

First Word

The newsletter of First Lutheran Church • Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Lent—Slowing Down in Ways Anticipated and Unanticipated



By Pastor Jason Burggraff

By the time you are reading this issue of First Word, we'll be in the middle of the season of Lent—halfway to Easter. I pray you are being blessed by

the opportunities to sing, share, and learn more about the hymnody of the church this Lenten season at First Lutheran Church. In our hymnody, we have much to celebrate and share—not just in the beautiful musical tradition of the Church and this congregation—but particularly in the death and resurrection of Jesus, for your sake. May our music and words proclaim this truth!

The word "lent" has its etymological roots in words for springtime, when the days are getting longer, or lengthening. Liturgically, of course, we know that the season of Lent is the 40 days (not including Sundays) before Easter. This time in the history of the church has been focused on slowing down, hearing God's Word, studying the catechism,

dying and being raised with Christ in daily repentance and renewal. In the early church this was a time of catechesis for those who would be baptized on the Easter Vigil worship service.

Here at First Lutheran, Lent is a time for us to gather in worship more often. It is also a time for our 5th graders and their families to be studying the catechism and be preparing for their 1st Communion on Maundy Thursday. In the midst of these opportunities to hear God's Word and sing the hymns of the faith together, we give thanks for this slowing down, even though it may feel like the world has forgotten how to slow down, at least in order to hear God's Word.

One of the unanticipated ways that we have slowed down in the life of First Lutheran is with the pausing of our call process for a third pastor. One of the suggestions made in crafting the budget that was passed at our annual meeting on Sunday, February 4, was a pausing of this call process until regular or pledged giving could comfortably sustain the addition of this third pastoral position. While this pause is not what we expected—it does allow a slowing down for the call

committee to further hone what we are looking for in a pastor working with evangelism and outreach. This slowing down also gives our congregation, leadership, and staff the opportunity to evaluate where we are, where we are going, and how the Holy Spirit is leading us there.

President Kedik in his remarks at our annual meeting mentioned budgeting for an awareness campaign to ensure the community of Sioux Falls knows of this gem of a congregation where God's Word is our greatest treasure and Christ's forgiveness is the reason for our outreach and is shared in wonderful worship services, music, education, and proclamation.

I give thanks for you partners in the Gospel of Christ. The song of its proclamation has a rich heritage here at First Lutheran. By the power of the Holy Spirit, when this Gospel is at the center of what we do, we have a rich future as well. I look forward to singing this song with all of you for the rest of the Lenten season, into Easter, and beyond!



figmus of Our Faith

This Lenten season, First Lutheran has the beautiful opportunity to explore the hymnody of the Church more deeply. Our midweek preaching will focus on a different hymn of the church each week and scripture readings related to that hymn.

HOLY WEER MARCH 24-31

Palm Sunday 9am and 11am

Maundy Thursday 11:15am and 6:30pm
First Communion Milestone 6:30pm
Good Friday 11:15am and 6:30pm
6:30pm Services YouTube.com/flcsf
Easter Vigil 5pm

Easter Sunday Worship 7am, 9am, 11am

Read more: flcsf.org/lent

Ministry and Board Updates

March Happenings: Youth and Family Ministries

How lucky we are to be serving a good and gracious God! This month allows for many ways our youth and families can be engaged in fellowship at FLC and learn about Jesus!

Starting off the month with our 1st Grade Milestone, we'll be teaching the Lord's Prayer and what we are actually saying when we pray it.

Our 5th graders have a busy month of First Communion classes on March 6, 13, and 20 with their First Communion at the Maundy Thursday worship service on March 28. This is a fun time for questions about what Jesus did on the cross and what bread and wine have to do with it! Along with the lessons, we involve them



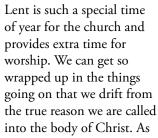
in hands-on bread making and wooden chalice painting projects. It is so fun to see these students learn about this important Sacrament with their families.

The freshman class has been attending Youth Group this year where they are putting what they believe into action in relationships and activities. On Sunday, March 10, we will work

with them to put what they believe into words as they write their Faith Statements for Confirmation. This is a challenging task but helpful for these teenagers as they navigate the world of faith outside of the walls of First Lutheran.

Later in the month, we will celebrate Palm Sunday with a palm parade! We would love it if your children want to walk around the Sanctuary waving palm branches with us to celebrate the kick off to Holy Week.

On Easter morning, your family can explore the empty tomb and pick up an Easter snack bag as you leave worship.



you pray, worship, and reflect this Lenten season, let the Holy Spirit guide and strengthen you for the season ahead.

Looking ahead to SUMMER... We have a few opportunities for you to attend Bible camp with friends or your family! This year FLC is going to Ingham Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camps in July. These camps are open to 2nd-12th graders and are a wonderful way to build relationships and learn more about God in His beautiful creation.

March Special Offering: Emmaus Road Foundation



By Val Peters, Evanglism and Outreach Board Chair

The March Special Offering supports Emmaus Road Foundation (formerly known as LIZWAN). This

organization is a scholarship ministry founded by Pastor Nate Lizarazo; his wife, Pastor Barbara Wangsness; and their daughter, Alicia Lizarazo. Pastor Nate and Pastor Barb both previously served at First Lutheran Church.

Emmaus Road Foundation operates with the mission that "education is the passport to a better life." Evangelism is a large part of their mission with the goal to share God's

love through evangelical witness, make visible the process change caused by the Gospel in all human beings, and help others in becoming aware of the deep meaning and value of their lives in the eyes of Christ. They fulfill all of their missions by providing scholarships for students in Colombia, South America, to attend formal education ranging from



elementary to the university level including formal technical education.

Additionally, Emmaus Road Foundation provides

opportunities for Christian Leadership

development and mission relationships through Casa Emmaus (Hospitality House). At Casa Emmaus, national and international groups (including groups from First Lutheran Church) experience hospitality, mutual reflection, and shared mission commitment.

To learn more about Emmaus Road Foundation, visit fundacioncaminoemaus.org/en/

As you keep this mission in your prayers, please consider financial support by using the Special offering envelopes included with your regular envelopes or in the worship pew. If you do not have one, bring your donation to the Information Desk at church, using "March Special Offering, Emmaus Road Foundation" on the memo line of your check. You may also donate online at flcsf.org/give, through the Church Center app, or by texting any amount to 84321.

Ministry and Board Updates

Updates from the FLC Foundation



By Chris Nelson, Foundation Treasurer

The First Lutheran Church Foundation was established in 1963 with an initial principal of \$2,500. The purpose of

the Foundation is to receive gifts, bequests, and devises in the form of either real or personal property; to hold the principal; and to expend the income derived for educational, charitable, and religious purposes approved or supported by First Lutheran Church.

Through wise stewardship over the years and the generous support of donors, the assets of the Foundation have grown to over \$15 million at year end 2023. The annual distribution to

First Lutheran for year-end 2023 was \$486,089—a record in the history of the Foundation. The first half distribution of \$243,0045 was presented to First Lutheran on January 28.



Such tremendous distributions can only occur with the continued strong support of the members of First Lutheran. Please

remember the First Lutheran Church Foundation in your annual giving and in your wills and estate planning. There are many designated funds to which you can direct your gifts, but an undesignated

> gift allows First Lutheran the most flexibility in the use of the distribution should the areas of ministry change, or an unexpected need arise.

Current board members are Allison Pay Crawford, Vance Goldammer, Larry Hamre, Ben Kyte, Marilyn Korsten, Chris Nelson, Deb Nelson, Randy Olawsky, and Veronica Paulson. Any of the board members would be glad to visit with you about the Foundation and ways you can help support its and

First Lutheran's mission, now and far into the future.

FLCW/WELCA Invite You to Join Us, March 7

Women of First Lutheran—this invitation is for you! The first General Meeting of our First Lutheran Church Women in 2024 will be held March 7 at 10 a.m. in the Gathering Room. (Please note time correction from the February First Word.) Our eight Bible Study Circles meet monthly at various times, but in March you will have an opportunity to join us for one of our four general meetings of the year.

These meetings are a time for prayer, singing, fellowship, education, and good food! We are pleased to announce that former FLC Pastor Jeff Backer will be our guest speaker, and he will share his story of serving as a pastor for St. Dysmas Prison Ministries. Pastor Jeff will also talk about the other prison ministries in South Dakota and how this pastoral call has impacted his personal life.

It is with pleasure that we will also welcome Pastor Tom Stadem and his

wife Judy to tell us about their journey as pastor and pastor's wife. Pastor Tom will also share his vision for our FLC youth ministry program.

We also said good food—yes! A tasty, light breakfast will be served along with

a Lutheran tradition—plenty of hot coffee. So please accept our invitation to be part of our women's program here at First, and mark your calendars

First Lutheran

First Lutheran

Church Women

for our other meetings this year. On May 2 we have an evening salad supper, September 5 is a noon luncheon meeting, and on December 7 we celebrate in the morning for our annual Happy Birthday Jesus gathering.

Our eight Bible Study Circles meet on a variety of days of the week and times of

day, and we are confident that one of these gatherings is just right for you. Please contact copresidents Lola Coon at 605-201-5703 or Marcia

Huffman at 605-360-4168 for more information.

Ministry and Board Updates

How Pledging Affects the Church Budget



By Mason Van Essen, Secretary

Greetings! I am writing to share my perspective as the most recent chair of the Stewardship and Giving board, member of the church council,

member of the previous two call committees, and—as of February member of the executive committee, serving as secretary.

At the annual meeting on February 4, we approved a budget that did not include an allocation for a third pastor's salary, resulting in a pause in the call process for 2024. Many are asking, how did we get

When it comes to fiscal planning for the year, the executive committee and church council can only make plans based on the resources they know, with some degree of certainty, will come in. In addition to several steady income sources (rental income, parking fees, etc.), the most reliable source of income is your pledges.

While non-pledged giving is wonderful and very appreciated, the church cannot, in good faith, make operational decisions with money they cannot accurately anticipate.

For example, the 2023 budget anticipated \$125,544 of non-pledged giving. The actual year-end number? \$21,705. It would obviously be irresponsible to make operational decisions based on numbers that could be off by as much as \$103,839.

Compare that to pledged giving in 2023—\$1.25 million was pledged, and thus, budgeted for. In reality, \$1.26 million was actually given. Now, that's a difference that can be managed responsibly.

Additionally, it's important to note that the number of pledges has declined each year for six straight years (2019-2024).

For 2024, FLC has received 346 pledges compared to 587 pledges in 2019, a 42% decrease. However, the \$1.25 million pledged in 2024 is only an 11% decrease from the peak in that six-year time frame of \$1.44 million pledged in 2020. Translation: fewer households have managed to maintain nearly the same amount of pledged giving.

Though six straight years of declining pledges may seem like bad news, there is much to be hopeful for in 2024. God continues to bless His people!

The 2024 budget passed in February

>>>>>>>>>

included full funding for all of our ministries. We have been blessed with two wonderful pastors and a team of talented staff. Our Foundation provided the church with a record distribution of

> use to cover our significant operating expenses. Most importantly of all, the Gospel continues to be faithfully preached!

\$430,338, which we are able to

What can we do as a congregation to put us on a trajectory to resume the call process for a third pastor in 2025?

We should aim to improve one key number: the percentage of pledging member households.

In 2024, just 21% of households completed a pledge. Regardless of the dollar amounts being pledged, if we could increase that percentage to 25%, 30%, or even 50%(!) of households pledging, First Lutheran's ministries could plan responsibly to make even more of an impact on our community, and, ultimately, call a third pastor.

On behalf of the Stewardship and Giving board and the council, thank you for your generous gifts of time, talent, and treasure. We can truly be confident in God's promise to provide Daily Bread.

Church Leadership, 2024

Officers/Executive Committee

Cami Jacobsen, President Cami Jacobsen, President
Lori Wilbur, Vice-President
Mason Van Essen, Secretary
Randy Olawsky, Treasurer
Brian Aamlid, Member at Large
Lyle Eidsness, Member at Large
Council Members/Board Chairs
Stan Christopherson, Care & Health
Karon Gubbrud, Education &
Discipleship

Val Peters, Evangelism & Outreach Colin Barron, Finance, Property, & Administration

Eric Severson, Stewardship & Giving (note this is a change from the annual

Chad Kucker, Welcome & Community Mary Oyos, Worship & Music Kristin Skogstad, Youth & Family Ben Kyte, Foundation

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Council Updates

November Council Highlights (delayed due to not meeting in Dec.)



By Michael Kedik, Congregational Past-President

Reports

Net income continues to be better than budget primarily due to the personnel budget

being lower with delayed hires. Total revenue is down \$36k (but would be up \$119k if not for the capital campaign misallocations). Bottom line financials are coming in good for 2023. Michael asked those boards who have not yet spent their full budget to spend only as needed and not simply to spend for the sake of spending. Any money not spent will roll into next year's general budget.

Pr. Jason's Report: The call committee continues to work as they search for a third pastor. This time of year gets busy worship-wise, but it's a "fun busy." The Advent theme for this year is "The Clothing of the King," with midweek services on December 6, 13, and 20. We are adapting a devotional that will be primarily online, with paper copies available upon request. The Y&F staff is also working on an Advent calendar. The Bible study on the book of Romans has been fun for Pr. Jason and those who have attended. The ten-week study will conclude in December.

Executive Committee: We don't have an estimate yet on the insurance coverage for 2024, hoping for quotes early December. The insurance industry has told us we may have had a good deal previously. Pr. Tom is expected to start December 1.

Budget Congress

We are currently working on a first, rough draft. We designated April 1 for expenses related to a new pastor. Funds are allocated not knowing who that person will be or when they will begin. We have a general idea on what we might get

from the Foundation, but we don't know specifics at this time. We are still waiting for pledge cards to come in, and revenue projections will be updated throughout the end of the year. Randy added that we'd like boards to keep budgets flat, as increased expenses with a full pastoral staff will add approximately \$200k to 2024 expenses. The more we stay under budget this year, the more we are able to carry into 2024.

- Care and health: This budget will decrease for 2024. Some areas did not have spending, and the board did not feel that needed to be carried. The Delta Dental bus did go up slightly. Only small amounts will be spent through the end of the year. Randy added that boards should look to restricted accounts for additional spending money.
- Education and discipleship: Michael shared that Ryan has resigned as chair. Jodi entered their budget for 2024 as flat compared to this year.
- Evangelism and outreach: Val was unable to attend the meeting. Notes were sent earlier in the week via email. The proposed 2024 budget will be flat to 2023. The training materials account was not used this year, but the board would like to keep the budget the same for 2024 as they look to increase engagement within and outside of the FLC congregation. Both the community engagement and children's outreach budgets will remain the same even they though they weren't used entirely in 2023. The hope is to bring back some of the events (e.g. block party, trunk or treat, neighborhood VBS) that were not done this year due to staffing limitations.
- Finance, property, admin: At this point, we have not yet been billed for the annual audit, so the budgeted

amount of \$14k is assuming an increase for 2024. The tax budget is up with an increase in property taxes. The bank fees budget has gone down significantly with the shift from Vanco to Stripe for automated giving. The computer hardware budget is down with fewer computers needed. Service contracts is up considerably over previous years with the outsourcing of the church's bookkeeping (Ness Tax) and cleaning (Hunt Cleaning). This account also includes things such as armored car deposit pickup, offsite records/archive storage, and alarm system monitoring. The only increase in the campus operation/maintenance section is in grounds maintenance with the planned resealing of all parking lots in 2024. This could also be paid for out of the property reserve account. It was recommended to increase snow removal to \$25k.

- Stewardship and giving: This budget stays mostly flat for 2024. Discussion was had around whether benevolence should change. General consensus is to keep it flat for 2024.
- Welcome and community: This budget also stays mostly flat. Food costs continue to rise, and restricted accounts will likely be used in 2023 to cover expenses. The board currently has approximately \$9k in restricted accounts.
- Worship and music: They would like to increase guest instrumentalists to \$12k to provide for more reasonable rates for musicians. Choir school is up slightly with more kids involved. Total increase from 2023, then, would be \$6k. Michael asked Mary for a rough estimate of a surplus for 2023.
- Youth and family: This budget is about \$5k less than 2023. Some accounts have been combined for clarity.

Giving

January Gifts and Memorials

Gifts to First Lutheran Church

In memory of Jackie Sexauer Kenneth & Athelene Gerber

In memory of Neva Erickson Mark & Sarah Erickson

In memory of Donna Schiager friends and family of Donna Schiager

Gifts to Caring Ministry

In memory of Karen DeNoble Jeff & Edna Husman In memory of Marguerite Houske Jeff & Edna Husman

Gifts to Lutheran Men in Mission

In memory of Bob Lommen Gerald & Arlene Gackle

Gifts to Media Ministry

In honor of Linda Braun Mary Eich

In memory of Joan Anderson Karen Lidel, FLCW In memory of Neva Erickson FLCW

Gifts to Music Ministry

In memory of Donna Schiager
Elnear Marshman, Janice Schneekloth

Gifts to Volunteer Shop

In memory of Bob Lommen David & Lori Melemseter

Thank You, January Broadcast Sponsors!

January 14, 2024

- The telecast on KSFY was sponsored by Lutheran Men in Mission in honor of all staff at FLC.
- The broadcast on KELO-FM was given in memory of Samantha Kramer, made possibly by earnings from a gift by family and friends to the First Lutheran Church Foundation.

January 21, 2024

 The broadcast on KELO-FM and closed captioning on KSFY were sponsored in memory of Dick Matson and Martin & Margaret Summervold, Ellie Matson, and Thelma Hicks by family.

January 28, 2024

 The telecast and closed captioning on KSFY were sponsored by Lori and David Melemseter. Sponsoring a broadcast is a wonderful way to remember or honor a person or event while supporting the ministry of First Lutheran Church.

Sponsorships are available at varying monetary levels. For more information, visit flcsf.org/media-ministry or contact Caryn, clengkeek@flcsf.org or 605/339.1983 ext. 202.

Thank you for your generosity!

Giving is a joyful expression of our faith, and we want to connect your joyful giving to your passion for ministry. Explore this month's giving opportunities, and if you can't find what you are looking for, let us know how we can help you give joyfully!

Online giving is secure and simple. Donate one time or set up recurring donations in the Church Center app or at flcsf.org/give. You can also donate via Venmo or text any amount to 84321.



Designate Your Thrivent Choice® Dollars

Please remember to designate First Lutheran Church if you have Thrivent Choice® Dollars. When designated to First Lutheran, these dollars support all ministries of the church. If you have dollars available, you must make an annual request for them to be distributed. The last date to apply for 2023 Thrivent Choice® Dollars is March 31, 2024.

Around the Church

Come and Sing!—Lankford Arts Series Celebrates Hymns of the Faith



By Zachary Brockhoff, Director of Worship and Music

The good news of Easter is more than one Sunday, or even one "Holy Week"—it is a blessed

50-Day season of giving thanks for the work of our Risen Lord. Each year, the announcement of Jesus' resurrection brings good news of Christ at work in the world as our peace, our Good Shepherd, the True Vine, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

This year, the Lankford Arts Series celebrates these gifts of our Risen Lord with a hymn festival on Sunday, April 14, at 3 p.m. in the First Lutheran Sanctuary—"Sing Glory to the Name of God: A Hymn Festival." You are invited to sing as a member of the congregation at this communitywide celebration! We will sing together to God who is everywhere and always—at once our Creator, Good Shepherd, and Prince of Peace; the Solid Rock, the Bread of Life, and the Word. The festival will be led by organist Tom Trenney from First-Plymouth Church of Lincoln, Nebraska, and the 50-voice Plymouth Choir. All voices—big or small—are encouraged to join in singing together.

Guest musicians and theological reflection will join in supporting congregational singing:

Composer, conductor, and organist Tom Trenney has been blessed to serve as Minister of Music to First-Plymouth Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, since 2009. In 2019, he became Associate Professor of Music and Director of Choirs at Nebraska Wesleyan University. Tom is well-known for his gift of improvisation and his creative leadership of congregational

singing. Many of his arrangements will be featured at the hymn festival in April. Tom has been a featured performer at churches, colleges, and concert halls across the country.

The Plymouth Choir sings for worship at First-Plymouth Church in Lincoln, Nebraska. The choir's musical offerings on YouTube have inspired more than 15,000,000 views and 25,000 subscribers around the world. The Plymouth Choir

A limited number of free tickets for the hymn festival may be reserved in the Church Center app, on our website at flcsf.org/lankfordarts, or by calling the church office at 605/336.3734.

Sing Glory to the Name of God: A Hymn Festival Sunday, April 14, 3pm First Lutheran Church

was invited to perform at the 2016 North Central American Choral Directors
Association (ACDA) convention and the only church choir selected as a finalist in the 2018-19 American Prize in Choral Performance. Recent performances have taken the choir from McCook to Sioux City, Nebraska; from Lincoln's Lied Center to Washington's Kennedy Center and New York City's Carnegie Hall.

First Lutheran Church Senior Pastor Jason Burggraff will offer theological reflections throughout the hymn festival. As a pastor, musician, and cellist, Pastor Jason has particular interest in the intersection of music and theology and how music helps to proclaim God's promise.

Interested in attending? Reserve your tickets today!

Below are members of our congregation who turn 90+ this month. If you see them around church, wish them a great day!

Mar 9 – Gene Erickson

Mar 11 – Barbara Long

Mar 17 – Joyce Sells

Mar 18 – John Myers

Mar 26 – Patti Erickson

Mar 31 – Marilyn Eikanger

Life Transitions

Baptisms

January 28, 2024

Katherine Marie Fonkert, daughter of Kelsey & Jesse Fonkert

Deaths

January 7, 2024 Jackie Sexauer

January 15, 2024 Joan Ellen Anderson

January 22, 2024 J Lynn Thomas

January 30, 2024

Donald W. Toft

First Lutheran Church 327 S Dakota Ave Sioux Falls SD 57104

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

On the Calendar – March

- 1 First Fridays Book Club, 5p, R Wine Bar and Kitchen
- 2 Grieving with Grace, 10a, Friendship Room
- 3 1st grade milestone, 10a, Fellowship Hall
- 3 Mark Bible study, 10:15a, Gathering Room
- 6 Lenten midweek worship, 11:15a, Chapel; soup lunch following in Reformation Hall, \$6/person
- 6 Lenten midweek worship, 6:30p, Sanctuary; join live, YouTube.com/flcsf
- 7 Mark Bible study, 12p and 6:30p, Gathering Room
- 10 Mark Bible study, 10:15a, Gathering Room
- 10 9th grade retreat, 12p, Manos de Cristo
- 13 Lenten midweek worship, 11:15a, Sanctuary; soup lunch following in Reformation Hall, \$6/person
- 13 Lenten midweek worship, 6:30p, Sanctuary; join live, YouTube.com/flcsf
- 14 Mark Bible study, 12p and 6:30p, Gathering Room
- 16 Dementia/Alzheimer's support group, 9a, Friendship Room
- 17 Mark Bible study, 10:15a, Gathering Room
- 20 Lenten midweek worship, 11:15a, Sanctuary; soup lunch following in Reformation Hall, \$6/person
- 20 Lenten midweek worship, 6:30p, Sanctuary; join live, YouTube.com/flcsf
- 21 Mark Bible study, 12p and 6:30p, Gathering Room
- 24 Palm Sunday worship, 9a and 11a, Sanctuary
- 24 Mark Bible study, 10:15a, Gathering Room
- 28 Maundy Thursday worship, 11:15a and 6:30p, Sanctuary; evening service live, YouTube.com/flcsf
- 29 Good Friday worship, 11:15a and 6:30p, Sanctuary; evening service live, YouTube.com/flcsf
- 30 Great Vigil of Easter, 5p, Sanctuary
- 31 Easter Sunday worship, 7a, 9a, and 11a, Sanctuary