

March 2024

THE MESSENGER

Easter
Eggsperience

Tuesday
March 26

First Communion
Workshop

March 27

March 31

Easter Worship
8:45 & 10:45

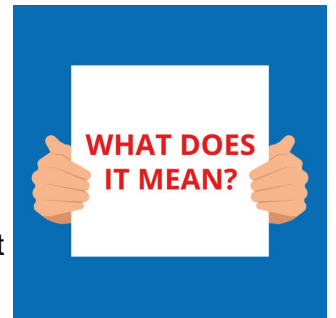
Fasnacht, Mardi Gras, Fat Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Passover, Pascha... what does all this mean?

To really understand any of these words, we need to remember the story of the Exodus. Pharaoh and Moses were in a tight power struggle, and our God would prevail. Our people didn't have time to spare, so they went home and celebrated the Pascha, the Passover, where the angel of death passed over all the houses that were marked with blood from the lamb of their meal. Because time was of the essence, there wasn't time to let the bread rise, and for the Passover meal, the people ate flatbread. In all the homes that didn't have the blood of the lamb on the doorpost, the angel of death killed the firstborn children, including Pharaoh's own son. In his grief Pharaoh let all the slaves go, and our people ran as fast as they could.

Our Jewish siblings, remembering our combined history, continue to celebrate Passover with a traditional meal. A meal that doesn't include yeast, because the yeast was the old way, and they were trusting God to do something new. In preparation for the celebration, they clean and scour their homes to make sure there is no yeast hiding in their cupboards. This is also where many Christians bring the practice of giving something up for Lent. In early homes, there would be a party the night before Lent started to make sure everything that contained yeast was removed from the house. There are many forms of this celebration, for German Lutherans it's called Fasnacht and you make sure that all of the yeast (including that used to make beer) is removed from the home. In other Lutheran traditions, they eat pancakes or ebelskivers on the day before Lent starts to eat all the yeast. In each area, there is some sort of food eaten or drank that represents the time before Ash Wednesday, when we all remember that we are created from the dust of the earth and will someday return to that dust.

It makes me wonder about where First is as a people of God. Pastor Duane has walked faithfully with you as you have continued to change and grow. Soon, Pastor Greg will take the next steps with you and you will walk together into your future. But what about this middle space, I wonder if any spaces need to be cleaned out. Where are the spaces that

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still have the old ways? Are there spaces where the old yeast is still hiding? As we take these next steps in preparation, how do you need to clean your heart to prepare for what is next?

As we walk into Lent, I'm here with you for the middle steps, but I don't know what areas are still harboring old ideas that need to be cleaned. Where are the spaces that you have left that need to be readied for what is next? In a few short weeks you'll be on a new path, what are you putting into your space during this time to get ready for what is next?

I don't know what you will do next, or who you will be, but I'm excited to be in this middle space with you as you prepare.

In hope of what will be-
Pastor Julie

Welcome

Pastor Juliet Focken (it rhymes with "token") will be walking with us as our supply pastor until Pastor Greg arrives.

Pastor Juliet Focken, lives with her husband Fred, and their youngest son Colton in Elkhorn. Since leaving the Nebraska Synod staff in 2022, Pastor Julie has been a full-time student at UNO in their Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. On the side, she does part-time transitional work with congregations in the Call Process. Originally from New York, Pastor Julie was a Special Education teacher before attending seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Her congregation of her first call was in Nance County Nebraska, before she was called on Synod Staff. She started in the CMHC program after realizing that there were not enough counselors in the Omaha area to deal with the depression and anxiety left in the community after living through a pandemic. She has a passion for reading, creating pottery, and finding new ways to make the perfect pizza.



I just want to take this opportunity to thank the members and friends of First Lutheran Church for the card shower, the "sweet treats" and all your expressions of appreciation for my ministry on my final Sunday at First on February 18.

I also want to thank the congregational leaders, staff members, and synod leadership for all the recent adjustments that have been made to accommodate First's needs during Lent and Easter while I transition to full-time ministry at Rejoice! I realize this change came about sooner than anyone thought it might. I appreciate everyone's resilience and flexibility.

Related to that is the willingness of everyone at First to accommodate the "experiment" we undertook last fall, by splitting my time between two congregations different stages of their pastoral transitions. Thank you for adapting to that arrangement as well. And for the concern for my health and wellbeing that many of you expressed.

But finally, I want to thank you for the opportunity you afforded to me for almost all the last two years to serve you as your transitional pastor under a unique set of circumstances. While we may have known that things are changing in both church and culture, we worked together dealing with challenges we still don't fully understand. At least I don't understand them. You have given me another set of experiences to reflect upon as I enter what I expect to be a final chapter in my work as a transitional minister. And of course, so many meaningful relationships.

I will continue to hold you in prayer as you enter the next chapter of your mission and ministry with your new Lead Pastor.

Blessings on your partnership in ministry.
Pastor Duane Miller



in

Worship

Lent 2024 *Altered by the Spirit*

Sunday Worship at 8:45 & 10:45 am

Holy Communion served March 3, 17, 24, and 31

Wednesday Lenten Worship

March 6, 13, and 20

6:15 pm - Holden Evening Prayer

Lenten Wednesday Meals

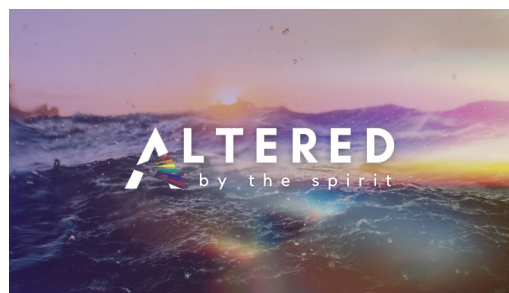
Served each week 5:15 - 6:00 pm

Menu changes each week:

March 6 - PIZZA

March 13 - TACO BAR

March 20 - BAKED ZITI



Lenten Meals: Help may be needed each week to setup, serve, cleanup and bring treats. The signup is available from the Ministry Opportunities button on our website or you can contact Tami in the church office and she will tell you what kind of help is still needed.

Special thanks to our team leaders and volunteers for making these meals a great time for food and fellowship.



Our Lenten offering and the proceeds from the Wednesday meals will go to The Bridge. The mission of The Bridge is to end domestic violence and sexual assault, and to provide the resources, education and community needed for healing and prevention.

Holy Week Worship



Palm Sunday
March 24
8:45 & 10:45



Maundy Thursday
March 28
7:00 pm



Good Friday
March 29
7:00 pm



Easter Sunday
March 31
8:45 & 10:45

Discipleship



WOW (Women of the Word) - The WOW (Women of the Word) Bible Study will meet at church on Wednesday, March 13, at 9:30 am in the Heritage Room. New faces always welcome!

Faith Study Group - Faith Study Group will meet at 7:00 pm on Thursday, February 8, in the conference room. Sue Williams will lead the lesson.

Chick Flicks: On Tuesday, March 5, the Chick Flicks group is planning to go to the theater (not sure which one) to see the last 2 episodes of season 4 of *The Chosen*. Please contact Kris Lindgren (krisl@flcfremont.org) if you plan to attend.

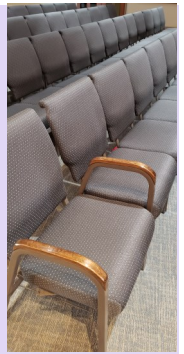
Men's Study Group: Bring your own coffee and join this group on Saturday mornings at 8:30 am in the Heritage Room. The group is studying the book of Matthew.

Sunday Morning Study: Kris Lindgren is leading a new study on Sunday mornings at 9:45 in the Heritage Room. NOOMA is a series of short films that explore our world from a perspective of Jesus. Jesus encouraged his listeners to search, to question, to wrestle with the implication of what he was saying and doing. Nooma is an invitation to search, question and join the discussion. Come as your schedule allows.

Discipleship

Chairs + Prayers + Praise!

Please join us as we offer prayers for those that will gather to praise and worship God during Holy Week and Easter. We are seeking individuals and families willing to physically come gather in prayer over the worship chairs at FLC during Holy Week. A written prayer will be provided or you can choose your own prayer. This will begin on Palm Sunday, March 24, and continue through Wednesday, March 27. You pick the time that best works for you. Please contact Tami Hall if you are willing to be a part of this prayer ministry.



Altar Flowers and Radio Broadcast

Radio: April 7, 14, 21

Radio broadcast sponsors are \$160 each week and Altar Flower sponsors are \$50 each week. Sign up online from our website or call the church office. We have many available days open yet in 2024.



Spring Flowers and Easter Lilies

Help us again fill the cross with lovely spring flowers on Easter. Your \$20 donation will help decorate for the celebration of the resurrection on March 31.

Mission and Outreach

See the many gifts God has given through His people.

Mobile Banquet: The next meal for the Mobile Banquet will be served on March 14. Help is needed to donate food items, help pack meals, drive the bus, help serve meals, and clean the kitchen. Items needed this month are: applesauce pouches, dinner rolls and cookies or bars. Rolls and treats should be individually wrapped. Sign up online or contact the church office to see where help is needed. Please contact the church office if you have a suggestion for a mobile meal location in Fremont.



The Quilters: Last year The Quilters were gifted three van loads of fabric. Thanks to everyone who cut fabric, sewed tops, etc. We are now in the finishing stage since only a few quilts remain to be sewn. Please consider SEWING the edges down. Zigzag or straight stitch can be used. Quilts can be picked up at church and sewn at home on your own schedule. Just call the office and leave your name and you will be contacted.



Sheets of any size are still needed. Bring them to the church office.

On Wednesday, March 20, at 1:00 pm, the finishing of quilts will continue with tying and pinning. There are nearly 100 quilts that need to be finished. PLEASE COME and help.

Mission Collection: Thank you for your donation of cleaning supplies for Lutheran Family Services. They came recently to pick up all the donations which filled several very large boxes.

This year our Wednesday Lenten offering and proceeds from the Wednesday meals will go to The Bridge. As victims are trying to leave their abusive home with their children or start over on one income, The Bridge helps free up these costs so their clients can get their rent and utilities paid. **In addition to your monetary donations, you can bring jars of peanut butter or jelly and/or juice boxes.** These items are used by clients in emergency situations.



Food Truck Festival: Save the Date! The Food Truck Festival is returning again this year to the church parking lot on Thursday, July 25. If you have any contact information for or have a favorite food truck, please let the office know and we will see if they are available for the date. This is a great community event and the vendors each give a portion of their proceeds to the Fremont Area United Way.

Lawn Mowers Needed: We will again be asking for help mowing the grass closest to the church building. If you or your family is interested in helping 2 or 3 times between mid-April and October, please let the church office know.

Children and Youth

Important Youth Programming Dates:

Please note: There will be no regular youth programming on Wednesday, March 27

WAM Kids (Worship Arts Ministry for Kids)

Wednesdays 4:30-6:00 pm

Confirmation

Wednesdays

New time for the rest of the year: 7-8 pm

March 8-9—Overnight at the zoo

First Lutheran Youth (FLYs) - 7:30-9:00 pm

March 13 – Destination Unknown with FLC Fargo youth

KidsFirst

Sundays 9:45-10:40am

No KidsFirst on Easter Sunday

First Communion Workshop



First communion preparation will be offered at FLC for kids of all ages along with parents, grandparents or faith friends. Families will work together to explore the deep mystery and truths of God's body and blood given and shed for us, through hands-on learning experiences.

At FLC we leave it to parents to decide when you think your child is ready to attend (for some this may be much younger and others it may be older). The workshop is intended to educate the family about how Lutheran Christians recognize and receive the sacrament of Holy Communion. The workshop will be held on Wednesday, March 27, 6:00-7:30 pm. Contact Heidi if you plan to attend.

Early Learning Center News

The spring came suddenly bursting upon the world as a child burst into a room, with a laugh and a shout and hands full of flowers!

March 1 is Read Across America Day! Read Across America Week is celebrated from March 2 to 6 — it begins on the birthday of the beloved author, Dr. Seuss. The entire month of March is dedicated to reading. The National Education Association encourages reading and educating people about its benefits, especially among children and young adults.

The ELC students learned about their teeth during Dental Health month in February. Thanks to Dr. Ben Peters for stopping by the classrooms.



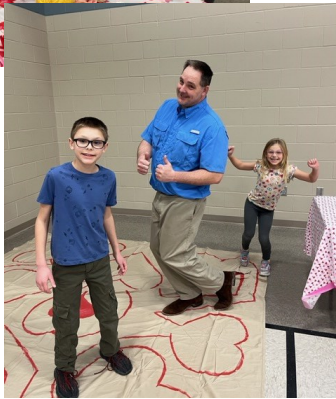
**TUESDAY
MARCH 26
4 TO 6PM**

*Hear the Easter Story
*Make Easter Crafts *Decorate Eggs
*Photo Opportunities

*Stay and eat or take to-go!
\$5 Adults/\$3 Kids
(All proceeds benefit The Bridge)

JOIN OUR
**EASTER
EGG-
SPERIENCE**

Interact
with
LIVE Bunnies!



The cross+generational Love Event on February 11 celebrated God's love for us.

KidsFirst and ELC kids provided special music at the 10:45 service.



Thanks to all who supported the FLY fundraiser for their summer mission trip.

Great food! Great entertainment!
Great fellowship!



Remembering in Prayer

Remember to let the church office know if you are facing a health concern or will be in the hospital so someone can be in contact with you. If you request, the prayer chain will also be activated. It is also helpful to our FirstCare ministry if you let us know about someone who could use a caring call.

Prayers of healing for Cherry Gocken, Tom Bosshardt.

Prayers of peace for:

- Mary Beth & Chris Leaver on the loss of her mother Corrine Feller.
- Dorothy Fenske and Lyle Fenske on the loss of son/brother, Dale Fenske and daughter/sister Dianna Kassebaum.

Baptism:

February 4 - **Hudson Michael White** Parents: Caden & Morgan White

*Our thoughts
And prayers
Are with you.*

Council Highlights - January

Pastor Duane's informal sendoff is scheduled for February 27 at 505 in downtown Fremont. The event is planned for 6:30-8:30 pm. All are welcome to say thank you and goodbyes to Pastor Duane for his two-year transition service at First Lutheran.

The Early Learning Center had a surprise audit on February 16 and passed with a grade of 100%. That same week there was an incident at the middle school nearby and the response by the church staff as well as the ELC staff to securing the building was outstanding.

With Pastor Duane's service at First Lutheran coming to a close, Bishop Scott Johnson will be presiding over Easter services.

Respectfully Submitted by Derek Fey, Secretary of FLC Council

** Full minutes are available upon request

Monthly Financial Report

	Jan Actual	Jan Budget	YTD Budget	YTD Actual	Prior YTD
Pledged Giving	\$ 62,715.59	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 365,000.00	\$ 403,812.08	\$ 318,438.10
General Income	\$ 67,190.89	\$ 63,236.66	\$ 386,598.38	\$ 439,466.76	\$ 339,650.45
Mission Income	\$ 11,295.20	\$ 4,004.16	\$ 23,520.88	\$ 52,569.37	\$ 24,354.15
Expenses	\$ 88,471.36	\$ 97,667.50	\$ 421,740.50	\$ 392,592.35	\$ 376,330.46
Net Profit/(Loss)	\$ (9,985.27)	\$ (30,426.68)	\$ (11,621.24)	\$ 99,443.78	\$ (12,325.86)
Building Fund Contributions	\$ 7,570.00			\$ 19,817.67	\$ 65,440.24
Build Fund Balance	\$ 18,497.28				

With pledged giving \$3k over budget, the Rejoice expense share, and expenses under budget, January ended \$20K better than budgeted. What a blessing! There was still a \$10K loss for the month because it was a 3 pay-period month, but there is a \$99.5K profit YTD. A deficit is still projected for the fiscal year, but it should be less than \$50K. Building Fund contributions continue to build to help offset costs of large unexpected repairs that occur as the building ages and to have for deductible coverage as needed. So many things to be thankful for this Lenten season and as we begin to prepare for Pastor DeBoer's arrival. God's Blessings ~ Wendy Grosse, Administrator



Targeted Giving... (as of 1/31/2024) We want to give people of FLC the opportunity to give in a *targeted* way around their particular interests and passion, as well as the needs of our mission and ministry. The following categories have primarily existed in our Memorial and Special Gift Account, but we want you to be aware of these different funds on an on-going basis. Your financial support in these *targeted* areas will bring critical support to the ministry of our congregation! Thank you for the many ways that you give!

Worship/Music	\$7,419.61	First Lutheran Youth	\$8,859.54	Prayer Shawl	\$1,214.47
Technology	\$3,332.41	Bible Camp Scholarship	\$6,255.54	Quilt Ministry	\$3,792.26
Church Home	\$7,690.33	Good Samaritan	\$2,790.46	Children's WAM	\$604.09
Building Maint.	\$18,497.28	Radio Broadcast	\$4,451.00	Spoudazo	\$4,558.16
KidsFirst	\$2,933.58			Zoe!	\$3,293.07

first lutheran church **ENDOWMENT** **Planning...Giving...***Growing...*

During the next few months, the Endowment Board (BOARD) will share with you information about the endowment fund at First Lutheran Church (FLC) and why you should consider FLC in your estate planning. Our theme for this campaign is, "Planning, Giving and Growing".

Let's be honest, estate planning can be confusing, stressful, and just plain intimidating. It's one of those things that is easy to put off thinking we will "get to it" another day. We are all unique in that we have different goals, desires and wishes that motivate us to decide how our assets will be distributed upon our death. The FLC Endowment Fund can play an important role in fulfilling your wishes and in leaving a gift that will benefit others for years to come.

Let's begin by reviewing the mission and purpose of the Endowment Fund:

The mission of the First Lutheran Endowment Fund is to support First Lutheran Church in the receipt and responsible distribution of financial and legacy gifts.

The Purpose of the First Lutheran Church Endowment Fund is to provide a perpetual source of income to benefit the ministries of First Lutheran Church and to enrich the church's life and reach beyond normal operations.

Our Mission and Purpose statements help to assure the expendable portion of the FUND and/or income from the FUND is distributed and meets the following core values of the Church:

1. Worship / Church
2. Discipleship
3. Children & Youth
4. Mission & Outreach

In the coming months, we will share with you the impact these funds had on previous benefactors and how these funds were used.

The goal of this campaign is not to cover all aspects of the estate planning process, but to familiarize you with the Endowment Fund at FLC and encourage you to talk with your financial advisor, legal counsel, or tax preparer about including FLC in your planning process.

The FLC Endowment Board

Barry Benson, Brian Brodd, Chris Coffman, Jeremy Hansen, Wendy Olson, Steve Pike and Kent Speicher.

WAM Kids: In February WAM Kids (Worship Arts Ministry for kids) learned about FLC's mission partners. They learned what the organizations do in our community and they prayed for their missions. Then they made cards to send to these organizations.



Holy three, holy one, you bring people of good will together to further your creative plan of love and healing for the world. Today we pray for our community ministry partners, and we thank you for the many ways each organization works to share their resources with the people of Fremont so that more people will receive your healing and wholeness. Bless the work we do together so that an abundant harvest of your love, justice, and peace will be known by all. Amen.

