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First Word

The monthly newspaper of First Lutheran Church

Engaged in the Life of Christ

By Pastor Lars Olson, Executive Pastor

"If God is for us, who is against us?" – Romans 8:31

The life of Christian faith requires only one thing: trusting in Jesus Christ. Unfortunately that is the one thing that sinners just can't and won't do, because trusting in God above all else means trusting God's word in Jesus Christ above your best friends, beyond your closest family, and finally - and this is the most challenging - beyond even trusting in yourself. So though faith requires only one thing, the one thing required is impossible for us to achieve. This state of affairs is so maddening that it feels like some sort of a Yogi Berra quote - not quite "it's like déjà vu all over again" or, "We made too many wrong mistakes," but to more like "The impossible requirement will be both required and impossible."

To be engaged in a life of faith is to realize that we are stuck in ourselves, but that we have a Savior in Jesus Christ who frees us. Where we cannot, he can. And whenever we attempt to turn back upon ourselves, he continues to free us with his word. How are we to be part of something impossible? "Nothing is impossible with God" (Matthew 19:26, Luke 1:37). What is required of us? "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

One of the reasons for this summer's preaching series on Romans is to bring this conundrum to light. That is, to bring us beyond the limits of our questioning and into Christ the light of the world. For it is in him alone where we come to be engaged in life. Not our life, but the life which is given to us in Christ (Galatians 2:20).

Engagement in the life of Christ comes not from us, but from God. This fall, First Lutheran will ask how you are engaged in the life of faith, which is just another way of asking, "Where is God calling you to serve, to witness and to be encouraged?"

Living in Christ with you all,
Pastor Lars

Fall-a-Palooza!

The time honored tradition of "Kick Off Sunday" or "Rally Day" has been a re-entry point into the program year for Youth Ministries and Sunday Schools for a long time. Additionally, the "Fall Stewardship Campaign" and choirs, confirmation, and youth groups have been ministry staples that need a yearly kick-off. In this way, many of our ministries live in a deep sense of a summer schedule and a September – May schedule, with the hope that after the summer everyone will return to their regular spot.

But what if things change a little? What if there were new opportunities, and new ways to be engaged in the life of faith in Jesus Christ at FLC? What if we were to intentionally engage together, across boards and ministries, to reach out and connect people to old and new ministries as the summer schedule comes to a close and the Sept-May program year begins? Could First Lutheran be better at connecting people to opportunities that fit their needs?

That's the idea with Fall-a-Palooza

Instead of having each ministry advertise, recruit and compete for volunteers, we will have all of our ministries and boards trained, equipped, and ready to share what is happening across our church community (that means members, visitors and guests). This would take place in August and September through personally contacting families for a short conversation. As the summer schedule comes to an end, FLC will be ready to enroll people into ongoing and new opportunities, share what is happening, and ask where each person sees herself or himself contributing, participating and serving. This will not only give the community a better understanding of what is happening within our congregation, but will also be a great source of information for all of the boards, ministries and teams.

What to expect

From the middle of August to the middle of September, we want everyone connected to First Lutheran to receive a personal contact. This might be over coffee at Genesis Cafe, or it may be on a walk or over lunch. It might be before worship, or it may need to be over the phone. It won't take much time, something like 5-10 minutes, when you get to share where you have been connected to First Lutheran, hear about the opportunities in the coming year, and encourage one another through our faith in Jesus Christ.

We will deepen our community friendships. Find out more about the ministries of your church. Become engaged again (or for the first time) in the life of faith at First Lutheran for the coming year. Those are the goals, as we offer new and renewed opportunities for living in Christ together at First Lutheran.

Fall Adult Forum Series

Christian Apologetics

Dr. LaMoyne Pederson (a Ph.D. alum of the University of Southern California-USC and Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Augustana University) and Pr. John Christopherson (former Adjunct Associate Professor in the Honors Program at Montana State University and Instructor of Systematic Theology at the University of Chicago Divinity School during his Ph.D. studies) will be offering a series in "Christian Apologetics" on Wednesday evenings in September and "Martin Luther and His Conversation Partners" in November. Questions will include: "What is faith? What is reason? And how are the two related?" Also … "What kind of truth claims can we make, if any in our post-modern culture? Can truth be universalized beyond one's own personal experience? And if not, if truth is basically a matter of perspective or relative to various contexts, what does this do for making moral arguments?" And … closely related: "How are we to understand the Christian faith in our increasingly pluralistic American culture? Are all religions the same with Christianity simply being one among the many religious traditions?"

– See ADULT FORUM p.6

Semper Reformanda

The "Always Reforming" Spirit and Nature of Christ's Church

By Pastor John Christopherson, Senior Pastor

There are various schools of thought regarding the beginning of the Reformation: from the *religious* arguments that point to a heavy-handed ecclesiastical legal system, which had buried any sense of the Gospel under impossible ethical demands [cf. Erasmus of Rotterdam's critiques in ***Praise of Folly*** (1509) or ***Julius Exclusus*** (1514)] … to the *non-religious*, *secular* arguments that point to the reformation as but a political movement, with an emerging German nationalism (e.g. Italy vs. France), or a socio-economic movement involving a reaction to the shift in farm economy – ala the increasingly oppressive serf-system in 16th century Germany – driving people off the farm and into the cities [cf. Lewis W. Spitz's ***The Reformation; Spiritual or Material?*** (1968) or Jaroslav Pelikan's ***Spirit Versus Structure*** (1968)]. However, for Martin Luther there was only one reason, the reason that sets the beginning and end, the alpha and omega (Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13) to any and all reformations of Christ's church. And that reason is the transforming power of God's Word. Reminiscing on his early years of reform, Luther observed:

> *"The Word, the Word, the Word! … In short, I will preach it, teach it, write it, but I will constrain no person by force, for faith must come freely without compulsion. Take myself as example. I opposed indulgences and all the papists, but never by force. I simply taught, preached, and wrote God's Word; otherwise, I did nothing. And while I slept, or drank Wittenberg beer with my friends Philip and Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor ever inflicted such losses upon it. I did nothing; [God's] Word did everything (**Luther's Works** 52:77).*

In this once-in-a-life-time season of celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation (with Martin Luther's nailing of the "*95 Theses*" to the Wittenberg Church doors on October 31, 1517, calling for reform) … I believe one of the key elements of such a reform – that continues to unlock our especially verbose time from its bondage to superficial "words, words, words" – is not only an understanding of what Luther understood by the traditional expression of "The Word of

– See SEMPER REFORMANDA p.2

– SEMPER REFORMANDA from p.1

Semper Reformanda cont.

God" but also what became new and radical in his use of this term. So, no we're not going to meditate on the merits of Wittenberg beer (as in Luther's quote above); but upon Luther's three-fold understanding of what is meant by the word, "Word." God's Word which has the power to reform and transform his people, his church, in every generation – *semper reformanda* ("always reforming").

The Word as Holy Scripture: The Bible

Much has changed, just within the past generation, in our understanding of how the Bible does or does not connect us with "The Word of God." Recent studies tell us that 90% of Americans say they believe in God; but only 20% understand the Bible as being authoritative for their lives (J. Patterson and P. Kim's ***The Day America Told The Truth***, p.32). Now, doesn't this strike you as an odd combination?! Believing in God; but the Bible has little if anything to say about God? … So what are the "sacred pages" (*sacra pagina*) – as St. Thomas Aquinas oft' referred to the Bible – of our time; that Word that would tell us of the nature of God and God's relation to us? ***The Times***? ***The Wall Street Journal***? How 'bout ***The DaVinci Code***?! Or maybe it's: "Like, well, you know, it just feels right." Like so much *ad hominem* emotion/hype and pornography that flows from the sewers of Hollywood. Recently, a person said to me: "The Bible doesn't tell me anything I don't already know." Really? Is our natural equipment sufficient? Thus, a Darwinian ethic? Able to save ourselves? Just ***Google*** "God"?

Think carefully here. It's not enough to simply say that one believes in God; what really matters finally, is what *kind* of God you believe in (see Terry Fretheim's ***Suffering of God***, p.1). The truth is that it's only by carefully attending to the Bible, God's Word, that God reveals himself to us; that is, who and how God is related to our world and that "God is for us, not against us" (Romans 8:31f; cf. John 3:16). From the earliest days of the church, it has been understood that the Bible is the "norming norm" (*norma normans*), the ultimate authority for matters of faith and life – given to us by God (cf. Ps. 19:7; 119:89; Isaiah 40:8; Zechariah 7:12; Nehemiah 8:5-6; I Thessalonians 2:13; II Timothy 3:14-17; Revelation 3:8). And even as much as I love skiing or fishing in the pristine beauty of the snow-capped Rockies of Montana, it's clear that we can't read of God's love or forgiveness or saving grace in Christ off a mountain side or from some "babbling" brook or deep introspective navel-gazing that just gets things even "fuzzier." In the Spring of 1962, at the University of Chicago's Rockefeller Chapel, the world's leading theologian of the 20th century, Karl Barth was offering a guest series of lectures on his life work – the classic ***Church Dogmatics***, all 7,888 pages. Toward the close of his lecture, he was asked: "How is it that you have come by such a confident understanding of God, with such depth and breadth?" Barth paused. A hush broke over the audience of some 3000 people. And then very childlike, very simply, the world-renowned theological titan answered: "Jesus loves me this I know. For the ..." [What do you suppose Barth said?] YES … "the Bible tells me so."

The Word Incarnate: Wrapped in Swaddling Cloths

You see, Karl Barth had given his whole life to the study of the Bible. Every day he would, in the metaphorical language of Martin Luther: "Open the Bible in order to hear God's Word which he lays before us in such simple guise as to quench all human pride. … Here we find," continues Luther, *"the swaddling cloths and the manger in which Christ lies, to which the star pointed the wise men, the bringer of salvation"* (***Luther's Works*** 35:236). Here then is the second understanding of "The Word of God" in the Christian tradition; namely, the Word incarnate who has come to us, *"wrapped in swaddling cloths"* (Luke 2:12) in the very flesh/person of Jesus (cf. Colossians 1:15, 19). As the German philosopher, Schelling observed: "Only a person can heal a person" (cited in Paul Tillich's ***Theology of Culture***, p.132).

And so, as we read the Bible of the Old and New Testaments "that cradle the Christ child" (Luther), we see that God never grows weary of trying to get himself across. *Word after word*, the Bible – "God's love story"

(Martin Marty) – witnesses to God's plotline of salvation, still unfolding … seeking to convict human hearts. It's a Word for all seasons. It's the "living word." To draw upon the very first verse of the book of Hebrews: *"In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days God has spoken to us by his Son …"* (Hebrews 1:1). Yes, ***"The word became flesh and dwelt among us"*** (John 1:14). What our financial and morally bankrupt times need is a wisdom, one that's not written on the ledgers of a bullish market or some egalitarian ethic of naïve tolerance, but calls us to return to the wisdom of God, revealed in the Bible, that points beyond itself to the cross and the ways of Jesus Christ (cf. Harold Bloom's ***Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?***). "And the eyes of all were fixed on Jesus" (Luke 4:20b).

FIDES EX AUDITU

"And [Jesus] began to say to the people, 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). Now, this is where Luther, drawing upon the teaching of St. Paul and St. Augustine, brought something fresh and new – as a third understanding of "The Word of God" – to the ongoing spirit and reforming nature of the church. First, Luther re-emphasized that in hearing Jesus' voice one hears God's voice (ala John 14:7, 9). And by hearing God's Word through the Bible, through the Spirit of Christ, faith is awakened. As St. Paul teaches in Romans 10: *"So faith comes from what is heard … and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ"* (10:17). "Faith comes by hearing" (*fides ex auditu*). It is here, that Luther emphasized the importance of how the Word of God has the power, simply through the spoken word, to re-form and transform Christ's church and his people through proclamation. "I did nothing," wrote Luther, "the word did it all." Reformation scholar, Ernst Bizer spoke of how, with this renewed emphasis on the power of proclamation, "Martin Luther sacramentalized the word" (***Fides ex auditu***, p.179).

Here is the critical importance of First Lutheran Church experiencing anew, being re-formed by the power of Christ's Holy Spirit, to be evangelists, witnesses, proclaimers of the good news of Christ's justifying death and resurrection for us and all people (Mark 1:1; Romans 6:1-11). We are being called anew in this 500 Anniversary of the Reformation to come to an understanding as-of-old with Martin Luther: that God's Word takes up faith-filled residence in and through our words (cf. II Corinthians 4:7). And so as hearers of God's Word, as Christ's ongoing body in the world – as a family of faith at First Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, SD in the year-of-our-Lord 2017 – we are called to proclaim God's Word of hope and healing and salvation for a world that is dying to hear.

Dear family members and friends of First Lutheran Church … We live in a world in which so very many people are truly "dying to hear" this Word – this Word of God in Christ, cradled in the Bible, cradled through our words of humble witness. For you see, people's identities have been taken captive and crushed by calloused words. Words like: "I don't love you anymore." "Who invited you?" "You failed again." "Get lost, I hate you." And into this emptiness of feeling lost and alone and no-good comes the gospel word, creating a reality of which it speaks, as with God at the very beginning of creation (Genesis 1:3, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28-29, 31): "You are my beloved, on you my favor rests, always … no matter what" (cf. Henri Nouwen's ***Life of the Beloved***, p.56-57). God's Word creating faith through your words, the reformation continues (*semper reformanda*).

By the power of Christ's Holy Spirit …

John Christopherson
Senior Pastor

Boards and Governance Update

The Executive Committee and the FLC Church council are involved in conversation to amend the bylaws of our constitution. The general purpose of the changes is meant to provide better strategic leadership, carrying out of ministry, and collaborative support throughout our congregation's governance structures. There was much discussion last fall (2016) about bylaw changes, which were designed to move away from a representative council made up of board chairs, but what the council heard very strongly was how important representation is in such a large congregational system. That has helped move the conversation in a new direction.

The current discussion aims to give the Executive Committee the role of strategic direction, and the council the role of carrying out ministry in line with strategic plans and providing feedback and approval for Executive Committee decisions. It would look something like this:

Executive Committee

Primary Purpose:
Provide leadership, strategic planning, policy setting, for the congregation

Responsibilities:
1. Give direction toward strategy/policy/goals
2. Staff and Personnel, Budget and Finance
3. Lead council and support implementation of ministries
4. Propose budget, nominations, etc. for council and congregational approval

Council

Primary Purpose:
Oversee the carrying out of ministry plans and objectives in line with strategic plans and policies.

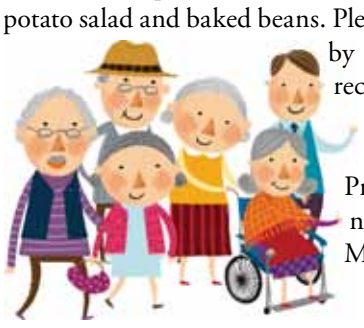
Responsibilities:
1. Coordinate, communicate, carry out, and approve Executive Committee recommendations
2. Implement ministries cooperatively across boards, ministry teams
3. Respond, critique, improve strategic planning
4. Approve Executive Committee recommendations to take to congregational meeting (such as budget, nominations, etc.)

The three key takeaways of this evolving proposal are:
1. The Executive Committee will be tasked with leading the Council.
2. The representative nature of the council is not changed.
3. Council and boards are tasked with carrying out strategic plans in their ministry area in collaboration with other boards, and with support from the Executive Committee.

Details are not finalized, and there is still much work to be done. Your feedback and thoughts are welcome. No changes will be made without Council approval and a special Congregational meeting. Watch for details in the coming months.

Senior luncheon

All First Lutheran senior adults and their friends are invited to join us for lunch Tuesday, Aug. 8, at noon. Jeff Backer, FLC Intern Pastor, will speak about his June study trip to the Holy Land. The menu is taverns, potato salad and baked beans. Please remember to RSVP by calling the church receptionist at 336-3734, by Wednesday, Aug. 2 If you need a ride, call Project CAR, 332-2777, no later than 9 a.m. on Monday, Aug. 7.



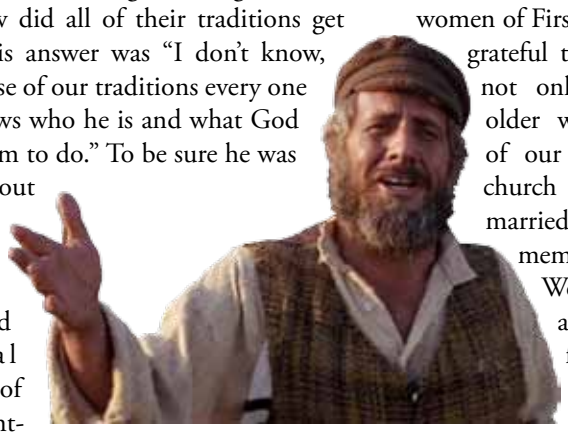
Women's Ministry

Tradition! Tradition!

How did our traditions get started?

By Marcia Huffman, WELCA President

One of my favorite musicals is "Fiddler on the Roof." It tells the challenging story of the Jewish community in a pre-revolutionary Russian village. Tevye's rendition of the song "Traditions" is on my list of all-time great songs. When asked how did all of their traditions get started, his answer was "I don't know, but because of our traditions every one of us knows who he is and what God expects him to do." To be sure he was talking about all of the eating, dressing, living and spiritual traditions of their tight-knit Jewish community. But it prompted me to think about our Lutheran church women's traditions, especially here at First Lutheran Church. Let's do a little review of some articles published in "First Word" last fall.



When two small Norwegian Lutheran churches decided to merge and establish a new congregation, the church women raised $30,000 for the project, a phenomenal amount in the early 1920s. From 1920-1930 records show that the women raised $79,098.90. They held their first Ladies Aid meeting on October 14, 1920 and this organization fostered such groups as the Friendship Committee, Membership Committee, Welfare Committee, Sunshine Committee and a two-day Christmas Bazaar. The Ladies Aid was active in starting the agencies that eventually became Lutheran Social Services. To top it off, in 1927 they assumed the payments of a church parsonage.

Ladies Aid divided into circles in 1934, a Study Circle was added in 1936, and eventually became the Missionary Society. The first official fall bazaar was held in 1936 and the first Kaffe Stua was introduced in 1938. Traditions! Traditions! Are you beginning to get the picture? We here at First Lutheran Church are carrying on awesome, loving, generous and ambitions traditions that were started by our predecessors decades ago.

So how did our traditions get started? That we can answer in one word, LOVE. Yes, because our forefathers knew who they were and what God expected them to do. They were – as we are – children of God and what God wanted them to do was to love Him and love others. Please read John 15:13, 1 John 4:7; 1 John 3:11, Matthew 22:37-39, John 13:34 and many others to hear God's Word regarding loving Him and loving our neighbors.

Last fall we celebrated our 80th Annual First Lutheran Fall Bazaar – tradition! We women of First Lutheran are extremely grateful that this bazaar includes not only the middle-age and older women, but also many of our faithful men, younger church members – single and married, youth and even other members of our community. We are all involved in a legacy of passing it forward and embracing the tradition we have here at 12th and Dakota sharing our abundance with others. It literally takes a village to make this happen and as a result we are able to share tens of thousands of dollars with local, national and worldwide agencies who minister to those in need. Our bazaar is a tangible way to be able to reach out and "pay it forward" and show our love to our neighbors near and far. Through the work of the members of First Lutheran we are able to have a huge impact on the world around us. And isn't that what being a Christian is all about?

It does indeed take a village. Many of us who enjoy the various projects of the bazaar are getting a little more gray and we worry about the future of this great project. As Uncle Sam says, "We Need You!" Many activities are available and you will find articles listing of ways to help later this fall in News Notes, First Word and on the web at flcsf.org/bazaar.

Want to put your talents to work?

Many projects have already started such as pricing Attic Treasures items and working with old linens. Soon we will start sewing woolen mittens and painting barn board quilt squares. Please join us and remember it is not necessary to be an expert. We can all learn and share together. Younger people in your 20s – 50s are encouraged and welcome to join us who are in our 60s – 90s as we keep our traditions alive. Please call Marcia Huffman at 360-4168, Kathy Stelzer at 332-1820, Jean Colon at 334-7718, or Sandy Fink at 339-2933, to see how you can become involved. Become part of the tradition.

2017 First Lutheran Church Bazaar
Saturday, Nov. 4 • 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

First Lutheran Foundation

Grateful giving

By Janet Naessig, Foundation Board member

The First Lutheran Church Foundation is an endowment fund that holds gifts in perpetuity with only income from the gifts being used to support the needs of First Lutheran Church. Currently the Foundation's annual disbursements fund at least 10% of the church's operating budget supporting broadcast and print media, senior ministry, youth activities, camperships and scholarships, worship and music, organ maintenance, caring ministry, visitation, property and benevolence. For more information, please contact Marilyn McNeill, Business Administrator, at 605-339-1983 ext. 236, or email her at mmcneill@flcsf.org.

Why?

Ardith O. Forbes of Dell Rapids gifted money through her estate to the First Lutheran Church Foundation. Why would someone not directly associated with First Lutheran give to our Foundation? The following letter contains the answer.

To First Lutheran Church of Sioux Falls:

Ardith Forbes designated the Media Endowment Fund of First Lutheran Church to receive a portion of her estate. As personal representatives, we would like to give an insight into that gift.

Ardith was a lifelong Lutheran whose faith was lived out in her love and compassion for others. She was actively involved in each church to which she belonged wherever she lived — Huron, Minneapolis, Kansas City, and Dell Rapids.

When her husband Verne became ill and could no longer attend worship services, she cared for him and they found comfort and hope in the televised worship services of their church in Dell Rapids as well as the First Lutheran televised service. After his death, she attended weekly services in her church in Dell Rapids, but when the weather was inclement or she was not feeling well, she would watch the televised services. A few years ago the local cable channel dropped the local worship service so Ardith would attend worship via the First Lutheran Sunday morning telecast when she was unable to attend church.

Especially in the year or so before her death as she became more homebound, she faithfully tuned in for the First Lutheran weekly worship service. When we would visit, she would turn it on so we could worship with her. She talked of the pastors and their messages, and enjoyed the music. She often expressed her gratitude for being able to hear God's word and the reminder of His love for her and the hope she had in Christ and the assurance of eternal life. in the last year or so, she talked often of getting to meet her sister Arlene who had died in infancy before Ardith was born as well as seeing Verne and her other loved ones again.

She desired to give the opportunity for others to receive that same comfort and hope. As written in Romans 10:14-15 (NIV) 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

May this bequest be used in Ardith and Verne's memory to continue to bring God's Word and His message of forgiveness, hope, and salvation through Christ via the media ministry of First Lutheran Church.

In His Service,

Gary and Kathy Agon, Personal Representatives

Sept. WELCA meeting to highlight Katharina von Bora Luther

All women of First Lutheran are invited to join us at Sept. 7, at 6 p.m. at our WELCA Meeting. Please join us in the Gathering Room as we kick off our new fall season. Kristie Meier, a deacon at the Trinity Lutheran Church in Tea, SD, will give a presentation on Katie von Bora Luther's influence on Martin Luther and the Reformation, and also the role of women in the Reformation. A light supper will be served by Katie and Ruth Circles. The General WELCA meetings are held on the first Thursday each month. Please join us as we come together and celebrate our heritage as First Lutheran Church Women while we learn and grow together through presentations on a variety of topics throughout the year. Experience fellowship through devotions, music, food and sharing. Come see what we are all about. More information on our programs can be found on our church website at www.flcsf.org. Use the drop down box "Groups" and click on "Women." We hope to see you there. If you have questions please call WELCA President Marcia Huffman at 360-4168, or Vice President Kathy Stelzer at 332-1820.

Caring Ministries

Delta Dental Bus update

By Jana Elkins, Parish Nurse

The Delta Dental Mobile Program was another huge success this year. The Dental Bus saw a total of 36 patients here at First Lutheran Church the week of June 12-16, 2017. 26 of those patients had been previously seen with the program, with 10 new patients that were referred from many of our community agencies. Total amount of production value performed this week equaled $25,153.00. There were 35 cleanings performed, 73 fillings, 7 crowns and/ or bridges, 9 oral surgery procedures, 7 cap placements, 28 sealant applications, and 35 fluoride applications in addition to all the exams and x-rays that were performed. Our families were grateful for the services that were provided on their behalf.

A great big thank you to the many volunteers who helped make this year's dental bus visit a success, by volunteering their time to check in families, playing and reading with the children while they waited for services, and assisting the dental staff to keep the patients coming and going on time! Thank you to: Kristin Anderson, Barney Brandenburg , Doris Bushard, Charlotte Copper-Tracy, Betty DeBerg, Sandy Holleman, Edna Husman, Marilyn Van Demark, and all the First Lutheran Church members and staff who helped to make the dental staff feel welcomed, those who set-up for the event, and those who provided food and conversation for the lunch buffet.

The Delta Dental staff travel all year round staying in hotels and eating out. Upon learning this last year, the First Lutheran staff decided to be a more welcoming home this year by supplying a home cooked lunch buffet three out of five days for the dental bus staff. The dental bus staff were overwhelmed by our efforts and thoroughly enjoyed the home cooked meals and the lunch time conversation.

The Delta Dental Bus staff wanted to extend a huge thank you for the hospitality, support and kindness they received while they were here at First Lutheran Church this year and look forward to seeing us all again next year!

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A Sending Prayer for those going off to college

By Emily P. Freeman

<http://emilypfreeman.com/ prayers-for-college-students>

Dear Lord,

They move into the dorm this weekend and will bring their bags filled with clothes and their boxes filled with books. But you see what they bring in their hearts – anticipation, adventure, love, regret, anxiety, motivation, and hope.

They are a mix of excited, ready, terrified, and wide-eyed freedom.

As he looks for a fresh start, remind him of your faithfulness every morning no matter where he calls home.

As she looks for community, remind her you are always with her no matter where she may go.

As he looks for adventure, remind him how you walk on water, turn water to wine, feed thousands from just a few pieces of bread. Remind him how you bring life straight up out of death, beauty straight out of ashes.

May she have the patience to believe even when she doesn't see results.

May he know the greatest adventures are found in your presence, the greatest love comes from your heart, the greatest hope is that you've made his heart your home.

When insecurity, comparison, disappointment and failure knock on her dorm room door, may she turn to you with her questions rather than run the other way.

Weave your wisdom into the fibers of his soul, bearing the fruit of confidence, clarity, contentment and a light heart.

May he not despise his humanity, rather may he embrace it.

May she not despise her body, rather may she learn to receive and respect her shape as a gift.

May he not despise his weakness; rather may he see how weakness brings a daily reminder to trust.

May they not fear failure; rather may they thrive in the midst of it.

May they not be quick to judge; rather may they be patient and curious.

Help them to find true friends and be a true friend in turn.

Help them find their voice and to use it to be an advocate for themselves and for others.

Replace her shame with courage.

Replace his confusion with peace.

Replace her fear with a love that moves within her beyond her ability to understand.

May your grace surprise them kindly.

Amen.

"Maggie and David" Concert on August 11

Pastor David Houck and his wife Margaret, known by their stage name, "Maggie and David," are performing a musical program at the Inn on Westport (4000 S. Westport Ave in Sioux Falls) on Friday, August 11th from 3-4 p.m. This program will feature popular music of decades past, Christian hymns, Scripture, prayer, and spoken words of encouragement. Maggie and David are happy to provide this program in conjunction with the Caring Ministries of First Lutheran Church. All members and friends of FLC are invited to attend!

Compassionate Connections volunteers sought

Our church frequently becomes a point of contact for those who find themselves in need of crisis support and are not sure where to turn. First Lutheran Church is seeking help from volunteers to help the staff compassionately connect with such persons, for the need is great. Check out the description for the new Compassionate Connections volunteer role on our church's website at http://www.flcsf.org/caring. We also invite anyone interested to attend an information/training event on Wednesday, Aug. 9, in the Trinity Room, from 6 – 7:30 p.m. If you have questions, please contact Pastor Katherine at kolson@flcsf.org or 339-1983, ext 214.

No Grieving With Grace Session in August

Grieving with Grace group sessions, open to adults who are grieving the death of a loved one, normally take place on the first Saturday morning of the month in the Gathering Room at First Lutheran Church. However, the group is not planning to meet in the month of August. The next session of Grieving with Grace is scheduled for September 2. If you have questions about Grieving with Grace, reach out to Pastor Katherine at kolson@flcsf.org or 339-1983, ext. 214.

Youth & Family Ministry

What is Family?

By Marnie Dahle Backer,
Youth & Family Ministries Director

"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." – Proverbs 22:6

What makes a family? The days of a mom, a dad, 1.5 children and a dog are long gone I do believe. Families come in all shapes, sizes, configurations and more! God in all his mysterious ways gave me a great reminder of this at the FLC Family Lake Day in June. In our planning stages we thought – the lake! Lakes are fun, kids love lakes, moms and dads love lakes – this will be great! So we planned. We had a signup sheet – the whole nine yards! We noticed that people were signing up for Lake Day, but they weren't the people we were thinking would sign up – almost the entire list of people were 60 and older. Huh. This is not what we were planning. But… we went with it. And boy oh boy, blessings abounded that day! The weather was perfection, there were s'mores, hammocks, hotdogs, burgers, wading in the water, great conversation, laughter, relaxing and "more"! The "more" was the best part – family happened, a community of believers gathered together to enjoy a beautiful day and time together. Meeting new friends, reconnecting, building relationships, sharing in God's grace together – all the things we hope for in a family event. What is family? You are. We are.

We are all needed in this family of faith as well. As we begin to prepare for another busy year of worship, Bible studies, meals, confirmation, Scripture First, music, quilting and more – we need our families – of all shapes and sizes to be a part of the ministry of sharing faith and the gospel with others. We need grandmas showing our children what faith might look like to them and teenagers reminding empty nesters how much fun it is to be a little wild and crazy, there is a place for everyone to share their gifts, if you haven't found it yet, please keep asking, seeking and searching. Your gifts are needed and a blessing. And to all those wise and wonderful people who knew FLC Family Lake Day was for them – we thank you for that awesome reminder of what family is.

Above left, Wall Lake Family day hosts, Marcia and Bill Huffman take a break from grilling to pose for the camera and Sharyl Wolf, above right, enjoys a warm s'more.

Below with Marcia Huffman, Bobbie Long roasts a marshmallow while Roger Coon looks on.

Above left Howard Paulson and Bryan Noe work on their cornhole tossing skills.

Above right LouAnn Paulson wades in the cool lake water with host, Marcia Huffman.

Left, Bryan and Margot Noe relax with friends.

Faith 5

"What happens to children who check in with their parents every night before going to bed? What happens to a family (of all shapes and sizes) that shares highs and lows, scripture, talk, prayer and blessings most every night of their lives? What are the psychological, sociological, neurological and theological benefits a child receives when they are given such consistent, intentional care before drifting off to sleep each night? How might a simple, five-step faith practice change a child, a family, and world?" Rich Melheim, www.faith5.org

Introducing the Faith 5. This simple formula is something we are hoping to incorporate in many of the ministries that happen in and around the church. And we are really hoping they will happen every night for five to fifteen minutes in every home. Give it a try for a month – make it a habit. Here they are:

1. SHARE highs and lows
2. READ a Bible verse or story
3. TALK about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows
4. PRAY for one another's highs and lows
5. BLESS one another

FAITH 5
Every night in every home
SHARE highs and lows
READ a Bible verse or story
TALK about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows
PRAY for one another's highs and lows
BLESS one another

HAPPY CAMPERS

Images from 2017 summer camps (so far)

Pictured clockwise from top left are: a muddy Grace Cain, Adam Monson and Blake Stark ready for canoeing, Lexy Hopp headed out on a horseback ride and Luke Martin in stylin' sun glasses. Below Ashley Elton relaxes with friends.

Mission

First Lutheran Church welcomes all people into the community of Jesus Christ, equipping and sending them forth to serve and witness in Jesus' name.

Guiding Principles

We are grounded in the great commandment of Jesus. (Matthew 22:34-40)

We are grounded in the great commission of Jesus. (Matthew 28:16-20)

We are committed to welcome and minister to all people.

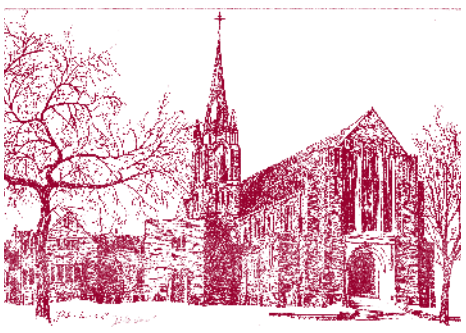
We are committed to equipping people for ministry.

We are committed to service in our community and world.

We are committed to a ministry of relationship building.

We are committed to our heritage and identity as a reforming church.

We are committed to excellence in broadcast ministry.



Worship Services

Saturday (Chapel)
5 p.m. Vespers/Communion

Sunday (Sanctuary)
8 a.m. Traditional Worship with Communion
9:30 a.m. Traditional Worship
11 a.m. Contemporary Worship

Media Ministries Broadcasts
8 a.m. KELO-FM Radio (101.9)
11 a.m. KSFY (Sioux Falls), KPRY (Pierre) and KABY (Aberdeen)

www.youtube.com/flcsf
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First Word

First Word is the monthly newspaper of First Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, S.D. It is distributed to members of the congregation and others upon request. Opinions expressed in First Word are those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by the First Lutheran Church congregation or staff. The editors of First Word reserve the right to edit submissions.

Newsletter submissions are due the first business day of the month. Please submit articles or questions regarding First Word to Susan Bell, Communications Coordinator, at sbell@flcsf.org. Reader feedback is always welcome. First Word is available to read or download online at flcsf.org/firstword.

– ADULT FORUM from p. 1

Adult Forum Series cont.

Overall, how does a Christian share his or her faith in such times when the scientific method seems to have made Christianity obsolete, times that are shot-through with moral relativity and a parity of religions?

Wednesday, Sept. 6:	Humble Apologetics: Defending the Christian Faith Today
Wednesday, Sept. 13:	Faith and Reason: Friend or Foe?
Wednesday, Nov. 8:	The Christian Faith in a Pluralistic Age
Wednesday, Nov. 15:	God, Ethical Relativism, and the Search for Moral Foundations

"Martin Luther and His Conversation Partners"

In a recent interview with Pastor Christopherson, as we now approach the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, he made the following observation: "During my years of doctoral studies in Chicago, it became increasingly clear that even though I'd studied Martin Luther's theology during my days at Augustana College and Luther Seminary … there was this nagging question that finally came to full awareness: 'Who really knows Luther who only Luther knows?' What I mean by this is that no thinker, and this is especially true of such a seminal mind as Luther's, can simply be understood by reading his primary works or even the very best of commentaries on his thought. In my generation, it was too often the case that professors either made Luther "stand alone" (pun intended) in some kind of vacuum or hero worship … or when he'd be aligned with his theological sparing partners … they were quickly dismissed or made into the "whipping boys." And so after stewing on this, for now some 35 years in parish ministry, I'd like to offer people a chance to more fully engage/understand Luther through the major theological exchanges or debates that brought about the foundational years of the Magisterial Reformation." Christopherson will seek to accomplish this offering with the following schedule:

Luther's "conversation partners" of the Magisterial Reformation (clockwise): Erasmus of Rotterdam, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, Martin Luther

Wednesday, Sept. 20:	Understanding a Reformation: Erasmus of Rotterdam and Luther
Wednesday, Sept. 27:	Understanding the Nature of God: John Calvin and Luther
Wednesday, Oct. 4:	Understanding a Sacrament: Ulrich Zwingli and Luther

The Adult Discipleship Board is also delighted to announce that world-renowned Luther Scholar, Dr. Steven Paulson (Professor of Systematic Theology at Luther Seminary) will be preaching at First Lutheran on the festive occasion of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, Sunday, Oct. 29. His most recent book is entitled, ***Lutheran Theology*** (T&T Clark International, 2011) and forthcoming book ***The Hidden Life of God: Integrating Luther's Deus Absconditus*** (Fortress Press, 2018). Later that afternoon, Dr. Paulson will be joined by organist extraordinaire, Dr. John Schwandt (Zachary Rygiel's Master's Degree adviser) in an ecumenical Hymn Festival with a mass choir, brass and string ensemble. Please mark your calendar now. Seating will be limited.

Don't THUMP Your Melon!

First Lutheran Church has partnered with SD Emergency Medical Services for Children in their campaign of "Don't THUMP Your Melon!" T-shirts were donated by Pheasantland Industries at the SD Penitentiary and First Lutheran sponsored the printing so shirts can be handed out as rewards by the Sioux Falls Police Department for people found riding their bicycles and wearing a helmet.

Church Council

Officers/Executive Committee
Brian Aamlid . . . President
Aaron Ellingsen . . . Vice President
Eric Severson . . . Treasurer
Mindy Moore . . . Secretary
Pr. John Christopherson . . . Senior Pastor

Council Representatives
Alma Kallesen . . . Adult Discipleship
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Deb Nelson . . . Financial Services
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Julia Kramer . . . Member-at-Large
Diane Atchison . . . Member-at-Large
Maria Neely . . . Member-at-Large
Lyle Eidsness . . . Property
Tim Heinemann . . . Stewardship
Suzanne Willadsen . . . Worship and Music
Ben Ready . . . Youth and Family

First Lutheran Church Directory

Pastoral Staff
(203) Dr. John Christopherson . . . Senior Pastor
(210) Rev. Lars Olson . . . Executive Pastor
(214) Rev. Katherine Olson* . . . Associate Pastor
(209) Jeff Backer . . . Intern Pastor
(202) Rev. James Christopherson* . . . Visitation
(202) Rev. David Houck* . . . Visitation
(202) Rev. Roger Noer* . . . Visitation
(202) Rev. Dennis Tranberg* . . . Visitation
(202) Rev. Dave Johnson . . . Emeritus

Administrative Staff
(202) Donna Jahr . . . Secretary to the Pastors
(236) Marilyn McNeill . . . Church Administrator
(201) Judi Mueller* . . Receptionist/Mbr. Secretary
(201) Cleo Sorensen* Receptionist/Mbr. Secretary
(201) Pat Svennes* . . Receptionist/Mbr. Secretary

Caring Ministries
(237) Jana Elkins* . . . Parish Nurse
(202) Cheryl Satterlee* . . . Wedding Coordinator

Financial Services
(211) LaVonne Wolf . . . Financial Specialist

Media Ministries
(252) Susan Bell . . Communications Coordinator
(213) Jared Callahan* Communications Assistant
(236) John Cerwinske* . . Sound Board Technician
(213) Kathy Hein* . . . Broadcast Director
(213) David Palmer* . . . Broadcast Director
(213) Hons Oakland* . . . Broadcast Director
(213) Tanner Wangsness* . . . Broadcast Director

Facilities
(201) Dave Wilson . . . Facility Manager
(201) Rick East . . . Custodian
(201) Jeff Hartnett . . . Custodian

Worship and Music Ministries
(260) Zachary Rygiel . . . Director/Organist, FLYGHT and Jubilant Singers Director
(261) Shirley Barlow* . . . Administrative Assistant
(261) Donna Hamilton* . . . Accompanist
(261) Dr. Jerry Hanson* . . Dir. of Music Emeritus
(261) Ali Hoffman* . . . Youth Handbell Director
(261) Marcia Kittelson* . . . Organist Emerita
(261) Bonnie Lindgren* . . . Carol Choir Director
(261) Dr. Paul Nesheim* . . Adult Choir Director and Women's Choir Director
(261) Larry Olson* . . . Contemporary Worship Coordinator
(261) Mary Ryrholm* . . . Agape Ringers Director
(261) Sue Severson* . . . Accompanist
(261) Pam Sonnichsen* Instrumental Coordinator

Youth and Family Ministries
(204) Marnie Dahle Backer . . . Director
(228) Nancy Henrichsen* . . . Nursery Attendant
(228) Gayle Johnson* . . . Nursery Attendant
(228) Annel Jolo* . . . Nursery Attendant
(228) Irma Rodriguez Leon* Nursery Attendant
(238) Heather Smith . . . Children's Minister
(228) Kris Stark . . . Nursery Coordinator
(228) Samantha Stark . . . Nursery Coordinator
(235) Elias Youngquist . . . Youth Minister
(228) Kristy Zuraff . . . Administrative Assistant

*( )=Direct dial phone extensions *Part-time*

Main phone: . . . (605) 336-3734
Direct dial: . . . (605) 339-1983
Toll-free: . . . (800) 425-9899
Fax: . . . (605) 336-8370
Pastoral emergency: . . . (605) 610-9431
Custodian cell: . . . (605) 351-8281
Project CAR: . . . (605) 332-2777

Media Ministry

Media broadcast sponsors May – June

First Lutheran Church's worship can be seen every Sunday at 11 a.m. on KSFY, KPRY and KABY in South Dakota, southwest Minnesota, northwest Iowa and northeast Nebraska. A live radio broadcast of worship is aired Sundays at 8 a.m. on KELO-FM, 101.9.

KELO broadcast sponsored:

May 5: In loving memory of Albert and Stella Wold by Dick and Jeanne Wold.

May 14: In loving memory of Harry and Lena Dooyema by their family.

May 21: In loving memory of Paul Willadsen by his family and friends.

May 28: In memory of Erling and Clara Haugo, who would have celebrated their wedding anniversary on May 29. It is made possible by earnings of a gift to the First Lutheran Church Foundation.

June 4: In loving memory of Vince and Naomi Pratt's 66th wedding anniversary, which would have been on June 10, by Karen Pratt.

June 11: In memory of Albert and Esther Berdahl, who were married at First Lutheran Church on June 11, 1937, given by their family.

June 18: In honor of Doris Salem, who will celebrate her birthday on June 23, by her family.

June 25: By John Hillgren in loving memory of Ralph and Priscilla Hillgren, and in memory of their daughter, Sonja Dorothy Hillgren. It is made possible through a gift to the First Lutheran Church Foundation.

KSFY telecast (fully sponsored unless noted otherwise):

May 7: In loving memory of Jake and Amelia Fritz and their son, Leonard Fritz, by family.

May 14: In memory and honor of all Mothers by the First Lutheran Church Women.

June 4: Partially sponsored by Frank & Joan Hansen in honor of their 63rd wedding anniversary

June 11 In memory of Muriel Ekeland by her family, Norm Ekeland, Rob and Kari Ekeland, Deb Ekeland and Rachel Levine.

June 18: In recognition of Joyce M. Ashley's parents through earnings from her memorial gift to the First Lutheran Church Foundation.

June 25: In memory of David and Susan Lankford by the earnings of a gift to the First Lutheran Church Foundation from their family and friends. David and Susan would have celebrated their anniversary on June 23.

KSFY closed captioning sponsored:

May 7: In loving memory of Paul Willadsen by his family and friends.

June 11: In memory of Albert and Esther Berdahl, who were married at First Lutheran Church on June 11, 1937, given by their family.

Sponsorships available

Worship broadcasts are made possible by supporters from all around the country. To learn more about sponsoring a radio broadcast, telecast or closed captioning in honor of, or in memory of a loved one, or in celebration of a special life event, please call Donna Jahr at (605) 339-1983, ext. 202. Donations of any size will help the broadcast ministry. Dates for future months not listed may be available. Please call for additional dates throughout the year.

KELO radio broadcast sponsorships ($150) available for Aug. 13, 20; Sept. 3, 10, 17 and 24.

KSFY telecast sponsorships ($1300) are available for Aug. 20.

Closed captioning sponsorships for the weekly KSFY telecasts ($140) are available on Aug. 20, 27; Sept. 10, 17 and 24.

Un-sponsored broadcast, telecast and closed caption dates are made possible in part through gifts and memorials to First Lutheran Church Media Ministries.

Online giving

You are able to make a one-time or ongoing gift to the mission and ministries of First Lutheran Church at any time through the First Lutheran website. You may also pay for events and registrations on the website. Please visit our web page at flcsf.org and click on the "Give" tab. You will be directed to create a log in and password. Questions? Please contact Lavonne Wolf, 339-1983 ext. 211 or lwolf@flcsf.org.

Financial update - June 2017

Total Revenues - Year to date

2017 Actual $991,823
2016 Actual $931,455

Total Expenses - Year to date

2017 Actual $1,024,442
2016 Actual $993,780

Contract For Deed – Ideal $348,739
God's Gifts. Our Responsibility. Income thru June 2017 ..... $3,990,836
Campus Improvement Income thru June 2017 ..... $200,752
Worship Attendance June 3,145

Financial Services

Gifts and memorials

Gifts to the Foundation in memory of:

Dick Gregerson: Don & Judy Erickson
DeLoris Erickson: Elwin & M. Eileen Brown, Friends & Family, Dorothy Grevlos, Sue Miller, Richard & Lorna Muchow, Hugh Shiveley
Kent Morstad: John Hillgren

Gifts to the Foundation - Youth In Memory of:

DeLoris Erickson: Betty Pfeifle

Gift to Caring Ministry in memory of:

Elaine Cary: Iola Nelson

Gift to Media Ministry in honor of:

Lynwood Oyos' 90th Birthday: Howard & Lou Ann Paulson
Marlys Shaff: Doug & Carol Uthe

Gift to Media Ministry in memory of:

Elaine Cary: Jeff & Edna Husman
DeLoris Erickson: Frances Alberty, Gary & Shirley Barlow, Elaine Berg, Steve & Doris Bushard, Faith Christiansen, Stan & Sandra Christopherson, Jim & DeAnn Clark, Darlene Colwill, Jeanette Edman, Milton & Joyce Erickson, Jim & Sandy Fink, Friends, Cheryl Grevlos, Jean Hammer, Frank & Joan Hansen, Willis & Phyllis Hanson, Orville Hill, Mary Ann Hohman, Frances Kilen, Carol Lerdal, Barb Matson, Conrad & Alta Otterness, Howard & Lou Ann Paulson, John Peckham, Pr. Franklin & Marit Pudas, Doug & Carol Uthe
Dick Gregerson: Brian & Denise Aamlid, Vance & Sherry Goldammer, Juie Greenfield, Donna Jahr, Richard & Alma Kallesen, Jerome & Nancy Lammers, Al & Sally Larimer, Carol Lerdal, Bob & Sharon Litz, John & Elnear Marshman, Dave & Linda Munson, Martin & Mary Oyos, Howard & Lou Ann Paulson, John Peckham, Tom & Mary Simmons, Mike & Gloria Simpson, Paul & Karen Van Bockern, James & Karri Wiederrich, Ronald Williamson
Kent Morstad: Barb Matson
Maxine Norlin: First Lutheran Church Women
Leona Peck: First Lutheran Church Women, Bette Gerberding & Family, Mr. & Mrs. Richard Graff, Pr. Leroy & Elaine Nevin, Mr. & Mrs. Gene Thill
Eunice Quamen: John Odney, Gary & Joan Tisher
Ray Stratman: Jeff & Edna Husman
Paul Willadsen: Steve & Cheryl Schurtz
Janet Yates: Christa Hanson, Bernice Jacobson, Bill & Nancy Olson, Joyce Sande, Don & Flo Toft, Doug & Carol Uthe

Gift to Music Ministry in honor of:

Frank Hansen: Marv Widmann

Gift to Music Ministry in memory of:

Dean Berdahl: Marv Widmann
Dick Gregerson: Marv Widman

Gift to Outreach Ministry - The Banquet in memory of:

Dick Gregerson: Carl & Janet Naessig

Gift to Organ Fund in memory of:

Dick Gregerson: James & Mindy Moore

Gift to Volunteer Shop in memory of:

Terry Wolf: Sharyl Wolf

Gift to Youth - Camp Ministry in memory of:

DeLoris Erickson: Lyle & Jean Eidsenss, Friends, Carl & Janet Naessig, Patricia Niemann, Mr. & Mrs. Richard Sweetman

Baptisms

June 3 Zachary Leonard Zuraff, son of Joshua and Meagan Zuraff
June 10 Henry Daniel Gleason, son of Matthew and Alicia Gleason
June 11 Rory Ann Aamlid, daughter of Erik and Leah Aamlid
June 17 Huxley John Stensland, son of Justin and Chelsea Stensland
June 24 Michael David Swanson, son of David and Katie Swanson
June 25 Christian John Entenman, son of Amy and James Lee Entenman II
June 25 Carson Lee Miller, son of Brock Miller and Megan Hotchkin

Weddings

June 3 Adam Arendsee and Rosalyn Rasmussen
June 10 Brady Snell and Haley Sundet

Deaths

June 4 Kent Morstad
June 8 DeLoris Erickson
June 8 William 'Bill' Kost
June 10 Christopher 'Chris' Bott
June 12 Janet Yates
June 22 Gordon Edman

Evangelism, Mission and Outreach Ministries (EMO)

Special Offering envelope

Holy Land Ministries

By Jordan Rygiel

This month's special offering envelope will go to support Augusta Victoria Hospital, a hospital system operated by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) on the southern side of Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem. This is a particularly pertinent offering for First Lutheran Church, as our Intern Pastor, Jeff Backer, had the pleasure of visiting last month during his study in the Holy Land.

Augusta Victoria is a hospital system specializing in oncology and renal care for Palestinians. It is the most advanced hospital of its kind in the area, making it essential to both Palestinians and Israelis. Despite tension between the two groups, both come together to utilize this special hospital system. Augusta Victoria is also venturing into long-term palliative and hospice care for Jewish people. This will be the only dedicated facility offering palliative and hospice care in Israel. These are just a few of the many specialty areas of Augusta Victoria. To house all of these specialties, Augusta Victoria operates 118 beds per day with 403 staff caring for the 12,605 inpatients. Outside of its inpatient care, Augusta Victoria provided 22,716 dialysis sessions, 20,088 chemotherapy sessions, and 25,585 interventions in the radiation oncology unit during 2016 (data from 2016 LWF Jerusalem Annual Report).

In addition to its work caring for the people of Israel/Palestine, Augusta Victoria is working to provide more vocational opportunities to Palestinians and Bedouins through a vocational training program offered specifically to these groups. Whether it is treating members in the community or creating jobs for members of the community, Augusta Victoria greatly impacts those living in Jerusalem and surrounding areas. To learn more about Augusta Victoria, visit https://jerusalem.lutheranworld.org.

Please consider giving to support this vital ministry located in the Holy Land. Your offering specifically makes a difference in the lives of the people reached through LWF and Augusta Victoria. You may place your special offering envelope in the offering plate or drop it off at the information desk in the Welcome Center.

The "Fifth Gospel"

By Jeff Backer, Intern Pastor, EMO Director

Traveling Israel is walking through the fifth gospel. "Read the fifth gospel and the world of the four will open to you," – St. Jerome

"What was the best thing about your trip?" has been a common question since my return from studying in Israel. Almost as common as, "Did you feel safe?"; to which I would say a resounding "YES!" It was truly amazing to take nearly a month and spend each day in the geographical locations that we commonly read over in scripture. There is no way to narrow it down to just one. The newly revealed depth of God's story in the Holy Land will be something that percolates through within my teaching and preaching over the rest of my life. As I have said, there was just so much to take in; it will take a lifetime to comprehend it all.

This amazing journey was possible due to a scholarship which I was awarded through Sioux Falls Seminary. Each year, a scholarship contest is held in which students are encouraged to apply and to write an essay explaining why they should go and how it will help their ministry to participate in this experience. Three scholarships are awarded each year, and this year I was a grateful recipient.

The context of the course was the Historical and Geographical Study of the Bible. Primarily, it was an archeological study tied to scripture. Most of the material covered was based in the Old Testament, with many sites also related to the time of Jesus Christ. If you read the books of Joshua through 2 Kings, noting the cities and sites listed; we actually stood on those sites. We experienced the land from the Lebanon/Syria boarder (where we did hear machine gun fire and mortar bombing), all of the way South into the Negev Desert. From the Mediterranean Sea on the west to Amman, Jordan to our east. Our professor was Dr. J. Carl Laney, a professor for 42 years with Western Theological Seminary in Portland, Oregon. Dr. Laney possesses a vast knowledge for the archeology of the Biblical record.

Our class was made up of 22 graduate level students and 26 others as part of Pastor/Parishioner groups from all over the world. We had students from the United States, China, Haiti, Puerto Rico, New Zealand, Canada, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Ireland, and ranged in age from 17 to 76.

Though this was a graduate level course, my expectations were monumentally surpassed. We took in so many Biblical sites and learned the historical and cultural context to the scriptures. I would encourage anyone, especially those called into a ministry context, to spend time in the "fifth gospel."

Above, Jeff Backer, Adam Barrett and Steve McCreedy, all students at Sioux Falls Seminary, cross the Sea of Galilee by boat.

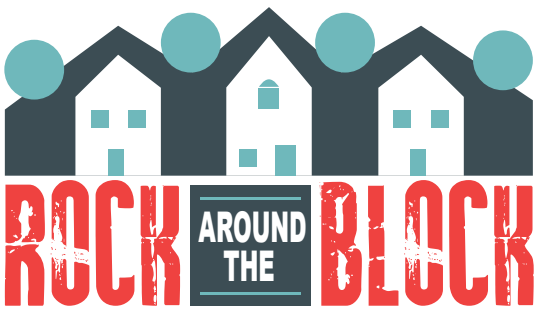
Below is a view of the Old City and Temple Mount from the Mount of Olives

Bottom is a "stable" in Bethlehem like Jesus was born in.

Worship in the Park and Blessing of the Backpacks

Sunday, Aug. 20, 11 am
McKennan Park

The annual Worship in the Park and potluck will be held Sunday, Aug. 20, at 11 a.m., at the McKennan Park band shell. Larry Olson and friends will provide worship music. Children and youth are invited to bring their school backpacks for our annual "Blessing of the Backpacks." Please bring a lawn chair. Plan to stay for lunch provided by the Evangelism, Mission and Outreach Board.



Second Annual Block Party – Aug. 30

Please join us at our Neighborhood Block Party on Wednesday, Aug. 30, from 5:30-7 p.m.. Open to the community so bring your friends and lets rock at 11th & Dakota Ave.

Accepting donations of toilet paper, full size shampoo, toothpaste and bars of soap for Charis Ministries.

Free Supper | Live Music | Bouncy Houses | Child ID Machine

Non Profit Organization
US Postage
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Madison, SD

First Word
First Lutheran Church
327 S Dakota Ave
Sioux Falls SD 57104

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