Brett & Kerry Petsinger, Curtis Loken

Undesignated
In memory of Ruth Olson, given by Lynn Hummel

SOCKTOBER

WARM SOCKS + CUTE SOCKS + TALL SOCKS +
SHORT SOCKS + ADULT SOCKS + KIDS SOCKS



During the month of October,
We are collecting **all** kinds of
NEW socks to fill our
Blessing Closet.

Bring your donations to church and place them on the altar in the sanctuary or in the collection bin outside.

First Lutheran Church

Stay Connected!

firstlutheranchurch.com

Worship With Us!

Sundays | 9:30am
Wednesdays | 6pm

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

Online:
firstlutheranchurch.com

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

First Lutheran Church | 912 Lake Avenue, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501 | 218.847.5656 | flc@firstlutheranchurch.com