Although we try to be as accurate as possible, all events are subject to change. For an updated and complete listing of all events and for more detailed information, please go to flcfargo.org.

**EVENTS**

**Valleyfair Day Trip**
Wednesday, June 6, depart FLC 7 a.m., Erik Carlson, ecarlson@flcfargo.org

**FLCW Salad Luncheon**
Thursday, June 7, Noon-1:30 p.m., Celebration Hall

**Chanhassen Dinner Theatre**
“Newsies” The Broadway Musical, Wednesday, July 18, depart FLC 7 a.m., Shirley Tietz, stietz@flcfargo.org

**Rappel off the Roof**
Wednesday, July 25, 6 p.m.-sunset, location TBD, Rollie Johnson, rjohnson@flcfargo.org

**FLC Annual Meeting**
Sunday, July 29, noon, Daniel Damico, ddamico@flcfargo.org

**FLC Night at the Redhawks**
Tuesday, July 31, 7 p.m., Shirley Tietz, stietz@flcfargo.org

**Women’s Weekend Getaway**
Saturday-Sunday, August 18-19, Bad Medicine Lake, Pr. Laurie Neill, lneill@flcfargo.org

**Mt. Carmel Adult Camp Day Trip**
Tuesday, August 21, depart FLC 8 a.m., Shirley Tietz, stietz@flcfargo.org

**Tae Kwon Do**
Tuesdays, 6 p.m., CrossTalk Cafe, Rollie Johnson, rjohnson@flcfargo.org

**Foot Clinic**
First Tuesday of each month, 8:30-11 a.m., lower level classrooms, Ruth Hanson, rhanson@flcfargo.org

**Prayer Shawl Ministry**
Fourth Thursday of the month, 1 p.m., Library, Ruth Hanson, rhanson@flcfargo.org

**Learn to Knit and Crochet**
Tuesdays, 1:30 p.m., Celebration Hall, Ruth Hanson, rhanson@flcfargo.org

**Prayer Partners**
Tuesdays, 9 a.m., Heritage Room, Pr. Jim, jhulberg@flcfargo.org

**Helping Hands**
Thursdays, 8:30 a.m., Dalen Nettum, dnettum@flcfargo.org

**Worship**

**Traditional Worship**
Sundays, 9 a.m., Sanctuary; Wednesdays, 1:30 p.m., Celebration Hall

**Celebration Worship**
Sundays, 9 and 11 a.m., Wednesdays, 6 p.m., Celebration Hall

**Learn**

**Preschool VBS (3yo-kindergarten)**
Sunday, June 10, 5-7:30 p.m., Maria Kietzman, mkietzman@flcfargo.org

**VBS Day Camp (1st-4th grades)**
Monday-Thursday, June 11-14, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Katie Kringstad, kkringstad@flcfargo.org

**Men’s Breakfast Bible Study**
Tuesdays at 6:45 a.m., Adult Ed Room, Pr. Corey Bjertness, cbjertness@flcfargo.org

**Incredible Faith Kid Series**
Sundays, 10 a.m. or Wednesdays, 6 p.m., June 6-August 19, Fellowship Hall, Katie Kringstad, kkringstad@flcfargo.org

**Youth Group Summer Sundays**
Sunday evenings, times and locations vary, Erik Carlson, ecarlson@flcfargo.org

**Bible Basics**
Wednesdays, August 8 and 15, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Adult Ed Room, Pr. Laurie Neill, lneill@flcfargo.org

**Gardening with “Growing Together”**
Thursdays, July 19, 26, August 2 and 9, 5-7 p.m., Catalyst Medical Center, 1800 21st Ave. S, Fargo, Meggie Bjertness, mbjertness@flcfargo.org

**Go Wild! Camping Adventure (5th-6th grades)**
Friday-Sunday, August 3-5, Park Rapids, MN, Meggie Bjertness, mbjertness@flcfargo.org

**Summer Worship Schedule**

» Sundays, 9 a.m. in the Sanctuary
» Sundays, 9 and 11 a.m. in Celebration Hall
» Wednesday Fellowship, 1:30 p.m. in Celebration Hall
» Wednesdays, 6 p.m. in Celebration Hall

We know that summer is a time for the lake, sports, and vacations. But don’t forget about worshiping God! It is still important to gather in fellowship and worship all year round.

**Summer Office Hours**

» Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
» Wednesday, 8 a.m.-7 p.m.
» Friday, 8 a.m.-noon
» Sundays, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
What's Inside

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Pg. 21 ........Building Project Update
Pg. 22 ........Gratitude
Pg. 23 ........Mexico Mission Highlights

Additional Staff
Ruth Hanson, Interim Parish Nurse
Danelle Kjar, Financial Manager
John Holmen, Giving Consultant
Becki Tollefson, Administrative Assistant
Wendi Scholl, Receptionist/Registrar
Missy Froeber, Executive Assistant to the Senior Pastor
Eric Dybing, Marketing and Communications
Travis Klath, Graphic Designer
Shirley Tietz, Member Relations
Dalen Nettum, Head of Maintenance
David Ferreira, Cathedral Choir/Men’s Choir Director
Kathy Ferreira, Crusader/Women’s Choir Director
Katie Damico, Joyful Noise Choir Director
Mary Weiss, Chamber Orchestra Director
Alex Plante, Maintenance staff
Chase Nettum, Maintenance staff
5 Ways to Invest in the Future

I believe in tomorrow. I think God will continue to raise up godly leaders who will lead the next generations to Jesus. I am confident the next generation of leaders will do great, better than we have done. I have faith God is sovereign and still holds the world nestled in the shadow of his wings and is working the plan that was set in place eons ago. I believe God’s plan for the redemption of the world is complete and uninterrupted by the incessant rebellion of humankind. I believe God is bigger than the 6 o’clock news.

I also believe that we have a responsibility for the future. An essential ingredient to a healthy future is to raise up healthy leaders. We are to find, coax, mentor, disciple, and train the precious human cargo God has placed behind us. Our task is to create for them an environment that oozes the grace of God and the truth of God’s love for them. And, we should make sure they have what they will need on the day the baton is passed to them. Here are some things we can do to create these conditions.

1. Believe in Tomorrow. Just like you, I have been conditioned to believe the world is in a constant state of deterioration. Our “if it bleeds, it leads” conditioning of the media has jaundiced me. This conditioning has led me to believe that humanity has, in fact, beaten the goodness of God’s plan and that sin is winning.

Although we cannot stop our forward progress of God’s work for a single moment, we can...
stop and celebrate the good things. For example:

» According to the FBI, the violent crime rate in America has been on a downward trend since 1990. It has dropped from 14.5 million crimes to 9.5 million.

» According to the International Disaster Database: in the 1930s, there were 971,000 deaths caused by disasters. So far in this decade, there have been 72,000 deaths.

» In 1893, there was one country that allowed women to vote. In 2017, 193 out of 194 countries allowed women to vote.

» In 1850, 1% of the human population lived in a democracy; today it is 54%.

» According to UNESCO: in 1850, 10% of the human population could read; today 86% of the human population can read and write.

» According to the World Health Organization (WHO): in 1980, only 58% of people had clean water. In 2015, 88% have clean water.

Is it possible that God is keeping the promise to move the world toward goodness and mercy slowly and we are missing it?

2. Lead with Vision. Steve Jobs once asked John Sculley, the CEO of Pepsi who he was trying to woo to Apple, “Do you want to sell sugar water the rest of your life, or do you want to change the world?” How about you? Is First Lutheran simply about marking the checkbox of “sacred duty?” Or, are we going to change the world?

Jesus called us to take his vision of the world and make it a reality. “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations…” Big visions capture us, motivate us, and allow us to dig deep within and call upon reserves of strength and passion we did not even know we had.

Is it possible that God is leading us to a grander vision of his work?

3. Develop People. The church needs fewer butchers and more potters. Too often we see the church as a set of dogma, beliefs and codes that we are called on to defend at all costs. When someone violates the law, whack, the cleaver descends, and the limb (person) is severed. Yikes, that is hard to reconcile with the way Christ handled his disciples (Peter is an example).

How about we act like potters instead? When something bulges and deforms, we gently move it back into symmetry. This seems more Christ-like and gives grace a chance and helps people become God’s unique creations.

4. Build Relationships. In Mark 3:14, Jesus didn’t appoint the twelve disciples to go out and do his work, he appointed them “that they might be with him.” And Jesus didn’t bring the disciples for cameo appearances when there was a miracle to perform. He shared meals with them, traveled with them, and met their families (Matthew 8:14).

The most significant ministry of the church does not come from the pulpit or the altar. The mighty work of the church comes from the kitchen table, the coffee shop, the high school basketball game, and the sympathy card hastily written, but heartfelt. People do NOT care about what you know until they know that you care.

Is it possible God is leading us to develop an even more intentional Christian community?

5. Be OK with Messy. Holy cats, people are messy. Really messy! Holy cats, the church is messy. Really messy! People might put on their Sunday best to come to church, but they are not always at their best. Not all of God’s wonderful people are always wonderful. This goes for ALL of us, even pastors.

We come to Christ in our mess. Therefore, Church is always going to be messy. But, most of those messes are merely opportunities to learn, opportunities for God’s grace to be applied, and for us to grow.

Is it possible that God is calling us to get our hands dirty?

This is the legacy I want to pass on to those who follow. It is one of hope and the calm assurance that God is still in charge.

-Pastor Corey Bjertness
“DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME”

How God Worked through First Communion

In April and early May, 55 students joined our community in a new way by taking communion for the first time. This event featured a two-hour hands-on training, family dinner, and prayer service where each student received communion and was prayed for by the family and congregation. Always a moving experience, it was delightful to participate with such a large group of students! Here were a few ways God was working in the evening. (All names have been changed for the sake of students and their families.)

» Matthew’s family has recently been unsettled by divorce. Through the many recent changes, it was hard to make yet another change and start attending a new church. We haven’t seen Matthew much, but this moment was deemed too important to miss. As Matthew came forward to receive communion, he was BEAMING with excitement. Hungry eyes drank in everything as the Lord prepared to work in his life at that moment.

» Just as Ariel and her family came forward and knelt at the altar, a new hymn started. Ariel’s mother immediately burst into tears. As it turns out, it was the hymn played at her son’s funeral 28 years ago. The inexplicable timing was a reminder that he was also participating with his sister on this very special day.

» Cameron and his family have been searching for a church home for several years. After many unsuccessful attempts at belonging, they were finally brought to First by a friend. They worried he might be too old or they might be too different, but we were happy to welcome. That evening, communion was a reminder to us all that we commune together as the body of Christ, despite our differences. We hope this marks a new beginning and sense of belonging for them.

» Patty’s family is VERY busy. As a blended family still settling into a new normal, Patty doesn’t always make it to church, but they did make time for this special event. Communion promises her that nothing will ever keep her from God. Jesus desires to be in her life always, even in the midst of change.

These are but a few of the many ways God has been at work at First Lutheran. There are, of course, many more stories that could have been listed. Perhaps your own story needs to be shared? Thanks for your continued prayerful support of our students. We are so happy to continue investing in the future of their faith and the future of our church. And, we say a huge thank you to God who made himself known on this night. May the God at work in this evening be at work in your life this week and always.

-Meggie Bjertness, Middle School Student Life Coach
Reminders of God’s Grace

Stephanie Ahlfeldt likes to take notes during the sermons. Her 11-year-old daughter, Ellie, saw her mom doing that and decided to start writing down her own notes. One Sunday, when they got home, Ellie made a poster for her room of something she heard in the sermon. It was typical of Ellie to create a poster/craft. She does that all the time. The part that was so sweet and unique was that she pulled out special paper, wrote the quotation in special handwriting, and made it look like an art piece for her room. She hung it up above her bed. Isn’t it a joy to think that Ellie got the message of Christ’s love through her church and she wanted to have it up in her room as a reminder.

Ellie also had the reminder of God’s grace through her first communion this spring. Her grandma, Sharron Ahlfeldt (Pr. Bill’s wife), was too ill to make it to the communion rail with the rest of the family, so the pastors came to her. It was a touching moment for this faithful family to be reminded that God’s grace comes to us and meets us where we are at.

Chanhassen Dinner Theatre

Wednesday, July 18, Depart FLC at 7 a.m., 1 p.m. show, seating for dinner at 11 a.m., Chanhassen Dinner Theatre, Cost $132, includes dinner, show, and transportation. Final day to reserve your ticket is June 18.

Sit back, relax, and enjoy the show as we take a charter bus to the Cities for a day of fellowship and fun! We’ll take in a delicious lunch and then see Chanhassen Dinner Theatre’s exciting Broadway musical—Disney’s NEWSIES! With astounding choreography, unforgettable songs, and inspirational storytelling, this is a not-to-be-missed, show for all ages. Register online at flcfargo.org or at the front desk.

Women’s Weekend Getaway

Saturday-Sunday, August 18-19, Wini Christensen and Al and Bev Nielsen’s cabin on Bad Medicine Lake. Leave FLC 9:30 a.m. Saturday, return FLC 9:30 a.m. Saturday. return Sunday afternoon. $20

Are you up for relaxation, boat rides, delicious foods, and card games? How about worshiping at the Chapel of the Good Creation with other lake folks? Then this weekend retreat is for you! On our way to beautiful Bad Medicine Lake we will stop at Summerhill Farms to enjoy a leisurely lunch. Once we are at the lake, we’ll relax, visit, boat, swim—it’s up to you. Sunday morning at 11 a.m., we will worship at the Chapel of the Good Creation. You are free to stay at the lake Sunday afternoon or return home. This is a perfect get-away for relaxation and fun. Space is limited. Register at flcfargo.org.

FLCW Salad Luncheon

Thursday, June 7, Noon-1:30 p.m., Celebration Hall, free will offering.

All women are invited to fellowship, learn, and lunch. For the program, Pam Burkhardt, the archivist for First Lutheran, will speak about the history of women at our church. Becky Anderson will provide us with details about the various ways we can help organizations among us. A salad luncheon is served with a free-will offering. Bring a friend!

Mt. Carmel Adult Camp Day Trip

Tuesday, August 21, depart 8 a.m.; return 10 p.m.

$80 (transportation, registration, meals), Mount Carmel Ministries, Alexandria

Mount Carmel Ministries is a place of rest, renewal, and recreation where people experience Jesus. Join us for a day of fellowship at the lake featuring leisure activities, special music, and speakers. Pastor Kathryn Schifferdecker will present a study on the Book of Job, “Out of the Whirlwind: Humility and Wonder.” Pastor Laurie will speak in the evening.

Register at the church front desk or online at www.flcfargo.org. Registration deadline is Monday, August 13. Contact Shirley, stietz@flcfargo.org, or 701.235.7389, with questions.

A Night at the Redhawks

Tuesday, July 31, 7 p.m. game, Newman Outdoor Field, reserve seats $9

Batter Up! Join First Lutheran for a summer night out at the Ball Park...or the Nest...or Newman Outdoor Field...It’s a great night of family fun no matter what you call it! Reserve your tickets online or stop by the church front desk. Deadline to reserve tickets is Monday, July 16. Tickets will be available for pick-up at the church from July 22 to game day. Contact Shirley, stietz@flcfargo.org, with any questions.
The room was a beehive of activity. Vertical ropes, tout with weight, swayed to and fro. Shouts of support and encouragement rose up and echoed off the 30-foot high walls. Just another typical Sunday night for our “In Search of Faith and Footholds” Servant Leadership class last February.

Twenty-some students and adult leaders were crammed into the YMCA-West climbing wall room to learn the basic skills of rock climbing with a follow-up Bible study. All participants had made fantastic progress, learning to trust in the rock climbing process. We all had to face our fear of heights, falling, starting, looking foolish and, most of all, failing.

But this, our final night of climbing, would be different. Tonight, we would climb blindfolded.

The nervousness and anxiety in the room were palpable. Michael, one of our young middle-schoolers, approached with apprehension as he was tied into his belay line. He placed his blindfold over his eyes and let out a big sigh. We quietly issued our back and forth safety commands and then he began his slow ascent. Quietly and steadily, he took his climb one foothold and handhold at a time. No need to look ahead and see the whole difficult route, for the blindfold took that away. He had to live in the now, focus on the next step.

Michael had been shy about taking risks and was slow to push himself. Yet here he was, pushing through his fears. He climbed slow and steady and seemed to gain confidence. He appeared as though he come to trust in his belayer and anchor, and so falling became a moot point. He was simply free to climb and achieve great heights. Within a few short minutes, I shouted, “Way to go Michael, you did it!” The look of surprise and joy on his face lit up the room. After removing his blindfold, we high-fived, and I told him how proud I was of him. He had done well.

In real life, we rarely get to see the clear path laid out before us. Climbing blindfolded has much to teach us about our own life and faith journey. Sometimes we need to slow down, feel our way prayerfully through our current situation, and trust that God will provide us with the next handhold or foothold. When we are held securely, safely, and strongly by a loving, compassionate God, we can live in the now without having to know the entire journey laid out before us. Simply trust and climb!

-Rollie Johnson
 Called to Serve
How One Couple Gives Back

"Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless."

Think about the last time you volunteered your time and talents. How did it make you feel? With the busy lives we lead, just the thought of volunteering might seem overwhelming, but in reality, it could be very beneficial. It not only builds stronger community, but it also strengthens the faith of those who act as Christ to others.

Chris Wear and Jena Korbel are a couple who can testify to the benefits of volunteering. For them, service has become contagious and helping others has become a part of the fabric of their lives.

Chris and Jena first started coming to First Lutheran because they both felt so welcomed here. Now they are the ones doing the welcoming. They greet in the parking lot and help open doors for people.

They give of their time at new member classes (Belong) and serve communion. Chris says he has felt compelled to give back. "I just knew it was a good thing to become more active in the church and I want to help out in any way I could, do whatever good I could." Jena admits she finds volunteering rewarding. "I enjoy the work and meeting new people. There is joy in being needed and I love that First Lutheran feels like family. I look forward to it every week."

In addition to helping with hospitality, they serve at Great Plains, Feed My Starving Children, and participated fully in First in Mission week, which has given them an opportunity to pass the joy of serving on to Chris's nine-year-old daughter. Working with those who have little has opened their eyes to the needs of others. Chris said, "I didn't realize, until we helped at Great Plains Food Bank, how many people they helped and how many people are in need. It was overwhelming, and it really opened my eyes." Jena added, "It was hard to think that there are kids who aren't eating lunch because they can't afford it."

Chris' mom modeled volunteering for him, but for Jena, Chris has been the one who got her hooked on helping. "Chris models giving for me. He is very humble and has a big heart. He is constantly helping, always giving. Even in the smallest of ways. He's got a soft spot," she says.

Jena looks forward to a time when she can give even more. "I can't wait till I get older and have more free time. There are so many ways I would like to be involved in the church. Helping here has really changed how I view my personal life. I seem to give more than I ever have, monetarily and in other ways. Seeing what people need is an eye-opener and a reminder of how good you have it. It reframes how you see things."

"For me," Chris adds, "this church feels like my home away from home. So, any way we can help out, we are glad to do it."

If you would like to help out in the variety of volunteering opportunities at First and in the community, contact Shirley Tietz, stietz@flcfargo.org, and she can get you plugged in.

Great Plains Food Packing

Thursdays, 1:30-3:30 p.m.
July 19, September 20, and November 15
1720 3rd Ave N, Fargo

Support low-income senior citizens by joining us for food packing at Great Plains. It is a fun, fast two-hour service project that keeps getting better as we continue this service ministry. This assistance program supports 1,000 eligible seniors state-wide in North Dakota, and the food we pack directly serves 600 seniors. Register at flcfargo.org or contact Shirley, stietz@flcfargo.org, or 701.235.7389.
7th Annual First in Mission

Men and women, young people of various ages, college students, middle-aged folks and older people exhibited energy as they joined in serving our community through First in Mission!

Total Impact for the Week

401 opportunities of service were filled.
959 hours were volunteered.

We packed meals at Great Plains Food Bank (32,888 lbs. of food packed; 27,406 meals provided) and baked 4,480 cookies that were given to the VA, CHARISM, Head Start, Ronald McDonald House, New Life Center, and FLC fellowship. The VA and Jail Chaplains were each given 100 children’s bags to hand out. Other service opportunities were held at Churches United, YWCA, Stuff the Truck, Dorothy Day House, Eventide, and Bethany. It was a wonderful week and a great reminder that this is what Christians have always done. Thanks to all who gave of their time and treasure to participate in First in Mission week. You are a blessing!
The Pretzel & Faith

During Lent, the kids got to learn about how the pretzel came to be and then they were able to make and eat them. Most of the kids had no idea what a pretzel had to do with Lent and God, so this story was shared with them.

The pretzel has a deep spiritual meaning for Lent. In fact, it was the ancient Christian Lenten bread as far back as the fourth century. In the old Roman Empire, the faithful kept a very strict fast all through Lent: no milk, no butter, no cheese, no eggs, no cream and no meat. They made small breads of water, flour, and salt, to remind themselves that Lent was a time of prayer. They shaped these breads in the form of crossed arms for in those days they crossed their arms over the chest while praying. The three holes in the pretzel were to symbolize the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Therefore, they called the breads “little arms” (bracellae). From this Latin word, the Germanic people later coined the term “pretzel.” Thus, the pretzel was born. The earliest picture and description of a pretzel (from the fifth century) may be found in the manuscript-codex No. 3867, Vatican Library.

The kids crossed their arms over their chest to pray and see how this matched the shape of the pretzel. Children are important, and prayer is important, so it was fun to watch them learn about prayer this way. If we could all be as excited about prayer and Jesus as those children were, we could change the world. Our children are our future. We all love our children and know that Jesus loves them more than we can imagine. Mark 10:14 says, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” Children love like Jesus loves, they don’t half love or sometimes love; they love with their whole hearts and what beautiful hearts they have.

Take time today to hold all the children in your life in prayer. Every child should know how special they are to us and how special they are to God. Take every chance you can to lift up their hearts and minds to know the love of Jesus.
**Award-Winning Christian Fiction**

Since Christian Fiction is a popular section in our church library, I’d like to tell you about the Christy Awards, and some recent winners that have recently been added to the Fireside Library.

The Christy Awards is a program of the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association (ECPA) and is the premier award honoring and promoting excellence in Christian fiction in several different categories.

New York Times bestselling author Charles Martin’s book, “Long Way Gone,” won the Christy Awards 2017 Book of the Year. The story features a modern day prodigal son in the character of singer/songwriter Cooper O’Connor. With dreams of making it big, he took nearly everything his dad held dear and went to Nashville. After five tough years, he is faced with tragedy that affects not only his life but his career. Where will his faith lead him?

The General Fiction category winner is author Chris Fabry, with his book, “The Promise of Jesse Woods.” This book also got a Christianity Today Award of Merit. Editorial Review from Barnes and Noble describes it as a coming-of-age story of social outcasts who are bullied and discriminated against because they’re different, mostly by the town’s self-professed Christians, who use their religion to justify their bigotry.

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Also nominated in the General Fiction category was popular evangelist, Bible study author, and teacher Beth Moore for her book “The Undoing of Saint Silvanus.” Christianbooks.com describes this novel: “Saint Silvanus was originally built during the 1800s as a church and was later converted to an apartment complex run by Jillian’s grandmother. While in town attending her father’s funeral, she meets an eclectic group of tenants from the building. As strange things begin happening, she finds out her father was actually murdered. Now she can't leave until she finds out what is really going on.”

One of my favorites, “The Long Journey to Jake Palmer” by James Rubart won the Christy Award in the visionary category. This story had me in its grip from beginning to end. Jake Palmer is a successful coach in the corporate world. After surviving a serious injury, he realizes he’s not able to practice what he preaches as he doesn’t know who he is any more. He reluctantly agrees to a lake vacation with some friends. When he arrives, Jake hears the legend of Willow Lake—about a lost corridor that leads to a place where one’s deepest longings will be fulfilled. Struggling with the likelihood of such a place, he also can’t shake the sliver of hope the legend offers. Could a serene passage lead to anything dangerous?

These are all available in the Fireside library to check out for your summer reading fun.

Becky Audette
Volunteer Librarian
Friday morning dawned bright and clear. It was a perfect day for Bible camp! Though I am familiar with camp, I had never been there in the winter. Our church had never offered this kind of retreat either, so I was excited when 12 students registered to go. That evening, we loaded up in our vehicles and headed to camp.

Shortly after arriving, I noticed one of our campers kept sinking back into her chair, crossing her arms, and withdrawing from the activity. The staff intervened before I could. They quickly moved in to let her know it was normal to feel nervous, but that she was valued and had nothing to fear in this space. God loved her, and they did too. As the weekend progressed, I kept an eye on this camper. She got gradually less reserved, but nothing really broke through her shell.

During our supper meal on Saturday, the staff started playing Disney songs. The room gradually got more and more excited singing along to Moana, Frozen, and Tarzan. Then, someone dared someone else to get up and dance and soon the whole room had stood up and begun a wild and fun, spontaneous dance party! We formed conga lines, dance circles, and even had a small hoedown. It was very fun.

As the dance started, our nervous friend was certainly not one of the first to get up, but eventually joined in. Soon, all nervousness was thrown aside and she was dancing as much as anyone else. She must have noticed me watching because she eventually came over to tell me what was on her mind:

“This is the best thing ever! I’m usually really nervous about trying things, but this is awesome! I guess sometimes you just have to go for it and see what happens! Do you think we can do this again tomorrow??”

Wow! Camp can have that effect on people. The safety and acceptance of God experienced through the staff and community constantly creates opportunities for campers of all ages to wrestle with their fears and learn what it’s like to live freely under God’s love. I hope she remembers this powerful lesson in the future.

First Lutheran is pleased to send students to Luther Crest Bible Camp again this summer. Our students will be at camp July 9-14 learning about God through play, prayer, food, and friendship. Please pray with us that God will teach them more about themselves and Him!

-Meggie Bjertness
Incredible Faith

New Kid Series this Summer!
God does incredible things when we put our faith in him!
Every Sunday, 10:10-10:50 a.m. and every Wednesday, 6:00-6:50 p.m., Adult Ed Room, all kids welcome, age kindergarten to fourth grade. No need to register—just come!

With the “Incredibles 2” movie coming out this summer, let’s use this movie to teach our kids about 10 people in the Bible who showed INCREDIBLE faith. Kids will learn that they can put their faith in God, because he is worthy of our trust.

Each week will focus on these Incredible Faith Lessons:

June 6/10: Ark Man
God asked Noah to build an ark because of the flood that was coming. Noah obeyed God because he trusted God’s plan. Kids will learn that having faith means trusting that God has a plan.

June 13/17: Mr. Obedient
God asked Abraham to move to a new place and Abraham obeyed immediately. Kids will learn that having faith means we obey God.

June 20/24: Professor Positive
Joseph chose to have faith that God had a plan and purpose for his life even when things seemed hopeless. Kids will learn that faith means trusting God even when bad things happen.

June 27/July 8: Captain Commandments
Moses had faith that God would take care of his people, even when they were trapped between an army and a large sea. Kids will learn that they can encourage others to trust God when they are afraid.

July 11/15: Princess of Protection
The Israelite spies were in danger of being caught and killed until Rahab stepped in and saved them. Kids will learn that when we have faith, God will use us to help others.

July 18/22: Mr. 300 Man Army
Gideon had a small army, but God had a plan to confuse the enemy and give Gideon the victory. Kids will learn that when we put our faith in God, nothing he asks us to do is impossible.

July 25/29: The Fire Trio
Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had faith in God that was so strong that they were willing to die to do what’s right. Kids will learn that having faith means we can trust God even if it means things don’t go the way we want them to right now.

August 1/5: Bravery Girl
When Esther’s people were in trouble, she chose to stand up and be brave. Kids will learn that having faith in God means they can make the choice to do what’s right even when it’s scary.

August 8/12: Builder Man
God called Nehemiah to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem, and Nehemiah obeyed even when faced with great opposition. Kids will learn that we must keep doing God’s work, even when people make fun of us.

August 15/19: The Mightiest Hero of All
Jesus is the greatest example of faith because he trusted God’s plan no matter what. Kids will learn when we put our faith in Jesus and ask him to be our Savior we can have an incredible future because of what Jesus did.
Summer Classes

Servant Leadership Academy (SLA) is a way for kids to get credits for confirmation, and learning doesn’t stop just because it is summer! This is a great way to get in some classes during a time when families may have a little more time. But these classes are not just for kids; all ages are welcome! Register for classes online at flcfargo.org. If you have any questions, please contact Pr. Laurie at lneill@flcfargo.org.

Core Class: Bible Basics

**Wednesdays, August 8 and 15, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Adult Education Room (2 core credits)**

Get a great overview of the Bible from beginning to end. Learn how to navigate it, read the exciting stories, and see how it all ties together from Genesis to Revelation.

Elective Class: Gardening with “Growing Together”

**Thursdays, July 19, 26, August 2 and 9, 5-7 p.m., Catalyst Medical Center (West Side), 1800 21st Ave. S, Fargo (½ elective credit and ½ service credit for each session)**

“Growing Together” is a Christ-centered community garden ministry creating safe, welcoming spaces for new American immigrants and access to free, healthy food. All Americans are encouraged to garden side by side to learn about gardening and each other. Come to one or all of the sessions. At the end of the night, you get to take some food home!

Youth Stock

Do you like making good investments that are guaranteed to have a positive return? Do you enjoy helping to create opportunities that will benefit God’s Kingdom? Do you want to be a part owner in a great experience for our youth? We are, for the first time, selling “stock” to support our youth. Each share purchased entitles the owner to all the rights and privileges associated with being a stockholder. Rights and privileges include praying for, encouraging and empowering our youth.

We are selling shares at $20 each, and you can purchase the stock by mail, online at flcfargo.org, or in person at the church front desk. We thank you so much for your consideration towards having ownership in the youth ministry at FLC!

Youth Group Summer Sundays

**Every Sunday evening, times and locations vary**

We can’t wait to get together every Sunday evening for an activity that could be anything including: kickball, watching a movie, Bible study, summer sledding, slip and slides. If you would like to be contacted via “GroupMe” on what is happening when, e-mail Erik at ecarlson@flcfargo.org.

Churches United for the Homeless

**Fourth Wednesday of the month, June-September, 5-7 p.m., Churches United for the Homeless (½ service credit)**

For six months out of the year, First Lutheran has the opportunity to serve dinner at Churches United for the Homeless in Moorhead. We take volunteers of all ages and we serve hot dish, salad, bread, milk, and cookies to whomever shows up for dinner that night.

This is such an awesome opportunity to put our faith into action! Both students and adults are invited to attend. If you are interested in being a volunteer this summer, please contact Erik at ecarlson@flcfargo.org.

Valleyfair

**Wednesday, June 6, 7 a.m.-late evening, $60**

It’s that time of year again and First Lutheran is headed to Valleyfair! Cost covers your admission into the park and transportation. We will take the bus from FLC to Minneapolis, hang out all day at the park, and then head back late the same evening. There are lots of rides and tons of fun to be had at Valleyfair. Whether you’ve never been there before or this is your 100th time, everyone will have a wonderful time! Register online at flcfargo.org.

Rappel off the Roof

**Wednesday, July 25, 6 p.m.-sunset, location TBD**

Register online at flcfargo.org. Free. Open to the first 30 people to register.

TAKE A RISK! This is a great chance to step outside your comfort zone and make some spiritual, physical and emotional breakthroughs! Plus it’s just plain fun, exciting and thrilling! The parallels between rappelling and our faith walk with Jesus are amazing. Fear/anxiety/worry confronted by faith and trust. Open to ages 7 to 99.
ELCA Youth Gathering

Prayers for our Youth

This summer, 12 youth and adult leaders are traveling to Houston to be a part of the ELCA Youth Gathering. This will be an experience that none of us will be able to forget. The ELCA Youth Gathering in San Antonio in 2006 is a huge part of the reason I (Erik Carlson) fell in love with ministry. And this gathering could do the very same for our youth who are participating. We will be worshiping, serving, and praising God with 30,000 other ELCA Lutheran youth from around the world! Some incredible speakers will be sharing their wisdom and stories with us and many great bands will be sharing their musical gifts and talents. Please pray for us and the life changing trip we are going to take. The students and mentors that are going are: Erik Carlson, Pastor Dave Adams, Danelle Kjar, Preston Akers, Chloe Bry, Josiah Bjertness, Emily Runsvold, Ella Wahlen, Julia Zachariason, Kate Zachariason, Alexis Moe, and Jonas Adams.

February Ski Trip

Back in February we took 18 youth to Detroit Lakes and spent a day on the slopes. This was an awesome day filled with tons of laughter and fun, and thankfully no injuries! We had first time skiers and veteran skiers and we look forward to taking a bigger ski trip out to the mountains next year!

Duluth Mission Trip

Middle School Summer Mission Trip
7-9 Grade, Sunday, July 29 – Thursday, August 2; Duluth, Minn., $150.

Please keep our Middle Schoolers in your prayers as we head off to Duluth on a mission trip! We’ll be serving at Union Gospel Mission, a soup kitchen and homeless shelter; and at The Encounter, a skate park hosted by Youth for Christ. There are still a few spots available. Interested adults and youth can contact Meggie for more information. (Worth 2 SLA Credits)

Ecuador Multi-Generational Mission Trip

Wednesday-Sunday, July 18-29

This trip, coordinated through FLC missionaries, Suzy and Jim Olsen, will take place July 18-29. The group is staying at Hacienda El Refugio, a training and retreat center which facilitates a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ through nature and outdoor adventure. High adventure is paired with the invitation to intentionally reflect and simply be in the presence of our Creator. Please pray for the 24 who will be making this trek.

GO WILD!

A 5th and 6th Grade Adventure in God’s Creation
Friday morning, August 3–Sunday, August 5 at noon. Camp Wilderness, $50.

Join us on a camping trip for anyone entering or leaving 5th or 6th grade! It’s a great time to be a kid—enjoy bonfires, sing, swim, hike, Capture the Flag, volleyball, two nights of camping, star gazing, and night games. Together, we’ll learn about God by experiencing his creation at Camp Wilderness. Register and pay online. Don’t let money be the issue! We have scholarships available. Questions? Contact Meggie at mbjertness@flcfargo.org.

Wanted: “Go Wild!” Leaders

Interested in helping us out? We need YOU! Lead songs, play games, hang out with kids, and guide small group discussions. We are looking for people who have completed 8th grade through adults. $20 reserves your spot, you’ll get the money back when the weekend is done. Use Register at flcfargo.org. (Worth 2 SLA Credits)
4 Tips on Grief

The death of a loved one, a job loss, the end of a marriage, an illness or disability; everyone faces losses and grief, but the toll that grief can take on the mind and body can catch many people by surprise.

Grief is a normal reaction to loss. In the past, grief was believed to follow a certain pattern or orderly progression from one feeling to another. But there is no one way to grieve. People may experience many different emotions in any number of combinations. They may include denial, sadness, anger, confusion, despair, and even guilt. Physical reactions can include sleeping problems, changes in appetite, a drop in energy level, body aches and pain, or the development or worsening of an illness.

Time spent grieving varies, too. Some people take months to fully accept or adapt to a loss. For others, the process may take years. Take a moment to read the following 4 tips to help with the grieving process:

1. **Express feelings:** Suppressing thoughts and emotions may prevent working through grief. Friends, family or members of the religious community often can be a source of support and comfort. Other options are support groups or grief counselors.

2. **Delay any major decisions or changes:** Decisions that affect life and lifestyle, such as housing changes or new ways of handling finances, should wait a while. Advice from a trusted family member or friend, financial adviser or attorney may be helpful.

3. **Take care of personal health:** Eating right, getting adequate sleep and limiting alcohol are important. Regular exercise can relieve stress and anxiety.

4. **Be patient:** Expecting to simply “get over” grief is unrealistic. Ups and downs may last for weeks or months following a loss. Though some feelings of loss may never fully go away, the most intense signs and symptoms of grief typically diminish over time, within six months or so. Grief that is prolonged and debilitating may be a sign of depression or post-traumatic stress disorder. A doctor should be consulted in this case.

*You must be able to stand for long periods of time and walk long distances.

*Space limited to first 12 women who sign up

Led by Pastor Laurie Neill, lneill@flcfargo.org

Application found online.

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**5th Annual NYC Mission Trip**

*Saturday-Thursday, Dec. 1-6, $1350. Cost includes: airfare, breakfasts, tickets to Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular and Music Hall tour, and 9/11 memorial with tour.*

This has become a wonderful tradition at First. Please consider joining us as we work and play in New York at Christmastime. Mission work involves working at soup kitchens and delivering meals to shut-ins—right in the heart of Manhattan. We also have free time to enjoy and explore all that New York City has to offer. Planned activities include:

- Radio City Music Hall’s Christmas Spectacular and a tour of Radio City Music Hall
- A tour of the 9/11 Memorial and Museum
- Worship Sunday at the Brooklyn Tabernacle
- Staten Island Ferry cruise by the Statue of Liberty
- Time to take in Broadway show(s)

Please prayerfully consider coming on this amazing trip. Connect with God through service, play and fellowship with other amazing women!
Vacation Bible School (VBS) at a Glance

**Preschool VBS**
3 years old-kindergarten
Sunday, June 10
5-7:30 p.m.
FREE!
Supper included
Maria Kietzman
mkietzman@flcfargo.org

**VBS Day Camp**
Entering 1st-4th grade
Monday-Thursday, June 11-14
9 a.m.-4 p.m.
$25/child; $50/family
Lunch, snacks, field trips included
Katie Kringstad
kkringstad@flcfargo.org

**Go Wild! Camping**
Entering 5-6th grade (or older)
Friday-Sunday, August 3-5
Leave Friday, return Sunday
$50/child
Camp Wilderness
Meggie Bjertness
mbjertness@flcfargo.org

We can’t wait to celebrate God’s love for you this summer!

Set sail for an island adventure in search of the world’s greatest treasure that is worth more than the purest gold! At SonTreasure Island, children will discover God’s love is treasure forever, based on 1 Corinthians 13.

Register now at flcfargo.org

We need YOUR help with VBS! We need Shepherd Leaders, Rotation Leaders, Snack/Lunch Leaders, Field Trip Chaperones, and Decorators. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Katie at kkringstad@flcfargo.org.
On Friday, April 20, a group of 26 people traveled to New York City. For some, it was their first time visiting the city that doesn’t sleep. For others, it was a return trip to a favorite location. We went because First Lutheran’s choir director of more than 40 years, David Ferreira, was invited to conduct a portion of a concert at Carnegie Hall. Needless to say, this was not an invitation you decline.

For the rest of us, we sang in this concert as part of a mass choir, singing selections from Antonio Vivaldi’s “Gloria,” which was conducted by David, and selections from Mozart’s “Missa Solemnis.”

It was a tremendous experience for all of us. To perform on the stage of the most famous concert hall in the world, while singing these timeless sacred pieces of music, united everyone who participated in a way that only music can do. Music has power. Music inspires us, uplifts us, moves us, entertains us, and unlocks the doors to all of our human emotions. This is why music plays such a crucial part of our worship life because it does all of this while uniting us in community.

This trip was a wonderful reminder for us that when we join our voices together to proclaim the love of God, we are blessed to see the beauty that surrounds us. Beauty in creation, beauty in each other, even beauty on a crowded subway ride when we come face to face with the diversity that is all around us.

And let me tell you—we saw a lot of beauty!

Many of us visited the National September 11 Memorial and found ourselves crying and praying with total strangers. BEAUTY!

All of this worked together to remind us that we have been created, crafted, and called by God to be a part of God’s world. To live lives that extend love and beauty to others. To join in the music that God is always composing within and among us.

And this is all possible because Jesus has shown us what abundant life looks like, and he leads us forward with his Holy Spirit.

As the final movement of Vivaldi’s Gloria says:

“Cum Sancto Spiritu in Gloria Dei Patris. Amen.”

With the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen.
Building documentation was finalized in early April.

The construction bid process was initiated with pre-qualified contractors mid-April with pre-bid site visits completed last week of April.

Bid proposals were evaluated by the building project committee and church council.

Construction is scheduled to begin early June, however, prep work on the Chapel relocation and secure construction areas began in May.

The relocation of the Chapel and new nursery is scheduled to open following Labor Day and the start of fall Christian education programming.

During construction security fencing will be erected adjacent to the Broadway sidewalk between 6th Ave. N and the south wall of the sanctuary building. In addition, security fencing for construction trailers, equipment and materials will be erected surrounding the south row of parking in the east parking lot.

Congregation members are discouraged from entering construction areas for safety and so not to interfere with construction activities.

Construction activity will result in a loss of the south parking row in the east parking lot and the staff parking lot on the southwest corner of the property.

Sunday worshipers are encouraged to utilize the Sanford Hospital parking lot on the northwest corner of Broadway and 7th Ave and the first and second floors of the Sanford Hospital parking ramp on 7th Ave.

Guide signs identifying First Lutheran parking will be placed at the entrance of each lot. Congregation parking volunteers will assist in directing vehicles into the lots and directing traffic when the east church lot is full.

Any questions can be directed to:

Dave Rogness, Building Project Committee Chairman, rognessd@gmail.com, 701.541.6638

or

Terry Yoney, Building Project Congregational Representative, terryyoney@hotmail.com, 701.238.4059
Gratitude

The First Lutheran Foundation is blessed with the wonderful task of giving out grants to organizations which support special missions and ministries of the Christian Church in our community, the region, and the world.

In this fiscal year alone, the Foundation distributed $125,000 in grants to worthy agencies. These dollars support the amazing Christ-centered work that these nonprofits provide for those who need it the most.

Recipients of these grants include Churches United for the Homeless, Ecuador Mission Trip, Mexico Mission Trip, Vision Slovakia, ELCA Youth Gathering, Lake Agassiz Habitat for Humanity, Lutheran Campus Ministries, Jail Chaplain Ministry, YWCA, and First Lutheran Church.

One of the many blessings the members of the Foundation Board experience is reading the heart-felt thank-you notes from these recipient organizations. The following note from the founder of TeacHaiti is just one inspiring example of how a grant from the Foundation furthered their mission:

“First Lutheran Foundation, Words are not enough to thank First Lutheran Foundation for granting our request to purchase Bibles and chairs for our students. These gifts will equip our students to know the Gospel and consequently, have a positive impact for the Kingdom of God.

Giving our students a good education is something we strive for immensely; however, I am a Christian above all. I truly believe nourishing the students’ minds without feeding them spiritually would be negligent on our part. A Christian education has always been a very important part of TeacHaiti and we are so pleased that you are helping us through your significant contribution. We now have the necessary tools needed to empower and lead them as they grow in knowledge and faith in Jesus.

Being able to pass Christian values on to the children in our community is vital, especially because they are easily influenced. Unfortunately, these children are surrounded by voodoo activities frequently. It is very important to speak Truth to their lives. We strive to teach them to develop a relationship with Jesus and adopt Christian values that can be passed down to future generations. This not only gives these children a path out of poverty, but also a home with our Savior one day.

St. Michel is more than a school. It has become a community gathering sanctuary. With voodoo being so prevalent in the area, using our school facility has given us a wonderful medium to share the Gospel with not just students from TeacHaiti, but also with those in the community who frequent our school compound on a regular basis. The gift of chairs will be used by both students and our visitors. My prayer is that everyone who comes into our school building will leave with the knowledge of God.

We will do our best to have Bibles in the hands of our students by April. On behalf of the TeacHaiti team, our students and faculty, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Sincerely yours,
Miquette D. McMahon,
Founder”

May God richly bless the mission and ministry of TeacHaiti!
Yours in Christ,
John Riley Holmen
Giving Consultant
First Lutheran Church

Nine Ways to Give

The following are ways you can give back to the Kingdom of God through First Lutheran Church:

1. Use the electronic transfer called Simply Giving (the link can be found at flcfargo.org)
2. Through the Sunday morning or Wednesday evening offering plate
3. Text to give (instructions in the bulletin)
4. Give the gift of real estate or personal property to the church
5. Give the gift of investment: stocks or mutual funds
6. Name The Foundation as the owner or beneficiary of an insurance policy
7. Include FLC and/or The Foundation in your will or living trust
8. Leave retirement plan assets (IRA, 401k, etc.) or annuities to The Foundation through beneficiary designation
9. Through estate planning, utilizing a charitable gift annuity, or a charitable trust
Welcome to our New Staff

Please welcome Maria Kietzman, who is joining the staff of First Lutheran Church as the Director of Nursery Ministries. In this part-time position, Maria will be ensuring the nursery is a safe nurturing environment and will create a ministry that serves parents and families with children from birth to five years old.

Maria graduated from MSUM in 2011 where she studied elementary education. She has provided case management for adults and children with developmental disabilities, worked in outreach for children facing home and community challenges, and served as a Children’s Ministry Leader at Hope Lutheran Church.

Maria is very excited to be growing the ministries of First Lutheran Church. She and her husband, Justin, have been attending First together since college and been members since 2014. They have three children: Eloise is four; Claudia is two; and their boy Vernon was born just before Christmas.

Maria loves Settlers of Catan, Harry Potter, cuddling her babies, and sharing God’s love with his children.

Volunteer in the Nursery

Jesus loves the little children and so do we at First Lutheran Church! As our nursery ministry grows, we are looking for additional volunteers to share the love of Christ in our nursery during church services and events. If you have been blessed with the gift of a love for children please contact Maria at 218.790.3138 or mkietzman@flcfargo.org to learn more about volunteering or stop by the nursery before or after church services. Volunteering with your children is, of course, welcome.

Mexico Mission ’18

Celebration Highlights

God is good! This spring, 11 participants ages 13-60 went to the remote, isolated, and quiet village of Mexíl, Yucatan, Mexico, with approximately 200 villagers. Most of the men were metal workers, forging axes, knives and machetes from scrap metal. While there, we built two concrete block homes and led five afternoon Bible school sessions with games, arts and crafts, and a Bible story. We also had a fantastic history visit to Chichen Itza Mayan Ruins. A wonderful sense of friendship and community developed between the villagers and us Gringos. Our small team from FLC bonded quickly and became a tight-knit family group.

God completely provides for us in all ways. Our financial needs were met completely, everyone stayed healthy and accident-free, and we came home with a renewed and deepened faith in Jesus. Many tears were shed upon departure. Yes, God is good!
Have you been enjoying First Lutheran’s Daily Devotion emails?

If not, you must not be receiving them, yet!

Every day, First Lutheran sends out a devotion written by one of our staff. They are inspiring, challenging, and thought-provoking. If you would like to receive these daily devotions in your email, contact Eric at edybing@flcfargo.org.