First Out Loud

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

JUNE/JULY 2026 NEWSLETTER

Siblings in Christ,

This Summer, as you work, attend graduation ceremonies, go on vacation, visit with family and friends or, just sit at home and watch the world go by on your front porch, know you are loved by God. Here is a poem by Joe Davis that I wish to share with you. It's from his 2023 book Remind Me Again: Poems and Practices for Remembering Who We Are. Enjoy summer and remember that God loves you always! Pastor Christopher Culuris

Love Always – A reminder of unconditional love by Joe Davis
I love you. I love you at your best, I love you at your worst, I love you in a dress or sweatpants and T-shirt.
I love you when you stay in shape, I love you when you gain weight, I love everything about you that you love and even everything you say you hate! I love you.
I love you when you wake up, I love you without makeup, I love you any time of day in any way because I mean it when I say love! I love you.
I love you from start to finish, from head to toe, I love every spot, wrinkle, and blemish, every freckle and mole. I love both your dimples and your pimples, your mind, body, spirit, and soul. I will love you before and after the here and now and now I'm here to let you know, I love you.
I love the way you laugh, you smile, you talk, you walk, you sing. I could cut this poem in half and say I love your everything.
Because if you ever think that you're not loved that just isn't so! No matter what, my love for you is unconditional.

I will love you forever and a day and today is the day I will forever say I will love you just the same when your hair turns dusty gray, I will love you just because I love you: Always.

2 Council President Report

In one of his recent sermons, Pastor Chris talked about valleys and mountaintops; the post-Easter slump, the power of the resurrection, and the dog days of summer; the happy moments and the daily grind. As we move from a busy school year and the month of May into summertime, I invite you to reflect on the ways you have been involved in our church community over the past year. Likely both joys and challenges that come to mind!

In addition, this is a wonderful time to consider ways you will continue to participate in the life of our congregation, as well as new—or new to you—opportunities coming this fall. Where is God calling you to plug in?

● Fellowship: Do you look forward to visiting and catching up after worship on Sundays? The Fellowship Committee is looking for volunteers to assist with providing and serving treats during the summer months. Sign up in the gather space or reach out to Jean Hayer at 507.317.6972.

● Wednesday Night Education: Are you interested in working with preschoolers through sixth graders? We are looking for passionate teachers for our Wednesday night classes.

● Adult Education: Do you have a burning topic or a book study you would like to lead for our adult community?

● Confirmation Mentors: Think back to your own confirmation—is there a mentor you still remember? We are seeking mentors to walk alongside our middle schoolers during these deeply formative years.

● High School Youth Advisory Team: Is high school energy and planning engaging activities your cup of tea? Help us brainstorm ideas and organize activities for our youth.

● Fall Festival (Sunday, October 11th, 2026): Do you love visiting with people and showing off First Lutheran Church? The Fall Festival will include building tours and showcases of what makes FLC great. Stay tuned for ways to get involved!

For myself personally, summer is a time of rejuvenation. Often, this takes the form of visiting my dad at a family “ranch” in Montana, which my great-grandfather homesteaded in 1912.

The peace of Big Sky country, time hiking the coulees, admiration for the way plants manage to grow in such dry conditions, and exploring mudrocks for hidden fossils and crystals—all of this fills my soul with gratitude. It reminds me of the beauty of the world we live in and the importance of the people we surround ourselves with. It allows me to return with the energy and dedication needed to navigate the valleys and mountaintops of everyday life.

Thank you for all of the ways you make First Lutheran Church such a meaningful congregation. May you have a wonderful summer filled with whatever rejuvenates you!

Kaari

"THE KITCHEN" continues to provide a free hot meal every Monday to anyone who comes to the Trinity Lutheran Church dining room from 5:30-6:30. Five local churches participate in providing the meals: First Lutheran Church, Trinity Lutheran Church, Union Presbyterian Church, St. Peter Catholic Church and Scandian Grove Lutheran Church. First Lutheran provides a meal on the 4th Monday of each month. Volunteer sign up sheets can be found on the table in the foyer. Since January 2026 we have been serving 100-130 people every Monday. Any leftover food is taken to the Union Street shelter. Thank you to Second Harvest who has helped supply us with food, Family Fresh and Hy-Vee Grocery stores who provide bakery items, and to the loyal volunteers who help shop and pick up donated food, prep and cook the meals, greet our dinner guests and serve the meals, and clean-up afterwards. This is a wonderful way to serve our community and help those in need, and make friends with other volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering or have any questions please contact Marilyn Kochsiek 612-695-6270 or the Social Justice Committee Members. Monetary donations are always welcome. If you would like to make a donation just put a check in the offering plate with "The Kitchen" written on the memo line. You can also send donations directly to "The Kitchen" at Trinity Lutheran Church.

GRADUATION CLASS OF 2026

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
SAINT + PETER

Lathe Bly
Parents: Kaari & Galen Bly
Future Plans: Attending Marquette University and planning to study secondary education
Shawl Creator: Ellis Jones
Favorite Memory of FLC: The canoe trip in the Boundary Waters!

Lillian Chambers
Parents: Brad & Sarah Chambers
Future Plans: Lily will be working and living in Oklahoma City.
Shawl Creator: Kim Engelhardt
Favorite Memory of FLC: Enjoyed playing handbells with the family.

Rebekah Roemhildt
Parents: Gabriela & Mark Roemhildt
Future Plans: I plan to attend St. Olaf College to major in music, with an emphasis in vocal performance
Shawl Creator: Cheryl Kautt
Favorite Memory of FLC: During this past year at the live Nativity, my sister and I, in an attempt to stay warm, began dancing to the music playing in the background. It's documented in some sort of video somewhere.

GRADUATION CLASS OF 2026

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
SAINT + PETER

Malcolm McHugh
Parents: Brenda & Tom McHugh
Future Plans: Attend the University of Minnesota Duluth to study marketing
Shawl Creator: Rachel Szybnski
Favorite Memory of FLC: Going to the BWCA with the FLC group a few years ago.

Amelia Staples
Parents: Jason & Deanna Staples
Future Plans: Going to NDSU and majoring in Pharmacy
Shawl Creator: Nancy Timm
Favorite Memory of FLC: Jeopardy with bible questions

Sam Szybnski
Parents: Rachel & Mark Szybnski
Future Plans: Attending the University of Wisconsin River Falls studying Broad Field Social Studies
Shawl Creator: Sharon Malm
Favorite Memory of FLC: My favorite FLC memories were made on the Boundary Waters Trip.

Abby Voeltz
Parents: Kris & Chris Voeltz
Future Plans: Work at the library and continue my education
Shawl Creator: Rebecca Otterness
Favorite Memory of FLC: The Christmas service when I was an angel.

CONFIRMATION CLASS OF 2026

Dylan Greenig
Baptized: November 20, 2011
Parents:Nick & Amanda Greenig
Confirmation Mentor: Nancy Timm
Bible Verse: Matthew 6:34 “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own”

Colton James Janovsky
Baptized: October 11, 2011
Parents: Dustin & Sarah Janovsky
Godparents/Sponsors: Jessen & Jennie Janovsky
Confirmation Mentor: Dave Ribar
Bible Verse: 1 Corinthians 16:14 “let all that you do be done in love”

Colton James Loken
Baptized: April 20, 2019
Parents: Aaron & Ann Loken
Godparents/Sponsors: Angie Quast and Chris Bordenave
Confirmation Mentor: Dave Ribar
Bible Verse: Romans 12:21 “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Graham Timothy Menning
Baptized: April 15, 2011
Parents: Stefanie & Stephen Menning
Godparents: Pat and Kris Menning
Confirmation Mentor: Pat Menning
Bible Verse: Joshua 1:9 “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Kolby Wenner Nixon
Baptized: May 20, 2011
Parents: Dave & Jodi Nixon
Godparents/Sponsors: Dan Wenner and Christy Nixon
Confirmation Mentor: Ben Johnson
Bible Verse: Matthew 7:7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

Simon Seul-gi Ribar
Baptized: July 17, 2016
Parents: David & Rachel Ribar
Godparents/Sponsors: Carissa and Rich Delestre
Confirmation Mentor: Galen Bly
Bible Verse: Exodus 15:2A “The Lord is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation.”

Happy Spring FLC community. These are busy days aren't they? It is easy to forget who we are and what we are all about in the midst of lives filled with activities, breaking news events or sleepless nights. Now it is more important than ever we remember who we are (followers of Jesus) and whose we are (beloved children of a God who so loved the world he sent Jesus into the world). Here are some ways to remember this very important marker that shapes the way we live and move and have our being:

1. **Observe the three "R's" - Rise, Read, Reflect**. Get up in the morning and have a devotion with scripture set out so you read it before you move into your day. Give yourself some reflection time. Use "Christ in our Home" or other resources. One great app on my phone that I use is "Pray As You Go".

2**. Mark the sign of the cross on your forehead** in the morning and say these words "I am a child of God, and nothing, nothing, nothing can ever change that."

3. **Mark the sign of the cross on your children's, spouse's or other family member's forehead** in the morning and say these words "You are a child of God, and nothing, nothing, nothing can ever change that."

4. **Be around others**. We have photos in this issue of the First Out Loud that show how this community gathers to wear their identity and remind each other of God's grace and CALL on each of our lives. It happens at Faith Night at First, and The Kitchen in meal prep and serving, in Youth meetings, Confirmation, Education classes, Choir rehearsals, bible studies, funerals, marches, rallies, meetings, sitting with someone in the midst of their grief and so many more places. These are places where we wear our identity and share it with the world. It feeds us and we help feed the world with the identity of Christ.

5. **Smile, breathe, remember that the Holy Spirit shows up** in mundane moments of our day - be on the lookout for God moments showing up in unusual places and people. The Holy Spirit can surprise us - she certainly has surprised me at different times and places! We are in this together and we are not alone. My favorite verse: Matthew 28: 20…And remember, I am with you to the end of the age.

FIRST COMMUNION CLASS OF 2026

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
SAINT + PETER

Avery Alexander Noble
Parents: Alex & Stephanie Noble
Favorite thing about First Lutheran Church: Meeting new friends and singing "Make a Difference"

Corbin Thomas Caven
Parents: Chris & Erin Caven
Favorite thing about First Lutheran Church: I love the fun and games at VBS during the summer!

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
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St. Peter, MN 56082

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