
APRIL 2024

THE MESSENGER

The Monthly Newsletter of First Lutheran Church, ELCA

Growing in God's grace, reflecting Christ's love, and living in the Spirit.



GO AND... TELL THE STORY

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WRITTEN BY NEBRASKA SYNOD STAFF

Jesus isn't in the tomb anymore – God is on the loose! God is active and up to something! The story of Easter is an ongoing one, similar to the story of our own faith. Our response as disciples is to Go and.... to go out, go share, go proclaim, and to go tell the story.

Questions to Consider:

- What is one of your favorite Bible stories?
- Is there a prop or tangible item you might use to help you tell the story?
- How will you GO and tell the story?

Prayer: Master Storyteller, your stories seem almost unbelievable. Open us to recognize your patience, deep love, and grace. Help me be a storyteller. Amen.

Suggested Song: I Love to Tell the Story (ELW 661)

WITHIN OUR BELOVED COMMUNITY

Prayers of Comfort and Peace for...



- Jerry and Carrie Stithem on the death of Carrie's cousin, Denny Carnell and on the death of Jerry's uncle, Phil Kraft.
- Myron and Diane Riddle on the death of Myron's sister-in-law, June Riddle.
- Greg and Linda Sue Jensen on the death of their friend, Matt Kampfe.
- Josh and Amy Sikes on the death of Amy's father, David Livingston.
- Sharon Wilson on the death of her husband, Stan Wilson.
- Jeanine England on the death of her husband, Steve England.
- Cheryl Heiden on the death of her husband, Marlin Heiden.
- The Straatmann family on the death of Kim (Straatmann) Roethemeyer.
- Sonya Buskirk and Heather Weber on the death their mother, Marla Weber.

LCA: www.elca.org 800-638-3522

Nebraska Synod: www.nebraskasynod.org 402-896-5311

Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministry: www.nelcm.com 402-391-1144

Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries: www.nlom.org 402-944-2544

Lutheran World Relief: www.lwr.org 800-597-5972

Lutheran Disaster Response:

www.elca.org/our-work/relief-and-development/lutheran-disaster-response
800-638-3522

First Lutheran Volunteer of the Month

April Volunteer of the Month:



Lola Rasmussen

Lola volunteered several hours to catalog and organize the Choir music.

Thank you so much!

April 21 - 27 is Volunteer Appreciation Week

Thank you

We appreciate and recognize the impact our volunteers make by serving others with their unique gifts and talents. Our volunteers are an essential part of our faith community.

WITHIN OUR BELOVED COMMUNITY



We pause to recognize Stan Wilson, First Lutheran Church member and Habitat volunteer who died Monday, March 11. Stan served on the Family Selection Committee.

The 100th House Celebration Committee is forming. Bonnie and Ken Mumm, Margaret Messbarger and Patrick Waltemath have agreed to serve. Please contact them if you could join them or have ideas, memories or memorabilia to share.

April 6, weather permitting, the first onsite building for Habitat. Two foundations are ready for walls which were constructed in the warehouse.

Many volunteers mean lots of work accomplished. New homeowners will be onsite working most Saturdays. Come to meet them and hear their stories.

April 13, Several students from the UNK Construction Management program will work side by side with regular volunteers. The hope is to erect the walls House #99, while others put up trusses and sheathing on House #98.

April 20, UNK Big Event Day. Students will work from 9:00 to noon. There will be plenty of jobs for everyone as the trusses and sheathing go up on House #99.

April 27, Houses need to be wrapped before the siding goes on. More jobs open up each week with jobs for everyone skilled or just eager to contribute.



On Jan. 27, Ken & Bonnie Mumm and Kay & Rodger Payne traveled to Peru to help build two houses in the town of La Florida for the Fuller Center for Housing, an ecumenical Christian non-profit founded by Millard and Linda Fuller, who are also founders of Habitat for Humanity. FCH builds and repairs homes for low-income people in 17 countries.

MISSION OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES



During the adult forum on Sunday, March 24, Shelby Riedman, a missionary from the Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM), spoke about the program in detail.

The ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program invites young adults aged 21-35 to embark on a transformative, year-long journey of international service. Through this program, ELCA young adults offer themselves in service and are shaped by the experiences of their global neighbors. The program offers six country programs worldwide, and Shelby had chosen Israel and the United Kingdom as her top picks.

Shelby recently returned to Nebraska after a year of serving her mission through Bethany Christian Trust in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The Bethany Christian Trust provides support to around 7,000 people each year with over 30 different services across Scotland. The organization is there to help people who are at risk of losing their homes, those in recovery, and those who are already out on the streets. Shelby expressed her gratitude for the support she received from First Lutheran and ELCA during her time in Edinburgh.

MISSION OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES:



April items needed:

- Women's Deodorant
- Please set donated items on the shelf in the Narthex.

The S.A.F.E. Center is the Spouse/Sexual abuse family education center. The S.A.F.E. Center's mission is to provide free and confidential services for those affected by dating violence, domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, and stalking while bringing awareness and prevention efforts to all individuals across South Central Nebraska.

Counties served: Buffalo, Franklin, Harlan, Kearney, Phelps

Hours: Monday-Thursday 9am - 5pm Address: 620 E. 25th Street Suite 14 Kearney, NE 68847 308-237-2599/Crisis line: 877-237-2513



JOIN OUR VOLUNTEER TEAM

July 21-26, 2024



Make a Difference

Join us in serving foster youth in our community. We are looking for volunteers willing to give a week of their summer to make a Kingdom impact!

Volunteer Needs

- Big campers (camp counselors)
- Support staff
- Chapel team
- Photographers
- Nurses
- Crafts
- Grandmas & Grandpas
- Aunts & Uncles

Volunteers must be 18+ and have a faith reference.

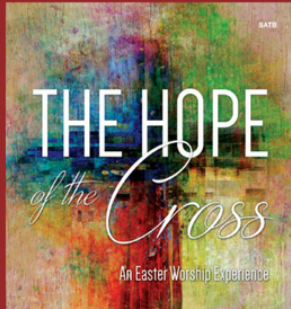


Join us in making a difference this summer! The bigger our team, the more children we can serve!

Learn more and apply at kearneyrfk.org/volunteer

Learn more and apply at kearneyrfk.org/volunteer

Special Events



**Chancel Choir &
Sound Offering
Easter Cantata:**

**Sunday, April 14
8:45 am and
11:00 am**



**Preschool
Family Fun
Night/Fundraiser**

MONDAY, APRIL 15TH
FROM
5-9:00 PM

Please join us and visit with other church members, and preschool families. This is a great chance to enjoy some yummy food! Everyone is welcome!

**WELCA Salad Luncheon
“Lessons in God’s Love”
April 20 - 10:30 am**

ALL women are invited. Bring a guest!
Please bring a salad to share.



**Guest
Speaker:
Jason Owens
from Hanny
Arram Center**

See pg. 16 for details

Natalie & Friends

in concert

Sunday, April 21, 2024

3:00 PM

First Lutheran Church



Featuring Chancel Bells, Praisers Bells,
UNK Flute Choir, Natalie Radcliffe-flute,
multiple other soloists

“Together for Joy” Unity Service



**Sunday, April 28
12:00 Noon Potluck**

See pg. 7 for details



“Together for Joy” Unity Service



**Sunday, April 28
12:00 Noon Potluck**



- Sno Cones, Games & More!
- Fun for the whole family
- Members with last names A-L please bring a main dish.
- Members with last names M-Z please bring a salad, side or dessert.
- 11:00 am service only. NO 8:45am service
- Bring a game to share!

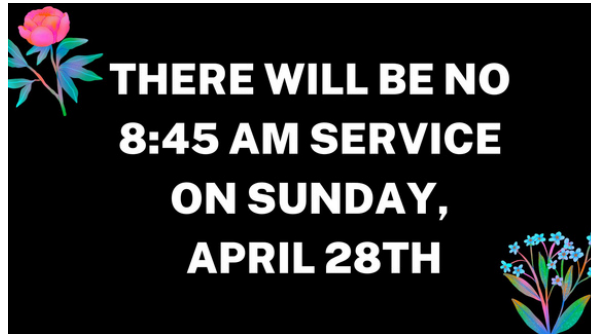


****9:50am - Last day of Sunday School!!!**

Join us for the “Together for Joy” Unity Service.

Bring an indoor game to share with others to play.

Weather permitting, bring your outdoor games and set them up in the south parking lot for everyone to enjoy.



Plant Lovers! Please consider helping out with taking care of the indoor and outdoor plants at the church. With a couple of volunteers, we can set up a “bi-weekly” schedule.



Plant caretaker needed!

The church needs a volunteer to water and take care of our indoor plants and outdoor flowerpots.

Please call the church office for more information.

WORSHIP THEMES

April 7, 2024

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

ACTS 4:32-35; PSALM 133; 1 JOHN 1:1-2:2; JOHN 20:19-31

The Easter season is a week of weeks, seven Sundays when we play in the mystery of Christ's presence, mostly through the glorious Gospel of John. Today we gather with the disciples on the first Easter, and Jesus breathes the Spirit on us. With Thomas we ask for a sign, and Jesus offers us his wounded self in the broken bread. From frightened individuals we are transformed into a community of open doors, peace, and forgiveness, and material sharing such that no one among us is in need.

April 14, 2024

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

ACTS 3:12-19; PSALM 4; 1 JOHN 3:1-7; LUKE 24:36b - 48

The gospel for the third Sunday of Easter is always one in which the risen Christ shares food with the disciples, meals that are the Easter template for the meal we share each Sunday. In today's gospel Jesus both shares the disciples' food and shows them the meaning of his suffering, death, and resurrection through the scriptures, the two main elements of our Sunday worship.

April 21, 2024

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

ACTS 4:5-12; PSALM 23; 1 JOHN 3:16-24; JOHN 10:11-18

The image of the good shepherd shows us how the risen Christ brings us to life. It is the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep, one of mutual knowledge and love, that gives the shepherd authority. The shepherd's willingness to lay down his life for the sheep shows his love. First John illustrates what it means to lay down our lives for one another by the example of sharing our wealth with any sibling in need.

April 28, 2024

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

ACTS 8:26-40; PSALM 22:25-31; 1 JOHN 4:7-21; JOHN 15:1-8

This Sunday's image of how the risen Christ shares his life with us is in the image of the vine. Christ the vine and we the branches are alive in each other, in the mystery of the mutual abiding described in the gospel and the first letter of John. Baptism makes us a part of Christ's living, and life-giving self makes us alive with Christ's life. As the vine brings food to the branches, Christ feeds us at his table. We are sent out to bear fruit for the life of the world.

From the Council

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE!

April 8, 2024

Greetings First Lutheran Congregants,

We hope this message finds you well after the festive Easter celebration. As we enter the Spring season, our building committee has some fun and exciting news to share with you regarding our office remodel and HVAC project. As a reminder, in November of 2022 the congregation voted to approve this project and enter a capital campaign process with a goal of raising more than \$2 million to support the estimated costs.

There has been so much activity happening behind the scenes in the nearly 18-months since that congregational vote. As of March 28th, First Lutheran received five bids from contractors interested in taking on this project. The bids ranged from \$1.6 million to \$2.1 million. The Building Committee has recommended awarding the contract to a local contractor with a bid of \$1,679,469. Nothing is finalized yet, but that is the direction we are leaning. Please keep in mind that with professional fees, furniture, and contingencies, the final price will likely be closer to \$2 million all-in.

As we work on a contract, our next step would be to secure financing such as a construction loan, and relocating our office staff to a temporary work location. The expected completion date for construction is Spring of 2025.

Once completed, we will have a beautiful new office space for our hardworking pastors and staff. We will also have significant upgrades to our HVAC system making sure we are worshipping and conducting ministry in a comfortable environment for decades to come. Our leadership team is delighted to know that our aging facility will have all new HVAC to go along with 100% replacement of the roof which was done just a couple of years ago. Addressing these significant needs isn't easy, but it is certainly worth it as it puts the building in a strong position for future generations.

cont'd.

Of course, with that being said, there are still challenges that lay ahead. Our capital campaign efforts have us on track to collect over \$1 million based on commitment cards received so far. That means we still need close to an additional \$1 million, enough to cover the remaining bid balance plus anticipated overages and associated costs. If you haven't filled out a commitment card yet, we ask that you prayerfully consider how your family can help support this effort as we continue to make space for faith to grow.

This message is meant to keep you all informed of what's happening with this project. This is a pivotal moment for First Lutheran Church. It's a big expense. Yet, it is so important to the future of our congregation and worshipping community. Think of all that goes on within our church facility. Think of the work that God calls us all to do. Think of the many hands that carry out this work. And think of the thousands of individuals who are impacted by that work. There is much to celebrate and for which to be thankful throughout this important process.

If you have any questions or concerns upon hearing this information, I invite you to call or email me directly. My cell is 308-240-0014. My email is k.r.means@gmail.com. Thank you for your continued prayers and support.

Sincerely, on behalf of the building committee and church council,
Kyle Means, Council President

Children's Ministry



Sunday School

Classes for ALL Ages
9:50 am - 10:50 am

*Last day of Sunday School: April 28

Wednesday Night Youth Events

Feeding the Flock for youth and adults.
Meal served: 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm

FROG (Fully Rely on God) for Preschool
and Elementary aged kids.
6:30 pm - 7:55 pm

Confirmation

Large Group 6:50 pm-7:25 pm
Small Group 7:25 pm - 8:00 pm

FLY: 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

**Last night of Wednesday Youth
Activities - April 24

Anyone can sign up for these opportunities at any time throughout the school year. The Sign-Up form is on the church website and on the Welcome Stations.

8th Grade Confirmation Families:

Rehearsal May 1st: 6:50 pm in Centennial Hall

Affirmation of Baptism: May 5, @ 8:45 am Service. (8:15 am photos)

Children/Youth Choir Dates

April 21st - 11am service : Children's Choir: You'll be called forward when it is time.

May 12th - 8:45am service : Children's Choir: Please have your child come to the sanctuary at 8:15am to quickly run through the song with all the choirs.



PRE-K NEWSLETTER

Spring is Here! Hurray!

We have been learning about how to take care of our teeth. We also began to explore that there are poisons that we don't touch, smell or taste.

Our class had fun learning about rainbows. We were scientists and discovered how you can see a rainbow using a cd and light. We also learned where light comes from.

Before spring break we had some St. Patrick's Day fun. We had a wee leprechaun play tricks in our classroom. He or she left small green footprints in our room. They took our gold, but left it outside so the kids had fun picking up all the gold. We have so much fun here!

The following week we talked a lot about being blessed instead of being lucky, since so many of March books talked about luck. We made a beautiful shamrock and they wrote that they are blessed. They also made a Leprechaun head using a paper plate and their hand prints for a beard. The students painted the face and learned to make pink you need a lot of white paint and just a small dot of red.

By the time you read this, we will have learned about Jesus and what Easter is all about. We will learn how he died for us so that we may have eternal life. We will make a special Easter basket with the cross in it. They will also get an Easter egg hunt and color eggs. Happy Easter to all!

We will have our art work on display at the library from April 29th – May 7th. Stop on by and see some of our amazing art!

My Pre-K class for the 2024- 2025 school year has a few more openings. Spread the word that we have some openings. We have so much fun and learn a ton in a very hands-on way!

Have a wonderful April!

Mrs. Amanda & Mrs. Sonya



3 YEAR OLD CLASS

Hello First Lutheran Parishioners,

April showers bring May flowers!! Our preschoolers are going to spend the month of April diving into all things spring! We will be doing crafts and activities pertaining to wind, rain, and all kinds of weather! Then we will celebrate Earth Day by learning how to recycle and take care of this wonderful earth that God gave us! We will hopefully have a nice day to take a walking field trip to Dryden Park and pick up trash and then play on the playground for a reward!

One of our favorite science projects is getting some baby caterpillars and watching them grow big, make a chrysalis, and then transform into beautiful butterflies! God's creations are so magical!! We will have a release party on a nice weather day.

We are quickly closing in on the end of the year, and we are so excited to share the growth of these preschoolers with their parents when we have Parent-Teacher conferences at the end of the month! We are so, so proud of how much they have learned, not just academically, but socially and emotionally as well! These preschoolers know how to be great friends and living examples of God's love!

We hope you all take time to marvel at God's amazing creations this spring!

God Bless,
Mrs. Lora and Mrs. Mindy





Wednesday April 3	FLY - 6:30pm-8:00pm Church Basement
Wednesday April 10	FLY - 6:30pm-8:00pm Church Basement
Wednesday April 17	FLY - 6:30pm-8:00pm Bowling - Meet @ Church
Wednesday April 24	FLY - 6:30pm-8:00pm Finale Regular Wednesday Meeting of the Year
Wednesday May 8	FLY - 6:30pm-8:00pm Youth arrive earlier to set up Pizza Ranch Fundraiser
May/June	Gathering Prep Meeting Date and Time TBD
July 15 - 20	ELCA YOUTH GATHERING New Orleans, LA

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or thoughts!

-Ashlea Denton

My email is adenton@firstlutheran Kearney.org

Adult Faith Formation Opportunities



"Dinners For 8" Returns to First Lutheran

This small group ministry program will bring people together for good food, faith, and fellowship. "Dinners for 8" is open to everyone - including couples **and** individuals. All are welcome! The only thing required is a hunger for meaningful conversation. Set to begin in June 2024.

If interested, contact Ashlea Denton at adenton@firstlutheran Kearney.org.



Did you know we have a "Memorial Rose Garden"? You can purchase a rose bush to beautify the church landscaping and a stone in memory of a loved one.

A rose bush is \$40 and a stone is \$30.

Please contact Shirley Smalley with any questions.
308-293-4815





The Southern Prairie Spring Gathering was held on March 9 at Bethany Lutheran Church in Ruskin. The theme was Open our Hearts - Listen, Be Kind, Pray. Pastor Lori Kitzing led the Bible Study based on the verse from 1 Peter 5:6-7 “Humble Yourselves therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.”

As she talked about humbling yourself she shared a quote from Marianne Williamson: “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are POWERFUL BEYOND MEASURE. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented FABULOUS? Actually, who are you not to be. You are a CHILD OF GOD. We are born to make manifest the glory of GOD that is within us. It is not just in some of us; it is in EVERYONE. And we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.”

Remember to talk and pray to God to cast your anxieties on GOD, because God cares for you and wants to be in a relationship with you.

The guest speaker was Peggy Meyer, LICSW, who presented an awareness of Mental Health and How it Affects the Way We Think, Feel and Act. The one thing she stressed is there is no health without mental health. Mental health is influenced by mind, body, spirit, behavior, socioeconomic and physical environments. Which affects how we think, feel and respond. Next month the article will be on strategies we can use to help our mental health.

WELCA Salad Luncheon “Lessons in God’s Love” April 20 - 10:30 am

ALL women are
invited - bring
a guest too!



Guest
Speaker:
Jason Owens
from Hanny
Arram Center

FREEWILL OFFERING WILL BE TAKEN AND GIVEN TO THE HANNY ARRAM CENTER

TANGIBLE OFFERING ITEMS INCLUDE - Fruit Snacks, Cereal bars, Cereal, Mac & Cheese, Snack crackers, Pasta/pasta sauce, Deodorant, Hair brushes, Shampoo. Complete list is on the Women of the ELCA bulletin board outside the church office.

The new date for Saved to Serve – August 2-4. The mission is working on the Dana Village Pantry in Blair. Registration forms are on the Women of the ELCA bulletin board.

DEBORAH CIRCLE
5:00 pm -3rd Monday
Chair: Deb Schauer
308-233-2669

GLORIA CIRCLE
12:00PM-3RD
THURSDAY
CHAIR: JUDY WORKMAN
308-237-2781

NAOMI CIRCLE
7:00pm-4th Thursday
(3rd Thurs. in Nov.)
Chair: Judy Niemann
308-234-4332

FEBRUARY FINANCE REPORT			
Ministry Budget:	Feb 2024	YTD '23-'24	YTD '22-'23
Budget Supporting Revenue	\$68,292	\$490,279	\$517,126
Budget Related Expenditures	\$(48,685)	\$ (457,677)	\$(570,112)
Total 2023-2024 Ministry Budget: \$759,201			
Facilities Budget:	Feb 2024	YTD '23-'24	YTD '22-'23
Revenue	\$3,757	\$46,252	\$63,919
Expenditures	\$(886)	\$(15,426)	\$(36,267)
Total 2023-2024 Facilities Budget: \$44,100			



ELECTRONIC GIVING:

Please consider using VANCO Mobile Faith, as you give and donate to help us lower expenses. You can select a one-time or recurring donation.

Online: Visit FirstLutheranKearney.org.

Click on the “Resources” tab, then “Make a Donation”.

Or download the Vanco Mobile Faith app on an iPhone or Android. Search for “First Lutheran Church” at 3315 Ave G, Kearney. Create a profile.

OFFERING ENVELOPES:

If you contribute by check, please put it inside an offering envelope. If you contribute by check without using an envelope, please write your offering envelope number on your check. This will enable us to record your contributions accurately. Any loose checks received without an envelope number noted may not be reflected on your contribution statement. Contributions to the Ministry Budget and Facilities Budget can be combined in one check. Thank you for your help!

If you would like a giving number instead of paper envelopes, please contact the church office.

If you have any questions or need assistance using the electronic giving options or need offering envelopes, please contact Stacy Seim in the church office: (308)237-5544 or SSeim@FirstLutheranKearney.org

Thank you so much for your faithful generosity to First Lutheran Church’s ministry!

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CONGREGATION COUNCIL

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Shirley Smalley

Treasurer

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Secretary

Judy Henning

Karen Emal

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Deb Schauer

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308-233-2669

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308-236-7265

SECRETARY:

BEV VACHA

308-468-6239

TREASURER:

JO SMALLCOMB

308-234-3053

April Dates to Remember

1st/3rd Weekends	Laying on of Hands for Healing during Worship Services
Sat/Sun, April 6/7	Worship - 6:00 pm and 8:45 am, 11:00 am 9:50 am - Sunday School for all ages & Adult Bible Study 2:00 pm - Worship at Brookstone Gardens
Sat/Sun, April 13/14	Worship - 6:00 pm and 8:45 am, 11:00 am Easter Cantata at both Sunday Services. 9:50 am - Sunday School for all ages & Adult Bible Study
Monday, April 15	Preschool Fundraiser at Pizza Ranch.
Sat/Sun, April 20/21	Worship - 6:00 pm and 8:45 am, 11:00 am Temple Talk 9:50 am - Sunday School for all ages & Adult Bible Study Women's ELCA Spring Event @ 10:30 am on Saturday, April 20th, Centennial Natalie and Friends Concert @ 3:00 pm on Sunday, April 21 in Sanctuary
Sat/Sun, April 27/28	Worship - 6:00 pm and 11:00 am (NO 8:45 am service) 9:50 am - Sunday School for youth (Last day of Sunday School for the summer)
Sunday, April 28	11:00 am "Together For Joy" Unity Service Potluck following service <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members with last names A-L please bring a main dish.• Members with last names M-Z please bring a salad, side or dessert.• Sno Cones, Games & More.• Fun for the whole family• Bring a game to share.• Weather permitting - outdoor games can be set up in the south parking lot.

Wednesday Nights*

Music Rehearsals - Praiser Bells, Heavenly Treble Makers, Chancel Choir
Feeding The Flock - 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm - in Centennial Hall. (for EVERYONE)
FLY in basement youth room - 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm
FROG Opening: 6:30 pm
Confirmation Class - 6:50 pm

The last evening of youth activities will be Wednesday, April 24*

****May 1st - 8th Grade Rehearsal for Affirmation of Baptism.**

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA
3315 G AVENUE
KEARNEY, NEBRASKA 68847-3699

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3315 G AVENUE - KEARNEY, NEBRASKA 68847



The church calendar, weekly bulletins, prayer lists, and LIVE Webstream Broadcasts on Sunday mornings can be found on our website:

<https://firstlutherankearney.org>

Find us on Facebook: "First Lutheran Church-Kearney"

Sign Up for Weekly Email Updates: office@firstlutherankearney.org

LIVE Radio Broadcast Sundays at 8:45 a.m. | KXPN 1460AM

PHONE: 308-237-5544 WEB: <https://firstlutherankearney.org>

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

To save postage costs and receive "The Messenger" via email exclusively, please call or email the church office.