

FIRST OUT LOUD

God's Work. Our Hands. To Serve ALL People.

APRIL 2024 NEWSLETTER

Siblings in Christ,

In April we continue to celebrate Easter. The season of Easter continues for seven weeks. Easter, then, is a week of weeks. This is wonderful because, as a society, we tend to focus on something and then quickly move on. The church's calendar will not let us do so. On March 31st, we celebrated Christ rising from the dead. All throughout the next seven weeks we will continue to celebrate the power of Christ's resurrection to bring life into our lives and into our world. Where have you seen signs of life around you?

I have seen signs of life springing up with buds on trees and bushes, with purple flowers peeking their leaves up through the grass and, with the return of robins which my grandma always said meant that spring is near. I have seen life in our Lenten gatherings. We gathered for tasty meals, good fellowship and conversation, learning and worship, all done through the help of many volunteers. Thank you to everyone who made our Lenten and Holy Week celebrations the wonderful experience they were. You are another sign of life at First Lutheran Church.

Where else are you seeing signs of life? Keep praying. Keep coming to worship. Keep offering your time and talents in service to God and your neighbor. Then stop and reflect. Where is God at work in your lives? Christ died and rose again so that we will have the promise of life now and forever. Thanks be to God!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Pastor Christopher Culuris



2 | A NOTE FROM COUNCIL PRESIDENT

BE THE CHANGE: GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS. TO SERVE ALL PEOPLE.

Let me start by way of an introduction. My name is Randy Frey-Hawkins, and I am the new Church Council President. I am married to JoAnn (Jo) Frey-Hawkins, and together, we have three adult-aged children; Noah, Brett and Hannah. For twenty years, I owned and operated Shiloh's Hope, an agency that provided residential housing and support services to persons with severe and persistent mental illness. My wife, Jo, was a licensed psychologist. Most of our adult lives have been devoted to working in the field of mental health and the well-being of others. We retired in September 2020 just as the pandemic was gaining headway across this country and around the world. I have lived in St. Peter most of my life. First Lutheran Church has largely been home to me, even when it was located on the corner of Fourth and Elm, across from the old Washington Elementary School. Admittedly and sadly, my memories of the old Church have faded. However, I'd like to think that even though my memories have faded, my love for this church hasn't.

We are now a quarter of the way through 2024, and here at First Lutheran Church, we have the opportunity to be a part of the changes that are going on in our midst and commit ourselves to the dreams, aspirations and challenges that stand before us as set forth in our strategic planning. It was Mahatma Gandhi who said, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." I have long been inspired by his life, work and the impact he had on the world. To be the change as a kind of moral imperative can be seen as a challenge and an opportunity to renew and transform our minds in how we see problems and solutions and how we see and relate to other people. Equally so, to be the change can inspire a new way of being and doing in this world. Even though it's a complex and often messy world in which we live, simple acts of kindness, compassion, mercy or generosity can have far-reaching benefits in ways we never imagined. These beneficent acts of good will and standing in solidarity with and fighting for the poor, the homeless, or the "lepers" or then marginalized of the world, or fighting for human rights or the environment or social justice helps to connect the dots of our collective DNA, reminding us we are still a global family held together by a bond much deeper than any cultural norms.

I often wonder how this world could look in its infinite possibilities. but if we want the world to be kind and understanding, do we not, first, have to be kind and understanding ourselves? If we want the world to be tolerant and accepting, do we not, first, have to be tolerant and accepting ourselves? If we want to be heard and acknowledged, do we not, first, have to listen to and acknowledge the needs and concerns of others? If we want the world to change, do we not, first, have to be the change ourselves? Fundamental to wanting to see the world as it can be is to first be the change we imagine it can be.

Over the next year, I will examine how the various committees within our church are the embodiment of "be the change" and how their commitment to hard work and efforts connect with both our mission: Gods work. Our Hands. To Serve ALL People.; and with our strategic planning. Of course, rarely does anything come easy or without a hitch. We will find ourselves having to face the unexpected surprises that weren't in the picture when the year started, like failing a boiler inspection. Moments like this, remind us that the work isn't always easy or glorious, that they require careful thought and discussion before the tough decisions are made and action taken. However, we are a community of faith, inspired by the Holy Spirit, united in like-mindedness with Jesus, the Christ. We can and shall face these challenges as we always have. In the meantime, let us remember, we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Eph 1:10)

Respectfully,
Randy
President of Church Council

FLC'S STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN UPDATE | 3

- ◆ **Strategic Priority: Engaging and Collaborating with the Community**
- ◆ **Strategic Goal: Put in place a plan to use the facilities/grounds/assets of First Lutheran Church to meet the needs of the community**

First Forum Summary

An Action Plan Team was formed in June 2023 to focus on the *Engaging and Collaborating with the Community* portion of the FLC Strategic Plan. The Action Plan team decided to focus on the specific strategic goal of putting a plan in place to meet the needs of the community.

The Action Plan Team discussed many options, in hopes of coming up with a way that we could use our assets to benefit **both** the church and the community. The idea we decided to research was building affordable housing on the church's vacant land. This checked both boxes: Serving the community with much-needed affordable housing, and doing so in a way that could also be financially beneficial to the church.

The Action Plan Team presented the research done so far regarding this concept at a First Forum on December 10. The team described studying similar projects completed by other churches, and discussions with community leaders, an attorney with expertise in real estate, and a non-profit community development organization.

The purpose of the Forum was to see what the congregation thought about this idea as a broad concept, so that the Action Plan Team could decide whether to continue to pursue it. The attendees were encouraged to voice their opinions during the Forum and/or complete a feedback form. We were pleased with the number of Forum attendees and feedback form responses!

Feedback Summary

According to the Forum attendees (via verbal comments and/or feedback forms) and a couple other members we have heard from, most are in favor of further exploring the possibility of building affordable housing on the church's vacant land. Regarding this concept:

- ◆ Many would like to maintain some degree or ownership and say over what happens on the land.
- ◆ There was some interest in the congregation being involved in the up-front planning parts of the project.
- ◆ Most want very limited or no risk or liability to the church when the project is complete.
- ◆ The vast majority want some financial benefit to the church from this project, and responses were split as to whether this would be a one-time payment to the church, a set monthly payment, or payments that could vary depending on ongoing profits or losses of the completed project.

Several FLC members expressed that they would like the Action Plan Team to present a second option for use of the church's vacant land. The predominant idea was some type of green space, such as native prairie restoration, oak savannah, or other landscape that involves native planting.

While we respect some members' desire for more than one choice when it comes to the vacant land, be it housing or native green space, there will have to be compromise as we have many members (based on survey results) who favor housing and others who favor green space. Therefore, the Action Plan Team will present two options at a future meeting, and both options will involve some housing and some native plantings.

Share Your Thoughts

Don't be shy! There's no need to wait around for another First Forum to let us know what you think! We'd love to hear from you. If you have an idea about how to use FLC's facilities, grounds, or assets in a way that benefits both the community and our congregation, please contact anyone on the team.

Thank you!

Mary Spear
Randy Frey-Hawkins

Keith Stelter
Kristy Larson

Mike Stewart
Shanon Nowell

4 | FLC AT WORK AND PLAY



FLC AT WORK AND PLAY | 5



6 | COMMUNITY INTEREST



Love Your Neighbor, Even When We Disagree

LUTHERAN
MEN'S MISSION

For All Men
SW MN Synod Spring Gathering
Saturday, April 13, 2024
Gloria Dei Church in Redwood Falls

8:00 a.m. Registration / Rolls, Coffee, and Juice

9:00 Welcome and Bible Study

Business Meeting

Fill vacancies on board: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Conference Reps.
Scholarship for Seminary and Endowment Fund Contribution
LMM Golf Tournament-Purpose and Details
- July 19, 2024, at Redwood Falls Golf Course

10:30 Mt. Ted Mathews, "How Do We Manage Conflict?"

Lunch / Meet and Greet

1:00 p.m. LMM Ambassadors, Pr. Tim Schoeder and Jan Nelson—LMM Tools for Ministering with Men

Closing Worship with Offering led by Pr. Bryant Kaden and Pr. Lowell Krogstad
- Installation of Officers

3:00 Depart for Home. Drive Safely.

To register please fill out the registration form and mail to LMM Treasurer, Reynold Dittbenner at 24533 State Hwy 4, Sleepy Eye, MN 56085. Cell: 507-220-0185.

Cost: \$10 per person

Donations to the LMM Scholarship Endowment Fund are appreciated even if you are not able to participate in the Spring Gathering.



Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

LUTHERAN
MEN'S MISSION

For All Men
SW MN Synod Spring Gathering
Saturday, April 13, 2024
Gloria Dei Church in Redwood Falls

Spring Gathering Registration:

To register please fill out the registration form below and mail to LMM Treasurer, Reynold Dittbenner at 24533 State Hwy 4, Sleepy Eye, MN 56085

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Congregation Name: _____

Registration fee: \$10 per person

Please make checks payable to SW MN Synod LMM

Registration deadline is Tuesday, April 9th.

We would ask interested parties to please contact John Woodford at 507-640-2472 or johndiane@redred.com

Registrations, payments and donations should be mailed to LMM Treasurer, Reynold Dittbenner.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

LAND BACK FOR INDIAN TRIBES is the topic of this year's Ronald and Kathryn Christenson Lecture in Politics and Law, Thursday, April 18, at 4:00 p.m. in the Wallenberg Auditorium at Gustavus. This year's speaker is Kevin Washburn, Dean of the Law School at University of Iowa, Iowa City. Dean Washburn is a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma. He served as Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs in the U.S. Department of the Interior, from 2012-16.

SAINT PETER SENIOR EXPO will be held on Thursday, April 18 from 1—4 p.m. at the Saint Peter Community Center. There will be food, drink, live music, giveaways and lots of information! This event is free and open to the public. **FLC IS HOSTING A TABLE** and Pastor Chris will be there to greet visitors! Please contact Betsy Paul @ 507-720-5006 or betsyepaul@gmail.com if you would be willing to take a shift from 2:30 - 4:30 or anything earlier or in between! You are sure to see many friends that you may have not connected with for a long time! Please come and share in the hospitality of FLC out in our community!

LIONS CLUB PANCAKE BREAKFAST is scheduled for Saturday, April 20 from 9 a.m.—12 p.m. at the American Legion Post 37. All you can eat pancakes, sausages along with coffee, milk and juice, \$9/ticket, 5 & Under are Free

SAINT PETER SPRING CRAFT SHOW will be at the Nicollet County Fairgrounds on Saturday, April 27 from 9 a.m.—3 p.m. Local area vendors and crafters, taco in a bag and more!

FLC YOUTH



MARCH-APRIL 2024

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE	SPECIAL MAY DATES
<p>3/24 - Palm Sunday 10am Children's Choir Sings</p> <p>3/28 - Maundy Thursday 7pm</p> <p>3/29 - Good Friday 7pm</p> <p>3/30 - Easter Vigil 7pm Artwork created by youth grades K-6</p> <p>3/31 - Easter Sunday</p>	<p>Mark your calendars to join in celebrating these special days.</p> <p>May 5: Confirmation Sunday</p> <p>May 12: First Communion</p> <p>May 19: High School Graduation Recognition</p> 

SUNDAY SCHOOL

PreK - Grade 4

3/24 - No Class

9:30 Children's Choir Sings

3/31 - No Class

4/7 - No Class

4/14 - Sunday School

4/21 - Last Day of Class

FAITH FORMATION

Grades 5 & 6

3/27- No Class

4/3 - Class Meets

4/10 - No Class

4/17 - Class Meets

4/24 - Last Day of Class

CONFIRMATION

Grades 7-8

3/27- No Class

4/3 - Psalms

4/10 - No Class

4/17 - Jeopardy

4/24 - Mentor/Mentee

Last Night Celebration

Grade 9: Same Schedule, separate learning plan.

Don't forget:

- Worship Assistants
- Sermon Notes
- Habits of the Heart

YOUTH GROUP

GRADES 7-12

Join in Fun and Fellowship!

4/3 - Easter Escape Room

5/1 - Kickball



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

1114 W. Traverse Rd.
St. Peter, MN 56082

Non-Profit Organization
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PALM SUNDAY

Though it was a gloomy day, the service on Palm Sunday was made extra special by the children's choir, music by Kim Beecher, fellowship by Betty Thompson and Carol Solberg, assisting minister Rebekah Roemhildt and reader Dan Polzin.

