

# The Voice

July 2023



A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

*A Congregation of the  
Northeastern  
Minnesota Synod, ELCA*



**Christmas in July  
update page 5.**



**Latest financial  
news page 8.**

**A Reminder:  
Worship at First  
is now at  
9:30 a.m.**



**Four congregations came together for worship on the riverbank in the Irv Anderson Amphitheatre. The weather held out and everyone enjoyed the fellowship.**



## From the Pastor's Desk

### **"Are We Truly Free?"**

*25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. 27 As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.*  
(Galatians 3:25-29)



I cannot help but think about our country this time of year. July 4th does this to some of us. I recall with fondness the welcoming hospitality of family and close friends when I was adopted on August 30, 1973 when I was 7 years old. Yes, I remember those early years. As traumatic as the adoption experience was back then ... a strange country, with strange looking people, and even a stranger language people were speaking ... I still recall with fondness the welcoming embrace of people. Or was it just my childhood memories and romanticizing of my early years? Maybe?

It could be that from a young elementary child's perspective, life has a "differentness" which reflects their rose-colored view of things. However, I don't think I'm too far off when I say ... many things in our country are different now. Some things are for the better ... and some things ... not so good. I don't think it's just me. I realize I'm getting older. I can see more and more of my parents showing up in me as I age. I used to laugh at older people who were so negative about our country and criticize the younger generation. Well ... am I doing that now?

The Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Galatians that we are no longer governed by a disciplinarian ... but we live "clothed in Christ Jesus." We don't need someone watching our every action like a "hallway monitor" in school. We are No Longer "Under the Law" but Free in Jesus Christ. Are we truly free? In the heavenly kingdom we are truly free. In the earthly kingdom, we still live with laws, rules and regulations that govern our behavior. So ... we cannot do whatever we want.

As Christians, we need to remember the Apostle Paul's encouraging words in today's devotion. Especially verse 27 ... "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." As baptized children of God, we have "put on Christ." This is the new white garment we wear. This is our new identity. God continually is making us a New Creation who live in the world. Amen.

+†+

Shalom

Paul J. Erdal, Interim Pastor

## First Evangelical Lutheran Church Council Meeting May 18, 2023

Present: President Brian Briggs, Pastor Paul Erdal, Treasurer Brad Ettestad, Secretary Carol Bass, Fellowship Cynthia Warren, Worship & Music Nancy McBride, Building & Grounds Lloyd Skogstad, Service/Outreach Brenda Bertilson  
Absent: Vice-President Hoa Sobczynski

Also present: Sue Mathews (presented at beginning of meeting only)

Meeting called to order by President Briggs at 5:00 PM.

Devotion – Devotion provided by Brian Briggs  
"Speaking in Authority."

Next month's devotion by Cynthia Warren  
Sue Mathews gave a re-cap of the Synod Convention which she and Carol Bass attended at the end of April. There was a quilt auction with quilts made by many churches which raised \$14,000 for World Hunger Relief.

Would like to see a quilt from First Lutheran be part of the next auction. She contacted Amy Loken for information. The quilt would need to be done by Oct. 14th and must be accompanied by an outline of what theme is represented and pertinent info about how it was made. Sue was impressed by the many representatives from all the projects our churches support including CHUM in Duluth and the Twin Ports Ministry for Seafarers.

Carol also mentioned that the synod supports the tiny homes project which supports tiny home villages for the homeless. At this point the synod is showing support for legislation to qualify tiny homes for zoning status as they are in a gray area, being neither a home nor a mobile home so face many barriers to being built. Sue also spoke on the Pollinator Project which encourages churches or individuals to plant flowers that attract bees and other pollinators as their numbers have been reduced in past years and they are so necessary to our food supply. Pastor mentioned the importance of Lay Leaders. Sue expressed her thanks for the opportunity to attend the convention.

Addition to Agenda: There were no additions.  
Minutes from May meeting: Copies provided to all.

Motion: To accept the minutes of the May 2023 meeting.

Made by: Cynthia Warren  
Seconded by: Brenda Bertilson  
Carried

Financial Report from May. Copies provided to all. Brad reported we are holding our own with a surplus in May. After the auction and other donations, we only owe \$7,305.12 on the elevator. \*\*As of 6/8/2023, the elevator is now paid in full!!!

Motion: to accept financial reports of May 2023

Made by: Betty Henrickson

Seconded by: Lloyd Skogstad

Carried

Pastor's Report: 1. I went to the "New" Synod Office located at First Lutheran Church in Duluth. I got a tour of the new facility and then sat down to have a conversation with Deacons Brenda Tibbetts and Deacon Susan Williams. Brenda is retiring and will be done at the end of August. Susan is taking over her position and duties and is enjoying her learning and time of guidance with Branda. We discussed the following: • Bethany in Loman breaking a relationship that began in 1909 • The "Collaborative Conversations" with Borderland ELCA congregations • Zion Lutheran Church of Int'l Falls • Zion Lutheran Church of Fort Frances • And some other things 2. "... they usually come in Threes" ... Yes, it's true. • (about 150 attendance) Paul Bergstrom's memorial service Friday, April 28 at 10am. Immediately after lunch and fellowship I left for Synod Assembly at Cragun's Resort in the Brainerd Lakes area • (about 230 attendance)

**(Continued on page 4)**

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

**Office Hours:**

**Monday—Thursday**

**10 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

**Friday**

**9 a.m. to noon**

**218-283-2208**

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

**[firstlutheranifalls@gmail.com](mailto:firstlutheranifalls@gmail.com)**

## Council (continued from page 3)

Dr Jon Talsness' memorial service was Monday, May 15 at 11:00am. It was great meeting family and speaking with family and friends. • Duane "Dutch" Olsen's Celebration of Life was May 17 from 4pm – 7pm at the Ranier Community Center. I was asked to Read Scripture and Pray. They spent time sharing memories and stories. 3.

I enjoyed the 2023 Synod Assembly at Cragun's Resort of Brainerd. I very much appreciated Carol Bass and Sue Matthews for being our Voting Members. I think they learned a lot about the Northeastern Minnesota Synod and what we do together as 130 congregations. They also learned that there are ministry partnerships with other ELCA organizations, and how we are connected with the national church-wide body. 4. My summer vacation plans are as follows: • June 7th – 14th (need pulpit supply June 11th) to Blacksburg, VA to visit my oldest daughter (Lily). June 15-16 is a Board Meeting for LSS in Red Wing, MN. This will work well as I will drive to Red Wing from Blacksburg. • (after worship July 2) July 2nd – 9th (need pulpit supply July 9) to Erdal 33" Camper at Niemeyer's Rugged River Resort in Brainerd lakes area. Time with ex-wife, and younger daughter, and golfing. • (after worship July 30) July 30th – August 6th (need pulpit supply August 6) to ELCA Camp Onomia in Onamia, MN. I will be their "guest pastor" for Family Camp that week July 30th – August 3rd. I will offer a family bible study, small group development, and prayer.

### Committee Reports:

President: Brian thanked everyone for their hard work on the auction.

The Call Committee reactivated the call process and there has been no response as of yet. Brian will contact our Bishop concerning Zion of Ft Frances and update on Zion I. Falls. Vice-President: Absent.

Service-Outreach: Brenda reported the committee served coffee and donuts after services on April 29th. There were 6 volunteers at Community Café. One get-well card sent. Food was donated to Servants of Shelter. Will send out 4th of July cards to keep in touch with housebound/ill members. The funeral committees have been reactivated but will need to update the helper list.

Discipleship: BettyJeanne reported there are no camp counselors from Vermillion or Onamia available to assist with Vacation Bible School this year. She will meet with Zion to coordinate. Tentatively it will be the last 2 weeks in June M-T-W.

Fellowship- Cynthia is meeting to form a committee to fill up a fellowship calendar of projects through the end of year. This would begin in the fall.

Buildings and Grounds: Lloyd reported that he is in the process of developing a list of needed summer projects, such as painting, small repairs, etc. The concrete sidewalk by the front door needs patching. Going to try a vinyl-type patching material. Electronic sign parts are here, and Lloyd and Ryan will install them. Lloyd will donate his time and money to get canoes and the trailer ready for use.

Needed are 2 tires and current license for canoes. Life jackets will be needed and some discussion about a canoe trip this summer. Dwayne and Lloyd will look at the rubber roof and determine if seam work is needed, Finance – Brad reported the new computer is here and the installer was in today to begin setting it up. The question was asked whether we should try to hire the Olson brothers to do lawn care again this year or set up volunteer roster. They will be contacted to see if they are available for hire. Point was made that whoever mows should make enough passes (5 were suggested) that no grass is sprayed on church windows.

Worship & Music: Acolytes needed for services, Nancy will be gone for two Sundays and will ask Summer Froemke to replace her. We will be continuing with Setting 1 of Worship after Pentecost.

### Old Business

a. Confidentiality Forms – Though confidentiality is important, the point was made that a piece of paper doesn't ensure confidentiality. Staff handbook has forms for staff, but it is felt this is unnecessary for council members. Staff have signed their forms so no further action will be taken.

b. Joint Meetings with Zion I. Falls – Deacon Colleen will be at the next meeting. No progress to report on possibly sharing pastoral services, yet.



## Workers, helpers needed for set-up and sale



Polish up your craft projects, and start your baking now! This year's Christmas in July is set for Saturday, July 22nd.

This year's sale will include baked goods, crafts, cookbooks and other gently used books.

The salad luncheon is back and will be served in our air-conditioned fellowship hall from 11-1. Everyone is welcome!

Set-up for Christmas in July is scheduled for Friday, July 21st. Everyone and anyone is welcome to help prepare for this project.



## The FELW are making big changes to Christmas in July this year!

**Christmas in July  
is scheduled for**

**Saturday,  
July 22nd!!**

**10 a.m.— 1 p.m.**

**Start your crafting now!**

**We are also happy to  
announce...**

**THE LUNCHEON  
IS BACK!!**



<b>General Fund Financial Information</b>						
<b>As of May 31, 2023</b>						
	Current Month Actual	Current Month Budget	Variance Favorable (Unfavorable)	Year To Date Actual	Year To Date Budget	Variance Favorable (Unfavorable)
Operating Income	8,707	14,829	(6,122)	79,911	74,146	5,765
Operating Expense	15,702	17,091	1,390	81,855	85,457	3,602
Operating Income Less Expense	(6,994)	(2,262)	(4,732)	(1,944)	(11,311)	9,367
In 2023, we need to Focus on our Year to date(YTD) information so that we understand if we are getting behind(or eating into our cash).						
Income - First 4 months - Strong giving - thank you very much.						
May - Income dropped off over 1st 4 months average by \$9,094						
and Income is not keeping up to Expenses						
YTD - Expenses - 5 months - Under Budget - Keep up the good work.						
Elevator Cost - in total				\$	46,241.95	
Elevator Giving thru 2022				\$	15,311.00	
Elevator Giving since the 1st of the Year is at				\$	21,394.99	thru May
Elevator Auction Proceeds				\$	9,070.83	
Balance yet to be <b>raised</b> to pay ourselves back is				\$	465.13	
Note in June(6/8/23) - THE ELEVATOR IS PAID OFF - Many Thanks to All						
<b>Thanks for supporting First Lutheran Church Ministries.</b>						

**Plan to attend the picnic following worship on**  
**Sunday, July 2.**  
**Dogs, Brats, and more!**  
**Even Cotton Candy!**  
**Happy Independence Day!**



## *Announcements*

### **Call Committee Update**

The Call Committee has completed a review of our Ministry Site Profile (MSP). The updated Ministry Site Profile was approved by Council on Thursday, May 18<sup>th</sup> and has been re-submitted to the ELCA for approval by Bishop Amy Odgren and posting for rostered Ministers. This MSP will replace the July 6, 2022 posted profile. The committee has remained in contact with the Northeastern Minnesota Synod and are awaiting candidate profiles.

### **Community Café**

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 at Backus Community Center.

### **Holy Communion**

If you have not participated in the Sacrament of Holy Communion in a while, please contact the church office or Interim Pastor Paul. The pastor would be honored to bring and serve you Holy Communion.

### **Sunday Morning Bible Study**

The Sunday morning Bible study is on hiatus for the summer months. See you soon!



Yoga with a certified instructor. \$10 fee with half going to FELC.

July dates and times:

Thursday, July 6, 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Monday, July 10, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Wednesday, July 12, 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Thursday, July 27, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Bring a mat or use a chair and stay as long as you like.

## First Lutheran Youth: What's Up?

### Camp can be impactful in various ways

In September 2020, Amelia Siewert was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes (T1-D). She was 6-1/2 years old. In the first couple weeks after her diagnosis, the child asked her mother a heart-tugging question: “Mom, are there other kids like me?”

That winter Amelia’s mom, Amber Siewert, was browsing through a T1-D moms’ Facebook group and noticed that parents were discussing summer camps and what they did with themselves when bringing their children to a facility far from home.

“Parents were mentioning that they just stay in a hotel in the nearest town to the camp,” Amber said. “The thought that came to mind was, ‘Why can’t there be a camp for the T1-D child and parent to attend together? And I need to get my kiddo around other kids like her.’”

Amber reached out to Camp Hiawatha, along Deer River in the Northwoods of Minnesota, and by end of summer 2021 it had hosted T1-D Connections Camp, a weekend gathering of 10 youth and 10 adults that included boating, fishing, hiking, cookouts, campfires and time to relax and sing.

“The experience exceeded my expectation,” Amber Siewert said. “The goal of the camp was to bring children with T1-D together to ‘build connections’ so they can be around kids who are like them. So many major interactions, experiences and beautiful moments occurred, in those short few days, that were very impactful.”

Amber recalled a moment when, sitting on the beach with other parents as their children played in the water, she felt she could “finally and truly relax and be at peace. It was as if I could take the armor off, the armor that a parent wears when they are managing their child’s diabetes and the feeling of always needing to be on and at the ready.”

Amber said that, though she knew camp would benefit the kids, she didn’t realize how much it would impact her and how much she needed this time.

“The staff at Camp Hiawatha truly added to our experience and were absolutely amazing,” Amber said. “There are no words to express how appreciative I am of that group. We are looking forward to a full week at camp this year. We are looking forward to seeing our friends from last year and excited to meet the new campers.”

T1-D Connections fulfills two objectives, Abenth said. One is to provide an experience for children under 10. Most summer programs for children with diabetes do not accept kids under age 10 because of the difference in health care (giving shots, etc.) for younger kids with diabetes. Another is to let families compare notes on the trials and tribulations of childhood diabetes.

“We want to make sure people have a safe space and the faith community to support them,” Abenth said. “We want them to get out into God’s great Northwoods and breathe a little bit and laugh. Our goals are that they be surrounded by creation and a nurturing faith community at the same time. So many in our world today don’t get that opportunity.”



**Council (continued from page 4)**

c. VNP Church Service – On the Sunday we meet at VNP, there will be no church service at the church. Question was raised if council had voted on there being no church service that day and upon consulting minutes found that they had not. So, a motion needs to be made to that effect.

Motion: That on 6/18,2023, there will be a church service at VNP and no church service at First Lutheran.

Made by: Nancy McBride

Seconded by: BettyJeanne Henrickson

Carried

The offerings at the VNP service will be distributed with offerings in their respective church envelopes going to that church and loose monies to World Hunger Relief. In case of inclement weather, service will be moved to First Lutheran.

d. Ministry Profile Update – copies of revised profile distributed.

Motion: To accept the revised ministerial profile as offered by the Call Committee.

Made by: Brad Ettestad

Seconded by: Nancy McBride

Carried

New Business –

a. Summer worship service time - Some have asked for an earlier services time for the summer months. Brian will announce this at services for the next 2 weeks and ask for input and the council will then act on it.

b. computer replacement and c. update on Ft Frances covered under Brad's Financial report and Brian's Presidential report.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:25 PM.

Next Executive Committee Meeting: June 13, 2023, at 5:00 PM

Next Council Meeting: June 15, 2023, at 5:00 PM

Respectfully Submitted by:  
Carol Bass, Secretary



**THRIVENT  
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**Did you know...** If you are a Thrivent member, you can contribute to First Lutheran Church through Thrivent Choice Dollars and Thrivent Actions Teams.

Log into your Thrivent account online, call 1-800-847-4836 or speak with your personal Thrivent representative for more information.

*let's be friends*



@FIRSTLUTHERANC



**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
ELCA**

**Worship at First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
is now at 9:30 a.m. Sunday mornings**



To those who helped with worship in June, including: Duayne Johnson, Hoa Sobczynski, Henry Carey, Pat Ettestad, Summer Froemke, Pastor Andy, and Donna Olsen. To those who helped with fellowship, including: Kris Jackson, Maureen Jackson, Darrell Schmidt, Ardel Henrickson, Sherri Mannausau, and all the others behind the scenes. To those who helped with music: Kris Jackson, Sue Hewitt, Brad Ettestad, Joe Belanger, and Kathy Thureen. And to all who helped with worship and fellowship at the park headquarters. Thank you so much!!

## 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. People will be on the list for one week only, unless you ask that they remain on the list. In that case, please call back when they can be removed.

\*\*\*\*\*

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

**Good Samaritan:** Margi Roeder

**Littlefork Nursing Home:** Betty Steinbach

V	V	S	A	V	I	O	R	G	O
P	S	N	A	M	O	R	N	N	Z
W	M	P	V	I	L	B	Y	I	F
N	W	K	B	U	Y	F	E	K	W
H	V	B	K	J	A	M	E	S	N
I	A	E	L	M	T	H	O	C	O
R	J	K	O	K	S	I	V	O	A
K	U	O	R	R	W	U	T	C	C
I	D	Q	D	A	V	Z	Q	U	T
K	E	A	N	M	N	H	O	J	S

## Bible Word Search

**ACTS  
JAMES  
JOHN  
JUDE  
KING  
LORD**

**LUKE  
MARK  
RABBI  
ROMANS  
SAVIOR  
TITUS**

## July Birthdays

7/2	Lyam Pelland	7/17	Tyler Plasky	7/27	Kathryn Miggins
7/3	Andrew Boelk		Korie Valentine		Steve Shermoen
7/4	Harley Droba		Jean Wood	7/28	Patricia Ettestad
	Carson Luettjohann	7/18	Myles Mason		Willard Johnson
7/5	Owen Jensen		Camryn Rasmussen		William Lyon
7/7	Harold Schumacher	7/19	Gladys Brown	7/29	Idella Franz
7/8	Darci Pelland	7/20	Henry Carey		Barrett Olson
7/9	Steve Blair		Kathryn Hughes		Tom Ollikkala
	Cynthia Buller	7/21	Eric Earley		
	Andrew Eide		Hailey Strand		
	Donna Erickson	7/22	Ryan Skogstad		
7/10	Jeffrey Trask		Cynthia Warren		
7/11	Eileen Johnson	7/23	Amy Amundsen		
7/12	Tanya Anderson		Aimee Droba		
	Mary Jo Fischer		Mitchell Kapla		
	Rod Haanen	7/24	Jason Lindquist		
	Teresa Waller	7/25	Lori Awe		
7/13	Jenny Herman		Denise Franz		
7/14	John Slatinski V		Shay Mannausau		
7/16	Bunny Blaine	7/26	Irving Arnquist		
	Leah Boe		Brooklyn Sobkowicz		
	Mindy Hraban		Faye Whitbeck		



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

**Call 218-283-7225 to reserve meals for you and your family for pick up from 5-6 on Tuesdays and Thursdays.  
There is no charge, but donations are greatly appreciated.**

**Thank you to June's volunteers: Carol Bass, Barb Bergh, Brenda Bertilson, Nancy Johnson, Laurie Lindberg, and Sue Mathews**

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

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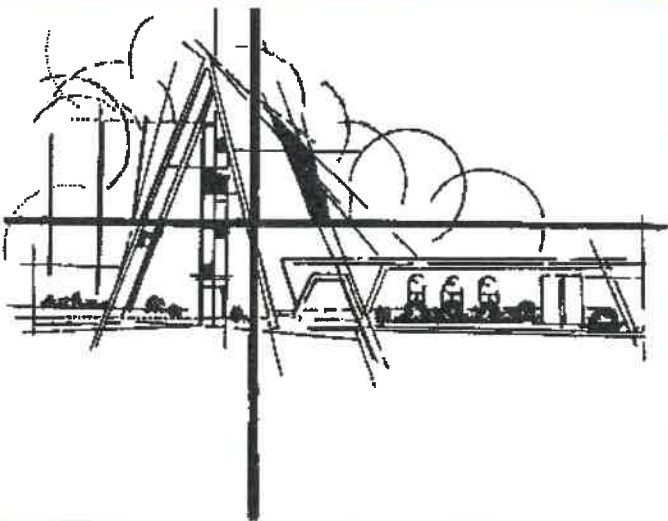
July 2023  
NEWSLETTER

(CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED)



# First Evangelical 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 on our website  
Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

### OFFICE HOURS

Mon. through Fri., 9 a.m. to noon  
Office: 218-283-2208

Check out our Website!  
[www.firstlutheranifalls.org](http://www.firstlutheranifalls.org)

Look for us on Instagram and Facebook.