

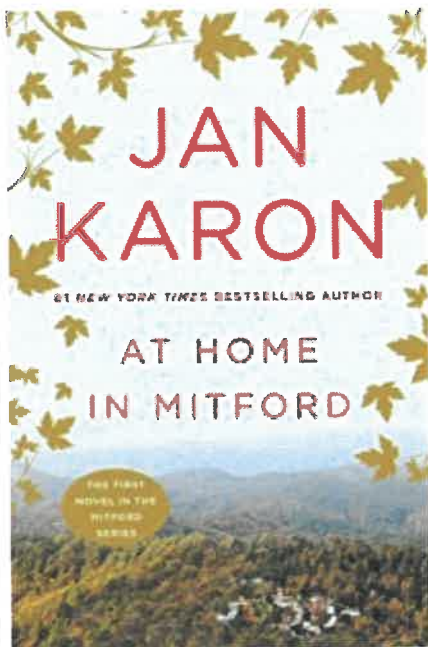
# The Voice

March 2022

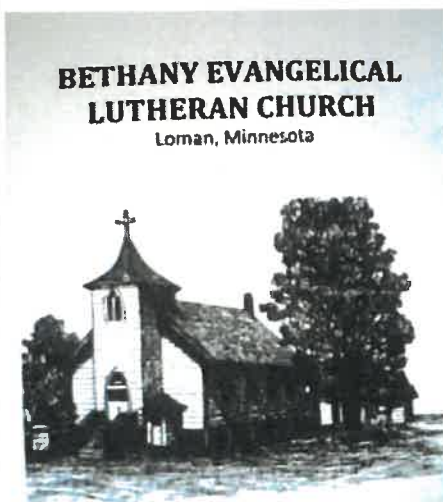


A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

*A Congregation of the  
Northeastern  
Minnesota Synod, ELCA*



**Book recommendation.  
See page 9.**



**News from Bethany.  
See page 6.**



## Lenten soup suppers scheduled

The Lenten season is upon us! Ash Wednesday is March 2nd, and we will have worship with communion and the imposition of ashes. No soup supper will be served on that Wednesday. However, the remaining Lenten Wednesdays will have soup suppers with soup at 5:30 and worship following at 6:30.

We are hopeful that the COVID numbers will allow us to have these gatherings, but because we are still concerned about health and safety, we ask that people socially distance while eating by staying in family groups.

As always, several soups will be needed, in addition to breads. If you are willing and able to provide soup or bread for one of these Wednesday meals, please contact the church office at 283-2208.

## Book discussion groups planned

*Living Lutheran* Book Discussion Groups during Lent will be on Tuesdays from p.m. to 3 p.m. March 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5 or from 5:30 to 6:15 on Wednesday evenings during the Soup Suppers March 9, 16, 23, 30, April 6. Bring your soup to Memorial Hall and join Pastor Paul Wednesday evenings before church!

## From the Pastor's Desk

### **The Lenten Journey**

*"Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, <sup>2</sup>where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished."  
(Luke 4:1-2)*



**Pastor Paul Erdal**

Jesus began his 40-day journey going into the wilderness. He was "led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished (Luke 4:1-2). Of course, he was famished! This event took place after Jesus was baptized. It was the start of his three-year ministry.

What was the longest you went without food? Do you remember fasting in Lent? What are your fond memories in Lent?

When I think about Lent, I am often drawn to my favorite childhood memory ... Friday Lenten suppers at St. Anne's Catholic Church. For a reasonable price, I recall receiving two large pieces of beer battered cod on a plate full of homemade fries. In addition, there was coleslaw and homemade pie. What a meal!

Imagine if there was no Lent? No Lenten traditions nor routines!? Wow. I recently heard a parishioner inform me that they know of church who does not observe a church calendar ... no Advent, Epiphany, Lent, etc. I cannot imagine that! It's part of my DNA to follow my faith in a Church Calendar. There is a rhythm to this faith journey.

Lent is a forty-day journey. We sojourn together to the cross of Jesus Christ on Good Friday and to Easter Sunday; the day of resurrection and life in Christ! Lent begins with Ash Wednesday. This year it is March 2<sup>nd</sup> and ends with Easter on April 17<sup>th</sup>. Sundays are not counted in the 40 days in Lent. Sunday are the days of resurrection and light. With the Imposition of Ashes and the spoken words, "remember you are dust and to dust you shall return," is a poignant reminder of our humanity.

We will continue to gather as a Christian community remembering with gratitude our traditions and practices. We will remember God leads us into the future faithfully. Let us continue to be sojourners who are committed to "Sharing God's Grace."

## FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

### January 20, 2022

**Present:** Interim Pastor Paul Erdal, Brenda Bertilson, Huntz Wagner, Kathi Henrickson, Hoa Sobczynski, Brad Ettestad, Lloyd Skogstad, Nancy McBride  
**Absent:** Ardel Henrickson, BettyJeanne Henrickson

**Guests:** Duane Mannausau

**Meeting called to order at 5:06**

**Devotions:** 1 Corinthians 12 – Pastor Erdal

**Pastor's Report:**

Weekly devotions on Facebook  
 Meeting with interim pastors group  
 Bethany annual meeting January 23 at noon  
 Discuss midweek Lenten service with them  
 Join with Littlefork Lutheran or have Thursday worship  
 Annual meeting at First – “like a family meeting”

**Approved December minutes**

**Motion – Hoa Sobczynski; Second – Huntz Wagner; Carried**

**Financial report:**

An “expensive month”  
**Approved report**  
**Motion – Brenda Bertilson; Second – Kathi Henrickson; Carried**

**President's report:**

Bethany contract needs tweaking  
 Will discuss particulars with Casey Olson  
 Working with synod on legals for Facebook Donate button

**Service/Outreach:**

Community Café numbers are up. Volunteers are great!  
 Planning Souper Sunday for February 13<sup>th</sup> to benefit Food Shelf  
 Valentines to congregation on Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>  
 Working on Temple Talk potential from Food Shelf in March  
 Resume ready meals. Members can donate a dated and labeled container of hot dish, stew, chili, etc. and place it in the church freezer for retrieval when needed for special situations, e.g., illness, accident.

**Discipleship:**

Confirmation has begun for grades 7-9 on Wednesday evenings

**Fellowship:**

Huntz encourages us to look for the new people and familiar faces who are attending worship. Greet them and introduce yourself to create a feeling of fellowship.

**Buildings and Grounds:**

Steve Lindberg will hook up water line for the new fridge.

Pelland Swenson submitted a bill for shingles

ServiceMaster will now be \$260 per month

Duane Mannausau installed a clock in the sanctuary in a beautiful wooden framework

The back door of the church will be replaced with a steel door fitted with a crash bar

A clock will be installed in Memorial Hall

**Finance:**

A good giving month, but expensive

**Worship and Music:**

Joe Belanger will record music at \$7 per song

Ryan Skogstad has agreed to help with recorded music for worship

**(Council —Continued on page 4)**

**Interim Pastor:**  
**Rev. Paul J. Erdal**

**Office Hours:**

**Monday—Friday**

**9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

**218-283-2208**

**[www.firstlutheranifalls.org](http://www.firstlutheranifalls.org)**  
**[firstlutheranifalls@gmail.com](mailto:firstlutheranifalls@gmail.com)**



## Council minutes continued from page 3

### Smart Team:

Continue with the status quo of masking, communion packets, etc.

### Old Business:

Annual Report is compiled and available

Annual Meeting is January 30 following worship

### New Business:

#### Transition Team

Pastor Erdal indicated a transition team is needed

The book *Living Lutheran* could be a focal point for guidance

The team would face the big questions of re-forming church habits

Changing what church "looks like" for a changing culture

### Confirmation Handbook

**Council supports handbook and confirmation program**

**Motion by Lloyd Skogstad; second by Brad Ettestad; Carried**

#### Camperships

Money is in a dedicated fund

Parents pay registration deposit

FLW pays \$100 per camper

Church pays remainder

**Motion to continue campership program**

**Brad Ettestad moves; second – Brenda Bertilson; Carried**

#### Other Business

Hoar proposed an adult Bible study for 9 a.m. Sundays beginning February 13<sup>th</sup>

**February 15<sup>th</sup> executive meeting**

**February 17<sup>th</sup> council meeting**

**Meeting adjourned: 6:04**

Ash Wednesday Service — 6:30, March 2, 2022

6:30pm Ash Wednesday, March 2nd will remind us once again to "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return." In our mortal and imperfect nature, we ultimately rely on God's grace in Jesus Christ. We will worship with The Imposition of Ashes ... either handed out for each family to mark one another or in person depending on COVID protocol.

## Current guidelines for worship at First Lutheran

- ♦ Please wear a mask during the worship service as the safest way to prevent any possible spread of Covid.
- ♦ Social distancing is also encouraged as a way to care for others in our congregation.

**Thank you for your understanding and patience  
as we safely move forward during this difficult time.**

# Women of the ELCA

## Ladies, please save the date.

Regular FLW meetings resume on Tuesday, March 8th @5:00. These meetings are for business and fellowship (no food at this time), and they normally last about an hour. Some of the topics for the March meeting are the Helping Hands Hotdish program, March Food Share, initial thoughts about the Christmas in July bazaar, the spring gathering, and the summer convention. Everyone is welcome.

Bring a friend!



## Christmas in July bounty

## Help the FLW compile refugee kits

- Components include:
- 1 regular size bottle shampoo
  - 1 regular size bottle conditioner
  - 1 regular size bottle lotion
  - 2 deodorants—men’s or women’s
  - 1 regular size bar of soap
  - 1 large pack of feminine pads

- Or
- 1 package of razors and regular can of shaving cream
  - 1 regular size toothpaste and toothbrush
  - Comb
- Please ensure these are not travel-sized, but regular-sized units.



## Helping Hand Hotdish!

Make a little extra and stick it in the church’s freezer. Label the container with main ingredients and the date. It can help out someone experiencing a tough time. Chili and stews freeze really well! Thanks in advance.





## Bits from Bethany



**Quilting** - Moose Creek Quilters have been busy sewing and making quilts. The ladies meet Tuesdays from 9am to 2pm. The ladies are currently working on quilts that will be given to the Littlefork Care Center for resident beds as well as baby quilts that will be donated to Northern Options for Women. The quilters have created many beautiful quilts that are also available for purchase.

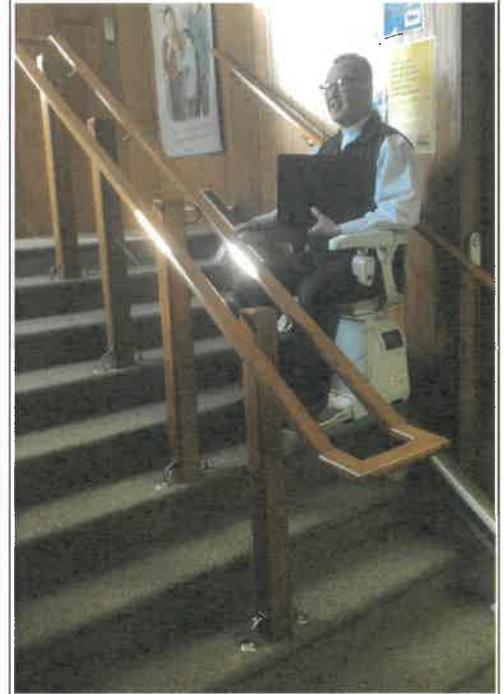
**Faith Benedix, Arlysse Palm, and Joanne Amundson tie a quilt.**



**Sunday School** has been exploring God's word and making crafts to help them remember what they have learned as well as share the stories with their families. Sunday School meets every Sunday at 9:30.

**Bethany Sunday School preparing to make hearts.**

### Sunday Morning Sillies



**Pastor Paul enjoys a ride!**

## Midweek Lenten Sermon Series

*Living Lutheran: Renewing your Congregation* by author and pastor, Dave Daubert. The focus and preaching topic will be based on this book. Books are available in the Narthex or church office.

**March 9<sup>th</sup>** – Chapter 1: A Changing Church for a Changing World

Luke 2:39-51: *Parents faithful and righteous before God, and Boy Jesus*

**March 16<sup>th</sup>** – Chapter 2: The Basics of a Lutheran Voice

Acts 2:41-47: *Life among the believers*

**March 23<sup>rd</sup>** – Chapter 3: God Has a Dream

Chapter 4: - The Church – God prefers Not to Work Alone –

Matthew 6:7-14: *The Lord's Prayer*

**March 30<sup>th</sup>** – Chapter 5: Looking for a Vision

Chapter 6: Developing and Using a Purpose Statement

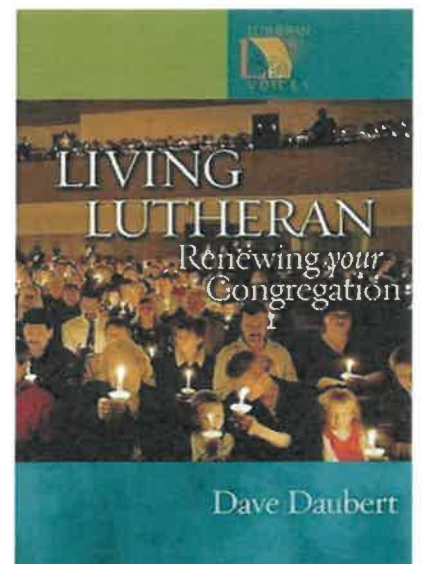
Chapter 7: A Purpose Statement Isn't Enough

Acts 9:1-19: *A New Vision – Saul an ally, Ananias was skeptical*

**April 6<sup>th</sup>** – Chapter 8: Developing Your Guiding Principles

Chapter 9: How do Guiding Principles work?

Acts 10:34-48: *Even gentiles receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*



## *Announcements*

### **Community Café Volunteers**

The Community Café is once again asking for volunteers. If you are able to volunteer one evening a month, please call the church office at 283-2208.

If you are in need of Community Cafe meals, call 285-7225 by 4 p.m. on Cafe day. Meals can be picked up between 5 and 6 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays from the kitchen window.

### **Bible Study**

You are invited to a Bible study with Bette Simon at 11 a.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at her house. The Bible study is from the *Gather* magazine. If anyone wants to participate but doesn't have a subscription to *Gather*, there are a few extra copies at the church that people can pick up and use. For more information, please call the office at 283-2208.

### **Holy Communion**

Holy Communion available in a disposable container may be delivered by Interim Pastor Paul. Call the Church Office if you would like the disposable container containing the Bread and Wine delivered to your place of residence prior to Sunday worship services. OR if you have not participated in the Sacrament of Holy Communion in a while, please contact the church office or the Interim Pastor Paul. The pastor would be honored to bring and serve you Holy Communion.

### **Sunday Bulletins**

Copies of Sunday Bulletins are available prior to Sunday Worship. These will always be available to you prior to our worship services. Especially with COVID-19 being a concern, we are willing to mail our bulletins to you. Call the church office before Noon on Thursdays prior to Sunday's Worship Service.

### **Transition Team to be formed**

A Transition Team will be set up to help First Lutheran Church address current ministry issues and looking into the future of ministry. Pastor Paul will work with the church council to help implement and lead the transition team. Look for more information in the upcoming months.



***You're Invited!!***

**Please join us for Bible Study**

**Sunday mornings at 9**

**In Memorial Hall**

## First Lutheran Youth: What's Up?

### An update regarding the 2022 Gathering

(Excerpted from the ELCA website) — After much prayer, conversation and tears, we have made the difficult decision to cancel the 2022 Gathering, MYLE and the tAble due to the ongoing pandemic, the recent COVID-19 surge and public health considerations.

We know there are thousands of young people who will not get to experience the Gathering, and our hearts break for them. This was not an easy decision, and we ask for your prayers and your grace. We understand the impact this decision will have on our youth, volunteers and planning teams, and we hope to return to Minneapolis for a future Gathering.

With God's power at work in and through us, we can do far more than we dare ask or imagine! The ELCA is fully committed to supporting the young people of our church and to seeing that the ministry of the Gathering, MYLE and the tAble continue for years to come. With that assurance, we are turning our attention toward 2024 for the next Gathering.

### Information about confirmation classes at First

Confirmation students are asked to attend Lenten worship in lieu of classes from March 2nd, which is Ash Wednesday, through April 6th, prior to Palm Sunday.

Regular classes will resume following Easter. Only two classes are scheduled to finish out the spring, April 20 and 27. The participants are requested to continue attending worship and completing worship notes through August.

Confirmands are requested to participate in

worship acting as acolyte, crucifer, communion assistant, usher, or reader. This may be a family activity with parents and siblings taking part in the service, as well. If you have a particular Sunday during which you would like to participate, please contact the church office, or let your class instructor know.

Confirmation is important to help develop a meaningful faith life. We are excited to be a part of this journey with our young people.

### First Communion Instruction

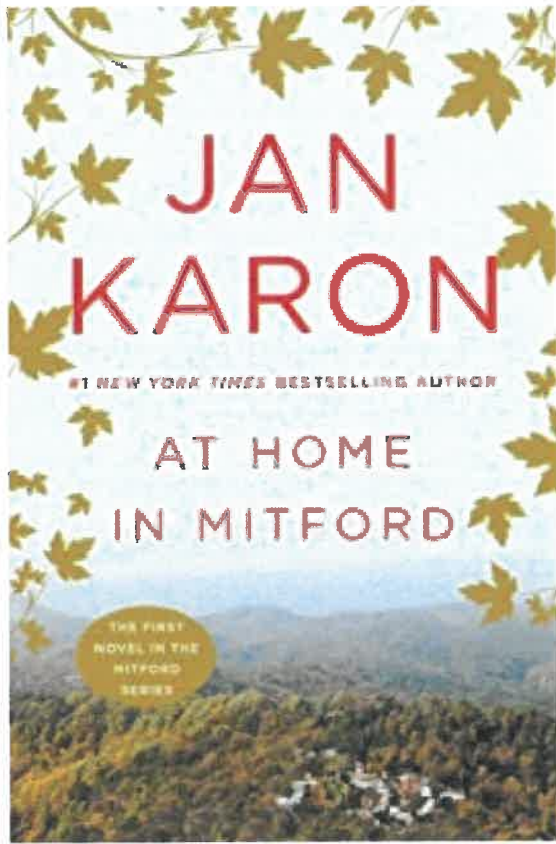
First Communion Instruction will be offered on two Sundays, March 20<sup>th</sup> OR March 27<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am for all youth in grades 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>. Choose the best time that works for you. Anyone who has not had communion instruction, please contact the church office. Pastor Paul will teach about the Lord's Supper and then students will have an opportunity to make a ceramic chalice with the help of Nancy McBride and Dawn Kruger. The day of "First Communion" will be 6:30 p.m., Maundy Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup>.



**Living Lutheran Book Discussion Groups** during Lent will be on **Tuesdays from 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.** March 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5 **OR** from **5:30pm – 6:15pm on Wednesday** evening during the Soup Suppers March 9, 16, 23, 30, April 6. Bring your soup to Memorial Hall and join Pastor Paul Wednesday evenings before church!



**Book recommendations**



*At Home in Mitford* by Jan Karon is the first in a 14-book series about an Episcopal priest in a small town called Mitford. There is something wonderfully comforting about these books. Read them all.

“It's easy to feel at home in Mitford. In these high, green hills, the air is pure, the village is charming, and the people are generally lovable. Yet, Father Tim, the bachelor rector, wants something more. Enter a dog the size of a sofa who moves in and won't go away. Add an attractive neighbor who begins wearing a path through the hedge. Now, stir in a lovable but unloved boy, a mystifying jewel theft, and a secret that's sixty years old. Suddenly, Father Tim gets more than he bargained for. And readers get a rich comedy about ordinary people and their ordinary lives.” —Amazon

“Karon knits Mitford's small-town characters and multiple story lines into a cozy sweater of a book.”—*USA Today*

“Karon offers her readers another chance to escape their own world, if just for a while, and live in the town that ‘takes care of its own.’ Her readers say they wish Mitford existed so they could move there.”—*Richmond Times-Dispatch*



A new member class will be offered for those who would like to join First Lutheran Church, and for anyone who would like to know the people behind the scenes at First, and for anyone who would like to know a little bit

more about how First and the ELCA run.

A light meal and conversation is planned for Wednesday, May 4th, at 6 p.m.

If you will attend, please contact the church office at 218-283-2208.



**Church Organist Needed**

Interested? Please call the church office at 283-2208 for more information.



Thank you to our readers and ushers, including Cynthia Warren, Huntz Wagner, Carol Bass, Brenda Bertilson, and Kathi Henrickson.

Thank you to those who helped with fellowship: including Brenda Bertilson, and Sandy Harju

Thank you to the musicians who shared their talents: Sue Hewitt, Summer Froemke, Kathy Thureen, Joe Belanger.

Thanks to Brad Ettestad and Ryan SKogstad for their technical assistance.

Thank you to the people responsible for snow removal!

## Prayer Chain

**Please consider serving as a member of the Prayer Chain.**

First Lutheran Church has four active prayer chains. If you have prayer requests for someone, or yourself, call either the church office at 283-2208, or Brenda Bertilson 283-2144; 240-4939. You must have permission to put someone on the chain, either from the person, or from a close relative. To put someone on the list for Sunday prayers, call the office at 283-2208. Please call back when they can be removed.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Remember in your prayers, those in need and those in care facilities.**

**Good Samaritan:** Bunny Katrin

**Littlefork Nursing Home:** Marlene Erickson and Betty Steinbach

### General Fund Financial Information

As of January 31, 2022

Thank you for supporting First Lutheran Church!

	Current Month Actual	Current Month Budget	Variance		Year To Date Actual	Year To Date Budget	Variance
Operating Income	10,399	18,428	(8,029)		10,399	18,428	(8,029)
Operating Expense	15,131	18,428	3,297		15,131	18,428	3,297
Operating Income Less Expense	(4,732)		(4,732)		(4,732)		(4,732)

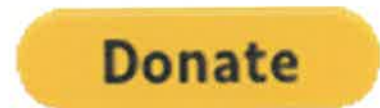
# March Birthdays

3/2 Lee Hasbargen	Nathan Sobkowicz	Presley Rousseau
3/3 Jenna Anderson	3/6 Diana Bolstad	Duane Sjoblom
3/4 Gary Bergstrom	Jonathan McDonald	3/18 Virgil Kluge
Maddie Fredrickson	3/7 Bryan Wichner	3/20 Steven Hanson
Krysten Skogstad	3/8 Megan Boe	Kitty Sandstrom
	Zachery Eide	3/21 Mara Pelland
	Marc Jackson	3/22 Justin Kapla
	3/9 Brayden Hart-Osse	Troy Rautio
	Janet Olson	3/24 Dwight Knuth
	Lachlan Reiners	3/28 LaMonte Bokovoy
	3/11 Perry Eide	Ryan Dault
	Angie Holenko	Ellie Rein
	Paul Mannausau	3/30 Dolores Arason
	3/13 Donna Parker	John Golnick
	3/14 Ashley Larsen	Allen Johnson
	Sydney Raboin	Kipp Raboin
	3/15 Kylynn Glennie	3/31 Rachel Roeder



Check out the new **Donate** button on the **First Lutheran** website. It makes it easy to support the church when you are not able to attend in person.

**Thank you in advance!**



## COMMUNITY CAFE SERVES FREE, HOT MEALS TO EVERYONE.

- Serving a free, hot, nutritious dinner from 5 to 6 pm.
- Meals are pick-up only; there is no in-house dining at this time. Come to the east door of Backus (the door that faces St. Thomas Church). It's door #3. We'll have dinner ready to go!
- EVERYONE is welcome.
- There is no charge for meals, but donations are gratefully accepted.

**Thank you to February's volunteers: Barb Bergh, Sandy Harju, Sue Mathews, Duayne Johnson, Nancy Johnson, and Brenda Bertilson.**



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA  
123 Wayside Lane  
International Falls, MN 56649

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
INTL FALLS, MN  
PERMIT NO. 52

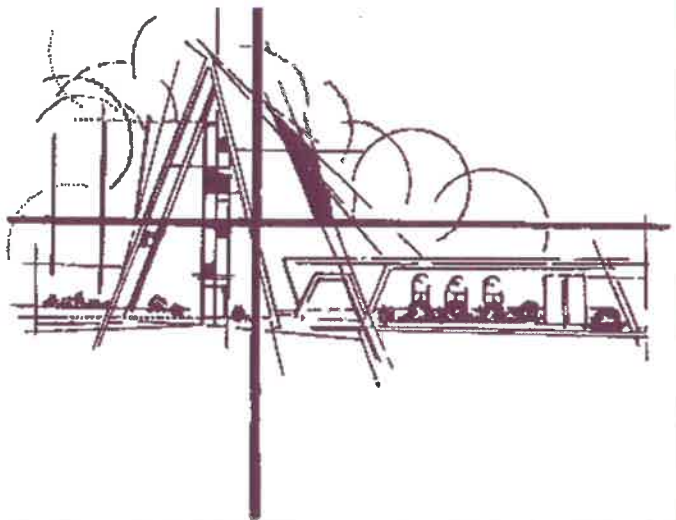
March 2022  
NEWSLETTER

(CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED)



## First Lutheran Church, ELCA

WHEREVER YOU ARE ON YOUR JOURNEY, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!



### First Lutheran's Mission Statement *Sharing God's Grace*

### First Lutheran's Vision Statement *First Lutheran Church will be a congregation that shares God's grace by:*

- + Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ with integrity.
- + Welcoming all to active involvement in ministry.
- + Offering a non-judgmental encounter with God through the celebration of liturgical worship with word and sacrament.
- + Responding faithfully to the Great Commission of Matthew 28 -- to grow.
- + Committing ourselves to serving the needs of our congregation and the community at large.

### WORSHIP SERVICE

Available in person and on our website  
Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

### OFFICE HOURS

Mon. through Fri., 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Office: 218-283-2208

Check out our Website!

[www.firstlutheranifalls.org](http://www.firstlutheranifalls.org)

Look for us on Instagram and Facebook.