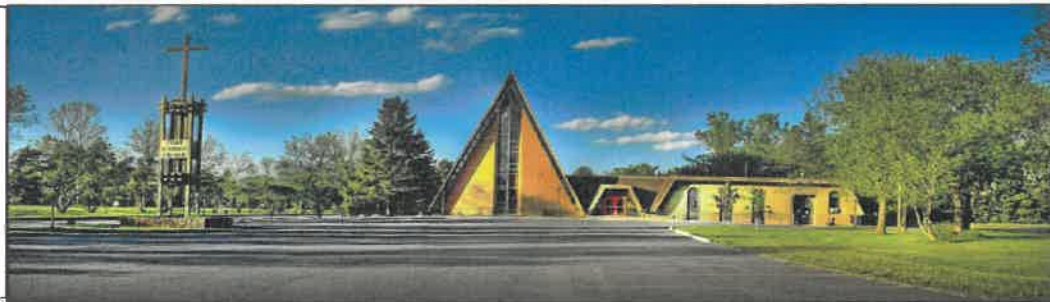


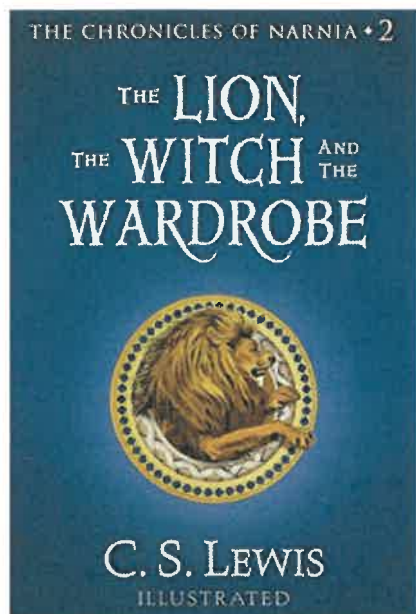
# The Voice

March 2023



A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

*A Congregation of the  
Northeastern  
Minnesota Synod, ELCA*



Book recommendation.  
See page 9.



Confirmation schedule  
of events.  
See page 8.



## Tale of Jonah and “the big fish” focus of Lenten luncheons at First

In lieu of our regular evening Lenten worship services, First will be trying something a little different this year with a noon-time luncheon in Memorial Hall with soup and bread at 11:30 a.m. with a short service to follow. The entire luncheon is designed to run until 12:45 and will be ideal for those who don't necessarily like to drive during the darker evening hours. All are welcome.

Interim Pastor Paul Erdal will be presenting a focus on the Bible story Jonah and the whale.

A more conventional evening Lenten worship will take place at Zion Lutheran with several local churches taking an active part.

Zion's worship will begin with soup at six, followed by worship at 7 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

## From the Pastor's Desk

### The Temptation of Jesus

When I consider this typical Scripture passage assigned for the First Sunday in Lent, it always fascinates me to read that Jesus would be "led by the Spirit" or the Spirit would "drive" Jesus into the wilderness. The three synoptic gospel (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) have the following:

***"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil"*** (Matthew 4:1).

***"And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness"*** (Mark 1:12).

***"Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness"*** (Luke 4:1).



**Pastor Paul Erdal**

All three gospel writers have Jesus being led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, this means that Jesus had to face very uncomfortable circumstances, to put it mildly. If we only had the Gospel of Mark's version, it would be a much simpler reading: <sup>12</sup> *"And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness."* <sup>13</sup> *"He was in the wilderness forty days, tested by Satan, and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels waited on him"* (Mark 1:12-13).

This is the entirety of Jesus being tempted by Satan in the wilderness as told by Mark's Gospel. However, the Gospel of Matthew and Luke tell a more complicated story. Jesus is actually tested or tempted by the devil or Satan three times. But why? What is the purpose of this?

In all three of the gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), Jesus has just been baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. And after Jesus was baptized, he came up out of the water when ... *"suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God's Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him."* <sup>17</sup> *"And a voice from the heavens said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased'"* (Matthew 3:16-17).

In this familiar story, we recognize that Jesus is affirmed that he is indeed "the Son of God" and the Father is well pleased with Jesus. Then come the "Doubting Temptation Encounter" stories in the wilderness.

Whenever we doubt or are uncertain about our "journeying in the wilderness," our God affirms his claim upon us. All we need to do is remember our baptism. God named and claimed us as His own. God will never let us go. We are forever held in God's gracious and loving arms.

In ministry together,  
Paul J. Erdal, *Interim Pastor*

## FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

### January 19, 2023

**Present:** Pastor Paul Erdal, President Hoa Sobczynski, Treasurer Brad Ettestad, Secretary Carol Bass, Service/Outreach Brenda Bertilson, Discipleship Betty Henrickson, Worship & Music Nancy McBride, Building & Grounds Lloyd Skogstad

**Absent:** Fellowship Linda Martin, Fellowship

**Guests:** Brian Briggs Candidate for Council President and 3 guests from Bethany Lutheran; Casey Olson, Jim Sutch and Laura Dahl.

**Devotion** – “Matthew 16” Peter the Rock.

**Bethany Covenant:** Guests spoke on our current covenant. They have approached Littlefork Lutheran on the possibility of sharing pastoral services. This is no reflection on their past experiences with us. Since many of their young people attend release time at Littlefork and it is a rural community such as Bethany, they feel this would be a more appropriate partnership. Nothing formal has yet been decided. The congregation will vote at their February annual meeting. They asked for a possible extension of their present covenant with us as there will be a considerable transition time before any covenant with Littlefork goes into effect.

**Motion: That the present covenant with Bethany will be extended by 6 months (thru July 31<sup>st</sup>).**

**Motion by: Betty Henrickson**  
**Seconded by: Nancy McBride**  
**Carried**

**Motion: to accept the minutes of the last council meeting (Dec 15, 2022).**

**Motion by: Betty Henrickson**  
**Second by: Brenda Bertilson**  
**Carried**

**Treasurers Report:** Cash fund is currently good, but elevator payment needs to be paid and that will impact it.

**Motion: to accept financial reports of the**

**month of December 2022.**

**Motion by: Lloyd Skogstad**  
**Seconded by: Betty Henrickson**  
**Carried**

**Pastor’s Report:** Confirmation class can now be held with Zion. Pastor talked to K. Winkel and H. Thompson of Zion. There would be 2-3 students from 6<sup>th</sup> grade, 2-3 from 7<sup>th</sup> and 3 from 8<sup>th</sup>.

Phone: Pleased with them, but still learning.

Lenten activities: Discussion of soup suppers and service times. Suggestion was made that there could be a lunchtime soup/bread service that could attract working people and those who don’t like to go out at night. Could begin at 11:30 and end by 12:45. Would meet in Memorial Hall. As to times of evening services, we may be participating in the round robin with other churches so times will need to be worked out. Service time for Ash Wednesday (Feb. 22) will be 7:00. Pastor will use as a theme the book of Jonah for Lenten services.

**President Report:** Will speak on topics later in meeting.

**Service/ Outreach:** Gave out 5 soups, 4 cards, 7 volunteers for Community Café. There is an expansion of Helping Hands so please let committee know of any needs. We will again be having the Soup/Chili Challenge

**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 minutes continued from page 3

in February with date to follow.

**Discipleship:** Fellowship activities (Getting to Know You) with Zion youth including bog walk, bowling. May 7<sup>th</sup> is 9<sup>th</sup> grade Confirmation.

**Fellowship:** Potluck to be held on Jan. 29<sup>th</sup> (after annual meeting). Email to be sent and notice in bulletin.

**Building and Grounds:** Lloyd reported that we cannot hold back 10% payment on elevator for 90 days as discussed at last meeting as this was not included in contract. It is suggested that on all large projects such as the elevator that there should be a project manager who will sign off on all payments and communicate with outside vendors. This would make for more organized and smoother process. Dwayne Dougherty has joined Building and Grounds Committee and will also help with snow removal as needed. Please welcome him aboard! Many thanks to Pat Ettestad for donating the money to buy the parts for our sign. Parts are here and sign should soon be fixed. Our canoes need to be licensed and tires changed on trailer. Roof inspection needs to be done yearly and seam repair done. If done regularly this should allow us 7-10 more years before needed roof replacement.

**Finance:** We pay \$50 a month for a listing in Frontier. Brad recommends we drop this as an unnecessary expense.

**Motion: That we discontinue the \$50 listing with Frontier.**

**Made by: Nancy McBride**  
**Seconded by: Betty Henrickson**  
**Carried**

**Worship and Music:** Joe Belanger will again record music for us if needed. Still working on getting choir up and running again.

### Old Business:

**\*Elevator Fundraiser:** Betty shared information on a fund raiser she had seen in which items were auctioned on-line. These were things like paintings, craft items, dinners out. The group she had seen do this raised thou-

sands of dollars. As we still owe \$30,000+ on elevator this would be a good project with little cash outlay for us as items are donated. Articles would need to be picked up in town or person would need to pay for shipping. Betty would work with this project but would need some computer savvy people to set it up and others to ask for donations. She thought a period of mid-March thru May.

**Motion: To gather more info and set up this online auction as an elevator fundraiser.**

**Made by: Carol Bass**

**Seconded by: Nancy McBride**

**\*Set meeting between Zion and our councils:** This would be to see where Zion is at currently and see if they would be interested in doing more cooperative projects or sharing pastoral services. Meeting to be at First on January 31<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 PM.

**\*Call Committee:** Because of the situation with Bethany, and per the recommendation of Deacon Brenda, we are presently putting the call process on hold.

### New Business:

**\*Endowment Committee:** appointments needed - one from Finance Committee and one from Council. Lori Lindberg has volunteered to be the Finance representative and Brad Ettestad agreed to be Council Representative.

**Motion: That Brad Ettestad should be Council Representative on the Endowment Committee.**

**Made by: Lloyd Skogstad**  
**Seconded by: Nancy McBride**  
**Carried**

**\*Zion Lutheran Confirmation:** As mentioned in Pastor's report, this would be a cooperative project with Zion combining both churches' young people to prepare them for Confirmation.

**Motion:** That First Lutheran and Zion Lutheran cooperatively teach both churches' young people to prepare them for the rite of Confirmation.

**(Council, continued on page 8)**



**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.

**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.



**Community Café volunteers**

Once a month, volunteers from First work at the Community Café helping to serve hungry people in the borderland area.

No fee is charged for the meal, and everyone is welcome, Tuesdays and Thursdays at Backus from 5-6 p.m. Volunteers l-r: Brenda Bertilson, Carol Bass, Laurie Lindberg, Nancy Johnson, and Sandy Harju. At right: Nancy and Duayne Johnson.



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## News from Bethany

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The FELC council has received and acknowledged Bethany's request to release Bethany Lutheran from the pastoral support covenant.

February 12, 2023

To: First Evangelical Lutheran Church President  
From: Bethany Lutheran Church President

Re: Request to Dissolve Covenant for Pastoral Support

Dear First Evangelical Lutheran Church Council and Members,

Bethany Lutheran Church has been informed by Littlefork Lutheran Church that a unanimous vote was cast to join with us in shared ministry. At this time we are requesting that First Evangelical Lutheran Church release us from the Covenant we signed dated February 1, 2023 through July 31, 2023. This letter serves as our 60 day notice per the out clause requirements listed and would request a termination date of April 30, 2023.

We have prayerfully considered the decision to embrace a new direction and look forward to seeing where the Spirit will lead all of us as we work together to bring Glory to God. May we continue to share God's Love together as our ministries grow in new directions.

In Him,  
Casey Olson, President  
Council Members: Laura Dahl, Bev Pelland, Bill Anderson,  
Gleora Palm, Myndi Steinbach, Sue Palm

## Announcements

### Community Café Volunteers

The Community Café can use more 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.

### Quilters

- + Bethany's Quilters meet from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. every Tuesday (Bring your own lunch)
- + Zion's Quilters meet from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Mondays and Tuesdays but not each week. March 13th, 14th, 20th, and 21st. (Bring your own lunch).
- + Littlefork Quilters meet from Noon - 3 p.m. each Thursday.
- + Northern Lights Quilters meet at 2 p.m. the 3rd Monday of the month at First Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Anyone interested in joining a group can show up or call the church group they would like to join.

### Bible Study

You are invited to Bible Study, Sunday mornings at 9:30 in Memorial Hall. Bring your favorite Bible and an open heart. Good things are happening!

### Building and Grounds

The Building and Grounds committee is looking for people willing and able to help with building and grounds issues. These volunteers need not join the committee, but we are always in need of someone to do a few small carpentry jobs from time to time.



### Church Organist Needed

If you know anyone who might be interested, please call the church office at 283-2208 for more information.

## First Lutheran Youth: What's Up?

### FELC Affirmation of Baptism set for April 16

The ninth graders will be confirmed on Sunday, April 16th during worship. The participants in grades 6-8 are requested to continue attending worship and completing worship notes through August. This year's 8th grade class will be confirmed in the fall of 2023.

The confirmands are also 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.

All confirmation students are asked to attend the Wednesday evening ecumenical services at Zion Lutheran during Lent.

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

## Confirmands Schedule of Events

**Bowling** — March 26th, meet at Timberpins  
5-7 p.m. Snacks included!!

**Affirmation of Baptism** — **April 16th, 10:30 a.m.**

**Bogwalk** — April 23rd, meet at church  
4-6 p.m. Hot dogs in warming hut!!

### Council, continued from page 4

**Made by: Brad Ettestad**  
**Seconded by: Brenda Bertilson**  
**Passed.**

**\*Nominating Committee:** At present Brian Briggs has agreed to take office of President, Hoa Sobczynski, Vice-President and Cynthia Warren, Fellowship. Several other committees do not yet have candidates and council may need to appoint. Nancy McBride's term on Worship and Music has ended, but she did indicate that if an appointment was necessary, she would accept it.

**\*Devotions at Council:** Nancy said she would do devotions at the next meeting.

**\*Budget Approval by Congregation:** Special meeting on Feb. 26, 2023, immediately following Sunday service.

**\*Pastors Covenant:** During the discussion

of this topic, Pastor excused himself from remainder of meeting. Pastor has asked the council to consider a 12- or 18-month covenant.

**Motion: That Pastor Paul be offered an 18 month covenant.**

**Made by: Betty Henrickson**  
**Seconded by: Brenda Bertilson**  
**Carried**

The executive committee will meet with Pastor Paul to present an offer to him.

**Adjourn at: 6:57 PM**

**Next Executive Committee Meeting: February 14, 2023, at 5:00 PM**

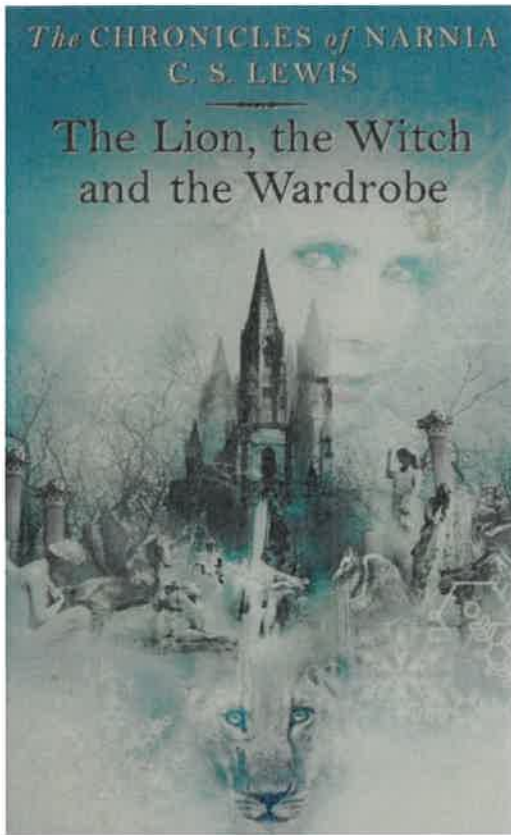
**Next Council Meeting: February 16, 2023, at 5:00 PM**

Respectfully Submitted by:

Carol Bass, Secretary



**Book recommendations**



*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is, for some, the most essential book in C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*. "...a series that has become part of the canon of classic literature, drawing readers of all ages into a magical land with unforgettable characters for over fifty years." —Amazon

This text comes in a vast variety of editions from coloring books and board books, to leather-bound illustrated versions. This would be an ideal choice for an audio book to share with your children or grandchildren, or just for your own enjoyment. There is also a decent video version, as well.

Four adventurers step through a wardrobe door and into the land of Narnia, a land enslaved by the power of the White Witch. But when almost all hope is lost, the return of the Great Lion, Aslan, signals a great change . . . and a great sacrifice.

—Amazon

**The tie-in to Easter is unmistakable.**

**Highly recommended.**

**ELEVATOR FUNDRAISER!**



**GOAL \$10,000**




**HOW YOU COULD HELP  
DONATE ITEMS +  
BID IN THE AUCTION +  
SPREAD THE WORD!**

**DO YOU HAVE ITEMS  
THAT COULD BE  
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AUCTION?**

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**FIRST EVANGELICAL  
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Contact for item donations:  
BettyJeanne @ (218) 324-2757  
Kathi @ +1 (651) 271-9687



Thank you to our readers and ushers, including Hoa Sobczinski, Pat Ettestad, Megan Boe, Summer Froemke, Don Nuthak, Jon Froemke, Garrett Froemke.  
 Thank you to those who helped with fellowship, including, Brenda Bertilson, Sandy Harju, Tony and Kris Jackson, Ardel Henrickson,  
 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.

## 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:** Dutch Olson and Margi Roeder

**Littlefork Nursing Home:** Betty Steinbach

<b>General Fund Financial Information</b>							
As of January 31, 2023							
<b>Thank you for supporting First Lutheran Church!</b>							
	Current Month Actual	Current Month Budget	Variance		Year To Date Actual	Year To Date Budget	Variance
Operating Income	11,709	0	11,709		11,709	0	11,709
Operating Expense	15,785	0	(15,785)		15,785	0	(15,785)
Operating Income Less Expense	(4,075)		(4,075)		(4,705)		(4,075)

# March Birthdays

3/2 Lee Hasbargen  
 3/3 Jenna Anderson  
 3/4 Gary Bergstrom  
 Maddie Fredrickson  
 Krysten Skogstad  
 Nathan Sobkowicz  
 3/6 Jonathan McDonald  
 3/7 Richard Johnson  
 Bryan Wichner  
 3/8 Megan Boe  
 Zachery Eide  
 Marc Jackson  
 3/9 Brayden Hart-Osse  
 Janet Olson  
 Lachlan Reiners  
 3/11 Perry Eide  
 Angie Holenko  
 Paul Mannausau

3/13 Donna Parker  
 3/14 Ashley Larsen  
 Sydney Raboin  
 3/15 Klyynn Glennie  
 Presley Rousseau  
 Duane Sjoblom  
 3/18 Virgil Kluge  
 3/20 Steven Hanson  
 Kitty Sandstrom  
 3/21 Mara Pelland  
 3/22 Justin Kapla  
 Troy Rautio  
 3/24 Dwight Knuth  
 Megan Whelchel  
 3/28 LaMonte Bokovoy  
 Ryan Dault  
 Ellie Rein

3/30 Dolores Arason  
 John Golnick  
 Allen Johnson  
 Kipp Raboin  
 3/31 Rachel Roeder



## 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 front doors of Backus (the door that face the street. 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:** Carol Bass, Barb Bergh, Brenda Bertilson, Mikayla Hanson, Sandy Harju, Nancy Johnson.



Spring ahead March 12th for  
**Daylight Saving Time!**

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

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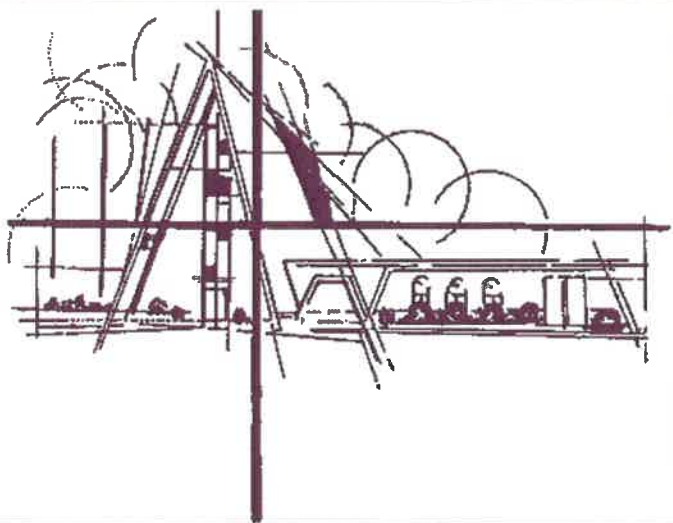
March 2023  
NEWSLETTER

(CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED)

# LENT

## 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.