THE MAY MESSENGER

The monthly newsletter of First Lutheran Church, a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Easter has just begun . . .



Easter is more than just one day - it is a seven-week long season. After forty days of repentance, where we look for ways to turn back to God, we spend a

"week of Sundays" celebrating the resurrection and rejoicing in transformation and new life! In the first weeks, the Sunday readings are stories of Jesus appearing to the followers . . . in the garden by the tomb, in a

locked room, on a journey to a neighboring town . . . ordinary encounters where Jesus brings something extraordinary.

While we may not have actually met the risen Jesus on the street, in one way or another, each of us has encountered him.

Moments of hope and new life and forgiveness and love are filled with Jesus' presence.

- When we receive undeserved forgiveness from someone we have wronged.
- As we see and are moved by spring's new life and growth.
- In compassion from a friend in a moment of need.
- As we find healing from struggles we thought would defeat us.
- In the unexplainable power of bread and wine.

As this year's Easter season unfolds, keep an eye open for Jesus. He has left the tomb and is loose in the world. We will find him in the places that are most ordinary, most unexpected. We will find him bringing hope and new life and forgiveness and love into places we might power expect

life and forgiveness and love into places we might never expect.

Christ is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

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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-anddevelopment/lutheran-disaster-response 800-638-3522

Prayers of Comfort and Peace for...



- The family and friends of Doris Schroeder on her death.
- The family and friends of Betty Henning on her death.
- The family and friends of Don Norman on his death.
- Fred Kempf on the death of his wife, Betty Kempf.

MISSION OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES:

Announcing an Adult Mission Trip to Asheville, NC!

We are excited to share that First Lutheran Church will be organizing a week long Adult Mission Trip to Asheville, North Carolina this September.

This mission opportunity is a response to a critical need in the Asheville area, where over 40,000 homes are currently uninhabitable and 10,000 bridges are broken or unsafe. It's a chance for us to be the hands and feet of Christ in a community that is in desperate need of support and restoration.

We are currently looking for 15 to 30 adult volunteers from First Lutheran and other local Lutheran churches to join this mission team. No experience is necessary—all tools, materials, and most travel expenses will be provided. What we do need is a willing heart and a servant spirit.

During our time in Asheville, we will stay overnight at a beautiful Bible camp near the city, providing a comfortable and spiritually uplifting environment to rest and connect after each day's work.

More details, including how to sign up, will be shared at the Adult Forum on May 18. If you've ever felt the call to serve in a meaningful way—this is your chance.

Let's come together as a community to make a difference in the lives of those in need. Please begin praying about your possible involvement and join us on May 18 to learn more!





Sunday, May 18th
9:50 am

- Centennial Hall
- Donuts & Coffee will be served!

Details of a September Adult Mission Trip to Asheville, NC will be discussed.



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

MISSION OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES:

S.A.F.E. Center May Donations: Disposable Plates, Cups and Silverware.



Address: 620 E. 25th Street Suite 14, Kearney, NE 68847

What a blessing to have these ladies attend The S.A.F.E. Center fundraising dinner. Your presence and support meant so much. Thank you for standing behind such an important cause and helping meet a real need in our community. So proud to be part of a group that shows up with heart!



MISSION OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES



Kearney Area Habitat for Humanity officially began our 2025 work season on a beautiful spring day



April 12, 2025. Building committee members have been working since March 1st building the walls for our first two houses of the season in our Warehouse. During that time, Dandee Concrete and Construction Co. Inc. poured the floor of both houses at the site in the Marlatt Subdivision. Then the Building Committee members went to the site and put up walls for Silvia's house, #101.

On Saturday, April 12, we had the help of two groups; seven members of the UNK Construction Management department came to help, and 12 members of the Upsilon Eta Upsilon Honor Society for Black Excellence at UNK provided half the cost of three trees and helped plant them in homeowners' yards. Thanks to these great UNK students for their enthusiasm and help! The hosts on site were from St. James Church, Maria and Lisa early and then a different Maria, Barb and Mike later. John Gosswein gave the devotion for Dobytown Kiwanis who provided lunch. Arlyn, Luzy and Nancy served for the Kiwanis club.

Honor society members planted the trees with help of building committee members Ken, Milt, and Rick, and then went to the North side of our current houses and cleaned up the area along the lot line. They did a great job and learned all about HFH while working with Ken.

Other volunteers brought in the walls for the second house #102 for Tyson and Haylee and raised the outer walls and most of the inner walls. Tyson and Haylee worked at putting in the hurricane clips in the base of the walls.

At Silvia's house, volunteers worked on getting the upper supports put in so that we can raise the rafters next week. Silvia, her work partner and brother Nery, and her sister, Lilian, helped put the hurricane clips on her house.



Third home-buyer, Heather, also helped with the clips at Silva's house.

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

Adam has been a member of First Lutheran since November of 2016. Adam and his wife, Stefani, have two children, Lily and Hayes. Adam has been a faithful volunteer of the church in many areas.

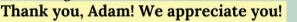
He is the chair of the

Volunteer of the Month: Adam Wegner

Adam has been a member of First Lutheran since November 2016. He is the chair of the Imaging and Technology Team and volunteers countless hours covering our needs.

Here's a FEW things Adam does:

- Organizes coverage for the sound booth
- Volunteers as First Lutheran's I.T. Person
- Manages the Hearing Loop
- Covers AV needs for Special Events/Concerts
- Manages Livestream on TVs





Imaging and Technology team and organizes Media Booth volunteers each week. This is an important responsibility and no easy task. This includes asking for help around all the holidays such as Christmas, Easter, Memorial Day, and many times covering the empty spots himself.

Adam is always willing to help with congregational needs and has been the "go to" person for the office staff, since we do not have an I.T. person. Adam has donated several hours of his own time during his work schedule to stop by the office and help look at a project, or an issue that has occurred – and we all know how those I.T. issues suddenly occur!

Adam helps manage things such as the hearing loop, radio broadcast, livestream the services, and helped connect the TV in the new nursery so parents can watch the service through livestream.

Adam also helps with other projects that take place, such as Natalie and Friends, Temple Talk Videos, Chancel Choir Cantata, Worship Service in the Park, Pastor Rick's Bible Study, and many others.



SPECIAL DATES / EVENTS



8th Grade Confirmation

- Sunday, May 4th
- 8:45 am Service
- 9:50 am Reception for everyone in Centennial Hall

Meet at 8:00 am in Fellowship Hall for Robes / Photos

The affirmation of baptism is a traditional rite that celebrates the purpose of confirmation, allowing individuals to publicly declare their faith and renew their baptismal vows. Please join us in this celebration Sunday, May 4th.

Graduates! We want to celebrate you! We'd love to recognize you at the May 18th 8:45am service.



Recognition of Graduates *
 Sunday, May 18th
 8:45 am Service

All Graduates will be recognized at the beginning of worship service. Feel free to wear your cap and gown!

(It's OK if you need to leave right after the recognition)

Attend the Adult Forum on Sunday, May 18th

- Sunday, May 18th
- 9:50 am
- Centennial Hall
- Donuts & Coffee will be served!

Details of a September Adult Mission Trip to Asheville, NC will be discussed. Please join us May 18th to learn more about an Adult Mission Trip this fall to Asheville, NC.

FLY NEWS



Hello First Lutheran Family!

This is Pastor Logan. As the School Year is wrapping up, we will be wrapping up FLY for the year with our last Wednesday night activity on May 7th.

It has been a wonderful year filled with fun events and good service to the community. We are communicating with other churches in the area to have some joint activities, so look for future emails for our summer activities!

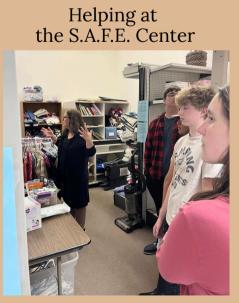
This is also a reminder for our Mission Trip! There is still time to sign up, so reach out to Pastor Logan as soon as possible. We will be assisting some churches and communities in Hutchinson, KS and Superior, KS areas.

Pastor Logan Ellis

Ax Throwing Event from December







LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

More than 1 million people in Ethiopia have been driven from their home because of ethnic conflict. Many walked more than a week with nothing more than the clothes on their back to a camp for internally displaced persons. Lutheran World Relief was able to provide the mothers with Baby Care kits so they had the basic necessities to provide for their babies.

YOU can help by providing items for the kits. Maybe you're cleaning out closets, or going garage sale shopping.

Items needed are: Size 6 months - 24 months lightweight t-shirts (no onesies), receiving blankets, socks, baby caps, jackets, sweaters, or sweatshirts with a hood, long or short sleeved gowns or sleepers (no feet) lightweight pants can be used for the sleeper.

The full list of items needed can be found on the Women of the ELCA bulletin board.



Mission Quilts

Warm bedding. A swaddling cloth. Shelter from the elements. An LWR Quilt provides many blessings to people in need around the world.



Kits of Care

School Kits, Baby Care Kits, Fabric Kits and Personal Care Kits: Assemble ordinary items into extraordinary gifts of love for people coping with war, disaster and poverty.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

First Communion Class

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



Back row from left: Pastor Michelle Carlson, Magdelena Denton, Brycen Placzek, Brynlee Stolcpart, Jaxon Fehringer, Mae Reece, Jonathan Connot, Tilly Reece, Beckett Bauer, Collins Akerson, Chase Brown. Front row from left: Shaden Banzhaf, Clifford Behrhorst, Jovie Weaver, Bergen Dutcher, Laiken Lintz, Bennett Shipp, Jaxson Vickers, Cruz Peterson, Aven O'Connor, Pastor Rick Carlson. (not pictured Landon Todd)

Confirmation bowling night!









CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Children's Easter Sermon with Pastor Rick



Embark on an exciting journey with Road Trip VBS 2025! First Lutheran Church of Kearney is calling all incoming preschool through fifth grade students to join us in a fun-filled adventure on the open road. Based on Joshua 1:9, "The LORD your God is with you wherever you go," our VBS Travelers will discover God's presence everywhere as we explore new places, make new friends, and experience God's goodness together.

Monday, July 14th - Thursday, July 17th 6:00-8:00pm

AND

Sunday, July 20th 10:30am Service To Register & Volunteer: FirstLutheranKearney.org



Last Spring Children's Choir Date May 11th - 8:45 am service- All children, please be here by 8:15 am to rehearse with the piano.

FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL

Called to Serve: An Invitation to Make a Difference

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace..." – 1 Peter 4:10

As we look ahead to a new church year, we are reminded that the church is not a building—it is the people. And it's through the hands, hearts, and time of volunteers that ministry happens, lives are touched, and the love of Christ is shared.

We need YOU.

There are so many ways to get involved—from greeting guests with a smile, teaching children, serving behind the scenes, or helping with hospitality and events. Every role matters, and each one helps our church grow stronger and more connected. Whether you've served before or this would be your first time, we invite you to prayerfully consider how God might be calling you to serve this year.

We are also seeking individuals who feel led to serve in Leadership Roles for the upcoming church year. These positions are vital to the life and direction of our church. If God is stirring your heart to take a step into leadership, we encourage you to listen and respond.

Please make plans to attend our Annual Meeting on Sunday, June 29. This important gathering will include updates, vision casting, and elections for leadership positions. Your voice and participation matter as we seek God's guidance together.

Let's commit to being the church—working side by side, giving of ourselves, and stepping forward in faith.

If you're ready to serve or would like to learn more about available roles, contact the church office or speak with one of our staff members. Let's make this next year one of purpose, unity, and service.

Lee Fritson Council President

On behalf of PJ Bartels (VP), Deb Schauer (Secretary), Lisa Parish (Treasurer), Karen Emal, Christine Fisher, Bill Schmidt, Tyler Schwartz, Shirley Smalley, Pastor Rick Carlson and Pastor Michelle Carlson.



WOMEN OF THE ELCA

NEEDED

Hospitality Coordinator

We are looking for someone to serve as the Hospitality Coordinator. We need to have someone start this ministry on June 1st. The Hospitality Coordinator sends cards to members of the congregation.

Information is available is available by contacting the church office or one of the Women's Board Officers.

Cards are sent to people who are/were hospitalized and sympathy cards to members who have lost loved ones. Those listed in the newsletter regardless of whether their funeral will be at FLC.

Birthday cards are sent when a special birthday is listed in the newsletter (e.g., 90 or 100), or Anniversary cards when a special anniversary is listed in the newsletter (e.g., 50, 60, or 75), or for Congratulations to parents for a Birth when these are reported in the newsletter. Information about who to send cards to in the weekly newsletter. A personalized message is written in each card.

The Church office provides cards, stamps, membership lists with mailing addresses and return address for First Lutheran Church.

First Lutheran Women's Events Calendar

2025				
May 3	Southern Prairie Spring Gathering at Church of the Good Shepherd in Hastings. The theme for Spring Gathering is " <i>Loved Beyond Measure</i> "			
June 2	Board Meeting 7Pm, in Centennial Hall			
July 7	Election of Officers / girls night event			
Sep 26-28	NSWO Biennial Convention: Camp Carol Joy Holling			
	The Nebraska Synodical Women's Events Calendar			
May 3	Southern Prairie Spring Gathering at Church of the Good Shepherd in Hastings. The theme for Spring Gathering is " <i>Loved Beyond Measure</i> "			
Aug 1-3	Saved to Serve, "Mosaic" at Beatrice. Spending time with the residents.			
Sep 26-28	Biennial NSWO Convention at Camp Carol Joy Holling near Ashland.			
	The Theme is "Wrapped in God's Love". men can attend these planned events, as they are open to everyone.			
All women can attend these planned events, as they are open to everyone.				

Please find our **complete** newsletter on the website: FirstLutheranKearney.org then click the "Get Connected" tab.

APRIL THREE/FOUR YEAR CLASS

Happy Easter and Many Blessings from the Three/Four Year Old Class!

April was full of fun and learning! We explored the wonders of springtime and discovered how "April showers bring May flowers." We learned about wind and weather (and enjoyed lots of outside time thanks to the sunshine) and talked about the different types of weather our world creates. We made rain sticks, conducted a science experiment using food coloring and shaving cream to see how water moves through clouds, and read lots of fun and fascinating books!

We also focused on the Easter holiday by learning about Holy Week, going on an Easter egg hunt, and making adorable cotton ball bunnies! A highlight of the month was welcoming five Painted Lady caterpillars into our classroom! We had the opportunity to learn about the butterfly life cycle and watch the transformation happen right before our eyes. It was amazing to see them grow and change each day! Two of our favorite books during this time were The Very Hungry Caterpillar and The Very Impatient Caterpillar, which helped us understand the importance of patience and transformation. Later in the month, we held Parent-Teacher Conferences and wrapped up April by learning about Earth Day—how to take care of our planet and what we can do every day to help keep it clean. We also had a fantastic time at Pizza Ranch for our Family Fun Night!

God's Blessings, Ms. Marissa

Learning about chrysalis





APRIL PRESCHOOL NEWS

Happy May!

We began planting our seeds and caring for them during the first full week of April. We also have extra soil available in our planting center so the children can continue to explore and play. We've started learning our graduation songs -it's hard to believe, but the big day will be here before we know it! One day, we pretended it was raining. The kids opened their umbrellas while I used spray bottles to create a gentle "rain." Then, they slowly stood up like growing flowers—this always brings lots of giggles and joy! 🗢 We celebrated Earth Day by learning ways we can care for our planet. On April 24th, we took a field trip to the Recycling Center. The children brought recyclable items and used them to create crafts or useful tools like pencil holders. It was a busy day-just like most days here in preschool! The following week, we explored transportation. It was so much fun to learn about the many different inventions people have created to help us get around! The children are now drawing all kinds of vehicles and even brought remote-controlled toys to play with during recess. We began our year learning about the seven days of creation, and in May, we're returning to that theme. During the first week, we'll talk about how God made their parents and grandparents, and how deeply they are loved. Then, in the second week of May, we'll celebrate that God made them! We're so thankful for each of these amazing children and their wonderful families. This will be our fourth year holding end-of-the-year parent-teacher conferences. These meetings are a special time to sit down and celebrate each child's growth-it's always such a meaningful experience! Finally, our graduation will be held on May 9th by the playground. There's so much excitement ahead! Let's all go take care of God's planet together!

Mrs. Amanda & Mrs. Sonya

All of our Teachers are Returning! We have a few openings for students. If you know anyone looking for preschool, please tell them to contact us!

The Pre-K Class attends M-F 8:15am - 3:00pm The Three/Four Old Class will be M-TH 8:15am - 11:45 am

WORSHIP THEMES

MAY 4, 2025

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

ACTS 9:1-6 [7-20]; PSALM 30; REVELATION 5:11-14; JOHN 21:1-19

The disciples make a big splash and eat breakfast with the risen Jesus. Wading in the water (remembering baptism) and eating with Jesus (celebrating holy communion) is our weekly encounter with the risen Christ. Jesus asks us again and again: Do you love me? And Jesus invites us, again and again, to follow him, bringing the Easter life to others.

MAY 11, 2025

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

ACTS 9:36-43; PSALM 23; REVELATION 7:9-17; JOHN 10:22-30

The gift of new life, or eternal life, is the gift of the risen Christ. It is the promise of Jesus. It was true for Dorcas in Joppa. It was true for those "who have come out of the great ordeal" in the Revelation vision. It is true for us and for all the baptized: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

MAY 18, 2025

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

ACTS 11:1-18; PSALM 148; REVELATION 21:1-6; JOHN 13:31-35

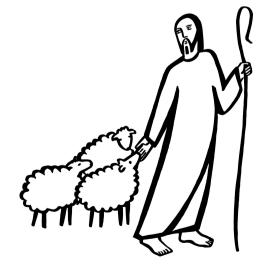
Easter initiates a new day. It anticipates a new heaven and a new earth. The risen Christ is making all things new. In the mystery of the holy baptism God has made new people of us. Today Jesus invites us to see everyone in a new light-though the lens of love.

MAY 25, 2025

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

ACTS 16:9-15; PSALM 67; REVELATION 21:1:10, 22-22:5; JOHN 14:23-29

Visions abound in the readings for the Sixth Sunday of Easter. Paul has a vision about what to do. John has a vision of what will be. Jesus provides visions of peace that surpasses human understanding and power beyond human imagination.



March Finance Report					
Ministry Budget:	Mar 2025	YTD '24-'25	YTD '23-'24		
Budget Supporting Revenue	\$58,858	\$593,750	\$558,592		
Budget Related Expenditures	\$(60,836)	\$(624,569)	\$(479,862)		
Total 2024-2025 Ministry Budg	et: \$768,954				
Facilities Budget:	Mar 2025	YTD '24-'25	YTD '23-'24		
Revenue	\$3,868	\$49,681	\$50,820		
Expenditures	\$ (1,997)	\$(21,655)	\$(16,521)		
Total 2024-2025 Facilities Budg (Facilities Budget is not the sam Campaign)					

The 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!

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

Donate On-line Please consider using VANCO Mobile Faith, as you give and donate to help us lower expenses.

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

Church Office office@firstlutherankearney.org

Pastors

Pastor Rick Carlson Co-Lead Pastor rcarlson@firstlutherankearney.org

Pastor Michelle Holley Carlson Co-Lead Pastor mcarlson@firstlutherankearney.org

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PJ Bartels Vice President

Lisa Parish Treasurer

Deb Schauer Secretary

Karen Emal Christine Fisher Bill Schmidt Tyler Schwartz Shirley Smalley Pastor Michelle Pastor Rick



Linda Fowler President

Betty Heggemeyer Vice President

> Bev Vacha Secretary

Jo Smallcomb Treasurer

DATES TO REMEMBER

Please review the calendar at FirstLutheranKearney.org for updates

May Events Laying on of Hands First and Third Weekends

Sat./Sun., May 3, 4 Sun. May 4	Worship - Sat. 6:00 pm, Sun. 8:45 am and 11:00 am Affirmation of Baptism - 8:45 am Service Reception for Confirmands (all are invited) Centennial Hall - 9:50 am Brookestone Gardens Worship - 2:00 pm
Sat./Sun., May 10/11 Sun./May 11	Worship - Sat. 6:00 pm, Sun. 8:45 am and 11:00 am 8:45 am Service - Children's Choir Singing (Mother's Day)
Sat./Sun., May 17/18 Sun./May 18	Worship - Sat. 6:00 pm, Sun. 8:45 am and 11:00 am 8:45 am Service : Recognition of Graduates
Sat./Sun., May 24/25	Worship - Sat. 6:00 pm, Sun. 8:45 am and <u>10:30 am</u>
Mon. May 26	Memorial Day - Church Office Closed.
Fri./Sat. May 30/31	Nebraska Synod Assembly - Younes Conference Center
Sat./Sun., May 31/June 1	Worship - Sat. 6:00 pm, Sun. 8:45 am and 10:30 am

June Events Laying on of Hands First and Third Weekends

Sat./Sun., June 7/8 Sat. June 7 - Tues. June 10 Sun. June 8 - Fri. June 13 Sat./Sun., June 14/15 Sun. June 15 Sat./Sun., June 21/22 Sat./Sun., June 28/29 Sun. June 29 Worship - Sat. 6:00 pm, Sun. 8:45 am and 10:30 am FLY Mission Trip to KS Confirmation Camp Worship - Sat. 6:00 pm, Sun. 8:45 am and 10:30 am Budget Forum Meeting - 9:50 am - Centennial Hall Worship - Sat. 6:00 pm, Sun. 8:45 am and 10:30 am Worship - Sat. 6:00 pm, Sun. 8:45 am and 10:30 am Annual Congregational Meeting - 9:45 am - Centennial Hall



** SAVE THE DATE: VBS: July 14 - 17, and 20th **

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



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: <u>firstlutherankearney.org</u> Find us on Facebook: "First Lutheran Church-Kearney" Sign Up for Weekly Email Updates: <u>office@firstlutherankearney.org</u> LIVE Radio Broadcast Sundays at 8:45 a.m. | KXPN 1460AM

> PHONE: 308-237-5544 WEB: firstlutherankearney.org Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

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