
MAY 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...

BE CHURCH

WRITTEN BY NEBRASKA SYNOD STAFF

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What does it mean to be church? The Holy Spirit is moving and blowing through, with, and for God's people. To Go and... means we pray, listen, share our story, serve with neighbors, ask, be honest, be present, rest, have the conversation, be intentional, tell the story, and be the church. Everybody has something to offer – Let's Go!

Questions to Consider:

- If you overheard someone talking in the grocery store about your congregation/ministry site, what do you hope people are saying?
- Use your imagination! What is your big dream for your congregation? (No limits!)
- What gifts, talents, and expertise do you hold and how can you share?
- I am going to Go and be church by _____.

Prayer: Holy God who gathers and sends us, we give you thanks for the gift of your Holy Spirit. Equip us, give us language to proclaim the Good News, and empower us to GO forth into the world. Amen

Suggested Song: Go to the World (ACS 991)

WITHIN OUR BELOVED COMMUNITY

Prayers of Comfort and Peace for...



- Kathy Benne and family on the death of Kathy's brother-in-law, Bill Mitchell.
- Greg and Amber Benson and family on the death of Greg's mom, Lois Benson.
- Sonya Buskirk and family on the death of Sonya's mother, Marla Weber.
- John and Judy Gosswein on the death of Judy's mother, Phyllis Sawyer.
- Randy and Krista Fritson on the death of Krista's aunt, Dr. Doris M. Corder.
- Shawn and Rachel Leach on the death of Rachel's grandma, Reneta Fischer.
- Gerry and Arlene Loschen on the death of Arlene's brother, Gene Casper.
- Andrew and Miranda Obermeier and family on the death of Miranda's aunt, Charlene Rogers.
- Susan Slater and family on the death of Susan's mom, Betty Rickard.
- Heather Weber and family on the death of Heather's mother, Marla Weber
- Friends and family of Mary Wright on her death.

Resources:

ELCA: 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

WITHIN OUR BELOVED COMMUNITY



Saturday, April 13 was a beautiful day with not much wind, so a GREAT day for building. The Construction Management and Interior Design students from UNK were here to help put up walls on the 98th and 99th houses.

Volunteers worked on Katelyn's interior walls, putting in backer boards and preparing the top for the rafters which will be installed next week.

The tub unit was brought in before all walls were installed, so that is good! While volunteers worked inside, others started putting up blueboard on the exterior. Homeowner from last year, Leo was there to help his new neighbors build their houses.

Logan and her build partner Michaela, Shelbie and her build partner Adin, all helped raise the walls for Logan's house today.

Faith United Methodist Church members provided a great chicken lunch with all the trimmings, and many of the volunteers returned to the site after lunch to continue building on this beautiful, warm day.

There are jobs for everyone: Siding in place can be painted; Fencing work can be done and many other tasks.

Feel free to ask our First Lutheran volunteers Vicki Conn, Pastor John or Judy Gosswein, Judy Fisher or Beth Forbess what they do. Come to the job site at 16th St and P Ave to meet the newest homebuilders. Lunch is provided for all Saturday volunteers.



MISSION OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES:



**“Sharing Shelf”
May S.A.F.E. Center Donation:
Dental Products**

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.

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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

Dear First Lutheran
Church Family,
Thank you for the many
beautiful cards with best
wishes, flowers, food, and
a singing quartet. It made
Jim's 90th Birthday very
special.
Jim & Twila Anderson



DEAR FIRST LUTHERAN FRIENDS,
PLEASE ACCEPT OUR HEARTFELT
THANKS FOR YOUR KINDNESS IN
LETTING US BORROW YOUR FOLDING
CHAIR IN OUR TIME OF NEED FOR AN
UNEXPECTED, LARGE FUNERAL, FOR
A MEMBER OF OUR CHURCH FAMILY.
YOUR GENEROSITY DID NOT GO WITHOUT
NOTICE.

BLESSINGS!
LIVING FAITH FELLOWSHIP

MISSION OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

The Mission Outreach Team has selected Operation Shine Camp as the Summer Project for 2024. For those not familiar with Operation Shine Camp, it is operated by The Kids and Dreams Foundation, started by Aaron & Kerri Bly from Kenesaw, NE. The Kids & Dreams Foundation desires to help individuals raise the bar in their hopes and dreams. In addition to Operation Shine Camp, they also offer conferences that provide resources to families and others to help them in their autism journeys.



OPERATION SHINE WEEKEND CAMPS are three-day camps for children ages 7-12 experiencing Autism Spectrum Disorders and related conditions. The days include: arts/crafts, swimming, fishing, archery, crate stacking, sensory activities, and more! Each camper has 2 big campers who have been carefully selected just for them. Operation Shine Camp volunteers receive training in the specific disorders that will be present at camp. Trained professionals and nursing staff are on-site 24/7.

OPERATION SHINE DAY CAMPS are a great way for new campers to have the camp experience without the uneasiness of spending the night away from home. We fit as many activities as possible into these fun-filled days, such as: swimming, fishing, archery, crate stacking, sensory activities, and more! As with our weekend camps, each camper has 2 big campers who have been carefully selected just for them, the volunteers have been trained prior to camper arrival, and nursing staff and other professionals are on-site that day.

“If you do it, I bet you’ll feel really proud of yourself! Maybe you’ll inspire me to do it, because I’m a little scared, too.”

quotes one little camper to another, as he is trying to coax him into trying the zip line for the first time. The camper contemplated the zipline again, but decided against it. As he climbed down the tower and reached the bottom, the crowd still cheered. Even though he didn’t jump, he tried something new....and at Operation Shine Camp, trying something new is always something to celebrate!

We are excited to have Aaron Bly speak at Vacation Bible School to share more about Operation Sunshine.

First Lutheran News & Events

A special "THANK YOU" to our May Volunteers of the month!



UPCOMING EVENTS

8th Grade
Affirmation of
Baptism
May 5
8:45 am Service

9:45 am Reception in
Centennial Hall



Meet at 8:00am in Fellowship Hall for robes/photos.

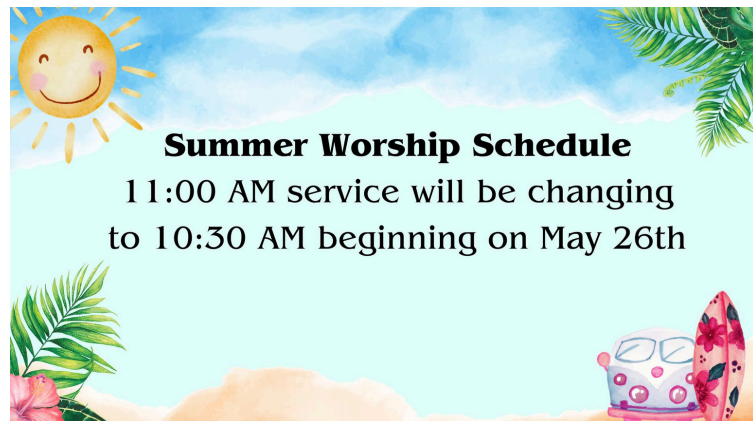


Join us for a
"Q&A Session"
about the renovation
and Budget Forum



- Sunday, June 9th
- 9:45 am
- Centennial Hall

*** NOTE: NEW DATE ***



Volunteer Opportunities

MISSION OUTREACH IS LOOKING FOR TEAM MEMBERS

Provides opportunities by encouraging members to reach out and spread God's love locally and globally. Help fulfill Jesus's command to love, serve, and care for our brothers and sisters. Contact the office for more details.



COORDINATOR NEEDED

Lutheran World Relief

Help organize and pack Layettes, Health Kits and School kits for children in need. Packing day is one morning in November and will need to be shipped out. Contact the church office for more details.



Lutheran World Relief

MILESTONES AT FIRST LUTHERAN

Our First Communion Class received their Sacrament of Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday. It is truly a blessing preparing children to receive Christ's Body and Blood for a lifetime of grace and joy.

FIRST COMMUNION CLASS MARCH 28, 2024



Back row: Pastor Michelle Holley Carlson, Morgan Connot, Katie Haack, Charlie Obermiller, Laura Behrhorst, Burke Schmidt, Pastor Rick Carlson, and Gavin Campa
Front row: Ilia Mueller, Audrey Lewandowski, Gus Cardenas, Jackson Reece, Taycen Martin, and Andrik Lintz.

WORSHIP THEMES

May 5, 2024

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

ACTS 10:44-48; PSALM 98; 1 JOHN 5:1-6;
JOHN 15:9-17

This Sunday's image of the image of the life the risen Christ shares with us is the imagine of friendship. We are called to serve others as Jesus came to serve; but for John's gospel, the image of servanthood is too hierarchical, too distant, to capture the essence of life with Christ. Friendship captures the love, the joy, the deep mutuality of the relationship into which Christ invites us. The Greeks believed that true friends are willing to die for each other. This is the mutual love of Christian community commanded by Christ and enabled by the Spirit.

May 12, 2024

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

ACTS 1:1-15-17, 21-26, PSALM 1; 1 JOHN
5:9-13; JOHN 17:6-19

The gospel for Easter's seventh Sunday is always taken from the long prayer Jesus prays for his followers in John's gospel on the night before his death and always includes Jesus' desire that his followers will be one as he and the Father are one. This oneness is not mere doctrinal agreement or institutional unity but mutual abiding, interpenetrating life, mutual love, and joy. This oneness is the work of the Spirit whom we have received but also await. Come, Holy Spirit!

May 19, 2024

DAY OF PENTECOST

ACTS 2:1-21; PSALM 104:24-34, 35b;
ROMANS 8:22-27; JOHN 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Fifty days after Easter, we celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Crossing all boundaries that would separate us, the Spirit brings the wideness of God's mercy to places we least expect it - to a crowd of strangers of different lands and tongues, to dry bones, to our weak hearts. Jesus promises his disciples that they will be accompanied by the Holy Spirit, and that this Spirit reveals the truth. We celebrate that we too have been visited with this same Spirit. Guided by the truth, we join together in worship, and then disperse to share the fullness of Christ's love with the world.

May 26, 2024

THE HOLY TRINITY
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ISAIAH 6:1-8; PSALM 29; ROMANS 8:12-17;
JOHN 3:1-17

When we say God is the triune God, we are saying something about who God is beyond, before and after the universe: that there is community within God. Our experience of this is reflected in Paul's words today. When we pray to God as Jesus prayed to his Abba (an everyday, intimate parental address), the Spirit prays within us, creating between us, and God the same relationship Jesus has with the one who sent him.

From the Council

Wrapping Up Another Year with Thanks and Praise

Greetings members of First Lutheran. Here's an update from council on the latest happenings at First.

At our April meeting, we reviewed the next steps for our construction project which was heavily communicated in the weeks that followed. Hopefully you have all seen or heard details related to receiving bids from contractors and working on financing to begin construction.

Additionally, we approved the list of Confirmands for Affirmation of Baptism. We are excited to see this next class of students complete all the necessary steps to get to this point. Seeing our young people display their faith in such bold ways is inspiring. A special thanks to the pastors and confirmation volunteers who helped guide these kids on their faith journey!

The council has also finalized the list of delegates who will be representing First Lutheran at the next Synod Assembly, held in June. This is an important part of participating as a worshipping body within the ELCA. We appreciate those who have agreed to serve in this way.

As we wrap up the fiscal year and the Christian Education portion of our calendar, we give thanks for another year of sharing God's word and using our resources to glorify God. From Sunday School, to FROG, to Confirmation, to FLY, to various Bible studies, music programming, Preschool, and so much more...it has been another great year!

VBS registration is now open for this summer. Be sure to visit our website for information on participating and/or volunteering.

Please take note of the wonderful works happening within our church and consider inviting someone you know to join us. We can all play a role in increasing membership and bringing people close to God.

The best information to share is our website: firstlutheran Kearney.org.

In peace,

Kyle Means

Council President, on behalf of Kelly Russman (VP), Lee Fritson (Secretary), Shirley Smalley (Treasurer), Judy Henning, Karen Emal, Bill Schmidt, PJ Bartels, Deb Schauer, Pastor Michelle, and Pastor Rick



Children's Ministry

8th Grade Confirmation Families:

Rehearsal May 1st: 6:50 pm in Centennial Hall
Affirmation of Baptism: May 5, @ 8:45 am Service.
8:00 am photos - Fellowship Hall

Children/Youth Choir Dates

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.

It's time for a summer camp adventure with God!

Children in preschool through fifth grade are invited to attend our fun, interactive vacation bible school this July. At Camp Firelight VBS, our Campers will discover how to put their trust in God in every situation. Each Firelight Focus (Bible memory verse) will teach us to trust that God will go with us, lead the way, share wisdom, give us peace, and spark joy as we celebrate the good news of Jesus in our own lives and in the lives of others.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2024 CAMP FIRELIGHT

- Monday, July 8th through Thursday, July 11th & Sunday, July 14th
- Weekdays 5:15pm - 5:50pm: Check-In & Free-Will Donation Meal
- Weekdays 6:00pm - 8:00pm: VBS Programming
- Sunday, July 14th: "VBS Takeover" of 10:30am Worship Service
(Lesson, Camper Performance, Slide Show, Party Afterward)

Registration is free and all youth are welcome: **you do not need to be a church member to attend. Have your child bring a friend!**

Register at www.firstlutherankearney.org

It takes many caring folks to make our event a success, please consider donating your time. Volunteer at www.firstlutherankearney.org

We look forward to seeing you this July!



3 Year Old Class

Hello Parishioners,

Spring has blown in and just like that we find ourselves at the end of yet another school year! And what a fantastic year we had! These kids have gotten so smart, but even better, they have become such kind and caring friends!

We have finished learning each letter of the alphabet and now we are starting to put those letters together to make words. It is so exciting and rewarding to see these preschoolers actually sound out and read words from their beginner reading books...all by themselves! They are ready to open the doors to an endless amount of learning opportunities by being able to read.

We are finishing up our end of year Parent-Teacher conferences. We truly have the best parents, and it is no wonder we have such great kids! It has been through a wonderful partnership with them that these kids have come so far in their learning process.

Thank you, parents, for all you do to support us!

In May, we will end our year by learning about our 5 senses and we will release the butterflies that have been morphing from caterpillars for the past several weeks. Then we will take some time to celebrate before we say goodbye for the summer.

It is with mixed feelings that we celebrate the incredible journey of the past year and also look ahead to the exciting future for these preschoolers! Mrs. Mindy and I have been so blessed to work with these wonderful children of God!

They will always hold a special place in our hearts!

Wishing you all a wonderful summer!
Mrs. Lora and Mrs. Mindy

Pre-K

Happy May!

The week after Easter, we began to plant seeds and tend to them. We have extra soil to continue to plant and play with. We started to learn our songs for graduation! It is going to be here before we know. We pretended it was raining out and we opened our umbrellas while I used spray bottles to make it rain! They always get a kick out of this.

It's usually the beginning of a gentle water fight. 😊

We will celebrate our Earth by learning how we can take care of it! We took a field trip to the Recycling Center on the 23rd of April. We took recyclable items and turned them into a craft or useful tool like a pencil holder. It was a very busy day, as most days are, here in preschool.

The following week, we had fun with transportation! It is fun to learn about all kinds of inventions that have been made. They can draw many types of transportation now! They also got to bring some remote control something to play with at recess!

We started our year learning about the 7 days of creation and in May we come back around to talk more about it. The first week in May, we will talk about that God made their parents and grandparents and how much we love them! Then we will celebrate, on the last week, that God made them! We are so grateful that God made all these children and families!

This is our third year of having end-of-the-year parent/teacher conferences with the child(ren). We want to sit down and celebrate all their growth! We've had wonderful conferences the past 2 years and I am sure we will be this year too!

Graduation will happen on May 10th at First Lutheran Church by the playground!

Bring a camp chair if you'd like.
So much excitement to come!

Go take care of God's planet!
Mrs. Amanda & Mrs. Sonya



At the Southern Prairie Spring Gathering, Peggy Meyer, LICSW discussed aspects of mental health. How your day is going to go is who you live life with that day.

ME - complains and blames everyone and no one does anything right.

MYSELF- is very critical of herself and puts herself down.

“I” la - seeks the positive in life and wants to help people.

To help your mental health, start with yourself. Your thoughts, feelings and responses affect how you will think, feel and act. Be open to change - try new things.

Biologically - you can help your mental health by getting exercise, getting sleep, eating healthy, and taking deep breaths.

Psychologically - you can help your mental health by listening to your body, be kind, set goals, be grateful/thankful and Pray.

Socially and emotionally - you can help your mental health by enjoying hobbies, going outside, setting boundaries- say no so you can say yes to the right things, and give hugs. Remember to talk to a trusted friend, coach, pastor or counselor. She also recommended these personal development apps : Headspace: Guided Meditation; One Sec, Gain back control over your time by reducing screen time; Growth Day, Brenden Burchard. Listen to Positive Solution 4 Life Podcast.

Remember : there is no health without mental health.

It is once again garage sale season. Items needed to help complete infant care kits are: receiving blankets, hand towels, socks and hooded sweatshirts (infant to 2T). Cloth flat folded diapers are also needed. New or gently used items are accepted.

The full list of items can be found on the website: lwr.org/kits

You may place these items in the collection box in the coffee area.

NEW DATE for SAVED to SERVE - Due to circumstances beyond their control the date has been changed to August 2-4th. They will meet at First Lutheran Church in Blair and work on Dana Village for foster children who have aged out of the system. Registration forms are available on the Women of the ELCA bulletin board and are due July 19th.

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

March FINANCE REPORT			
Ministry Budget:	Mar 2024	YTD '23-'24	YTD '22-'23
Budget Supporting Revenue	\$68,688	\$558,592	\$570,491
Budget Related Expenditures	\$(58,729)	\$(587,893)	\$(626,463)
Total 2023-2024 Ministry Budget: \$759,201			
Facilities Budget:	Mar 2024	YTD '23-'24	YTD '22-'23
Revenue	\$4,567	\$50,820	\$69,759
Expenditures	\$(1,095)	\$(16,521)	\$(38,225)
Total 2023-2024 Facilities Budget: \$44,100			



CHURCH FISCAL YEAR-END APPROACHING

May 31st will mark the end of the Church's current fiscal year. Is your pledge current and up-to-date? Now is the time as we complete this year and journey forward. Thank you for participating in all that God is doing among us and helping First Lutheran's ministry!

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!**

Church Office

office@firstlutheranearney.org

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Co-Pastor

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Pastor Michelle Holley Carlson

Co-Pastor

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Amanda Lewis

Lead Teacher for the Preschool

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CONGREGATION COUNCIL

Kyle Means

President

Kelly Russman

Vice President

Shirley Smalley

Treasurer

Lee Fritson

Secretary

Judy Henning

Karen Emal

Bill Schmidt

PJ Bartels

Deb Schauer

Pastor Michelle

Pastor Rick

Women ^{of the} ELCA 

PRESIDENT:

DEB SCHAUER

308-233-2669

VICE PRESIDENT:

LINDA FOWLER

308-236-7265

SECRETARY:

BEV VACHA

308-468-6239

TREASURER:

JO SMALLCOMB

308-234-3053

May Dates to Remember

1st/3rd Weekends	Laying on of Hands for Healing during Worship Services
Sat/Sun, May 4/5	Worship - 6:00 pm and 8:45 am, 11:00 am 8:00 am - 8th grade Confirmands meet in Fellowship Hall for robes/photos. 8:45 am 8th Grade Affirmation of Baptism 9:50 am - Reception in Centennial Hall honoring the Confirmands.
Sat/Sun, May 11/12	Worship - 6:00 pm and 8:45 am, 11:00 am 8:45 am - Recognition of Graduates
Sat/Sun, May 18/19	Worship - 6:00 pm and 8:45 am, 11:00 am Sunday 9:50 am - Q&A Session on renovation
Sat/Sun, May 25/26	**BEGIN NEW SUNDAY WORSHIP TIME** Worship - 6:00 pm, 8:45 am and 10:30 am
Monday, May 27	First Lutheran Church Office Closed



Do you have an old file cabinet to get rid of?

The church office is needing two. Please call the office if you have one or two.

They don't need to match

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

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FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
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.