

FIRST OUT LOUD!

NEWSLETTER
APRIL 2023

Pastor Chris – *Close Encounters in Our Daily Lives*

Alleluia! He is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia! A blessed and happy Easter to you all!

Our theme for this Lent was “Seeking: Honest Questions for Deeper Faith.” Over the course of the past six weeks, I pray you have felt empowered to ask those deepest, most heartfelt questions that reside in your heart. Questions are a good thing! They show that your faith is alive and well. I would rather have a congregation filled with curious believers asking good questions in the hopes of growing in their faith, than not. Questions help us to refine our thinking about what we believe and who we place our trust in. So, I hope you have been asking the questions you needed to address this season of Lent.

As we enter the seven-week season of Easter I pray that you will have another encounter. This time it does not have to involve questions- although, it certainly could! You may also encounter some answers. Over the course of the Easter season, I pray that, through God’s Word and Sacraments, through prayers and hymns and the gathering together of the faithful in our congregation, that you will have a holy encounter with someone. This Easter I pray that you may come to feel the presence of our Risen Lord Jesus! May you encounter Jesus in the Easter story of the empty tomb and Jesus’ appearing to Mary and the apostles. May you encounter Jesus in the love you feel between yourself and your family, friends, and neighbors. May you encounter Jesus through the forgiveness you offer and receive during your daily lives, Monday through Saturday. Then, I pray you may encounter Jesus as we gather around God’s altar to receive Jesus’ true body and blood given for the forgiveness of our sins in the sacrament of Holy Communion. May you encounter the Risen Lord as Jesus is truly alive!

Finally, I want to thank Jeff Olson and everyone who worked on our Strategic Planning Task Force over the course of the past two months. They have done us all a great service and they deserve our sincere thanks and appreciation! I pray that our “First Lutheran Church Strategic Plan Framework 2023-2028” will bear fruit and further God’s mission in St. Peter and beyond.

In Christ,

Pastor Chris



HOLY WEEK EVENING SCHEDULE
Services Begin at 7pm
Maundy Thursday: April 6
Good Friday: April 7
Easter Vigil: April 8

EASTER SUNDAY
Continental Breakfast 9am
Worship 10 am
EVERYONE IS WELCOME

FEBRUARY 28 *Financial Report*

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Income | \$107,400 |
| <u>Expense</u> | <u>\$77,030</u> |
| Net Income | \$30,370 |

Council President – Identifying Church Priorities & Core Values

Strategic Plan Framework Approved by Congregational Council

Vision Statement, Core Values and New Mission Statement also approved.

With great enthusiasm and hope for the future, the Congregational Council presents the 2023-2028 strategic plan framework for First Lutheran Church. The strategic plan includes three strategic priorities as well as a vision statement, core values and a new mission statement. I would like to thank the “thought leaders” team of Pastor Chris Culuris, Steve Erickson, Harry Hunt, Bill Kautt, Dave Kennedy, Amy Ronnkvist and Mary Spear for their key role in initiating and refining this plan and to the core

planning team members of Aaron Banks, Emily Bruflat, Calleigh Carlson, Michelle Doose, Randy Frey-Hawkins, Ceceli Polizin, Rachel Ribar, Monique Sebring, Carrie Stelter, Shirb Sylvester, and Grace Timm for their valuable input in developing the strategic plan framework.

Our congregation has engaged in strategic planning in the past including the “Co-Creating First Lutheran 2007-2012 Plan for Ministry”. This plan developed the mission statement “Renewed by Christ in Word, water, bread and wine, we serve the community and the world” and put in place a capital campaign to remodel and expand the church building. There have been subsequent plans for ministry but the transitions in pastoral leadership and the COVID pandemic have delayed significant strategic planning. We were overdue for an intentional look at our plans for the future.

With a new pastor and emerging from the COVID pandemic, the council agreed it was time to engage in strategic planning to seek out who God is calling the people of First Lutheran to be and do. This plan made use of data collected from discussions of small groups of members (2019), council discussion groups (2021, 2022), and a member survey (2023). Using this data, Jeff Olson, a member of our congregation with extensive experience in strategic planning, guided a diverse group of thought leaders and core planning team members over an eight-week period in activities that helped us devise this strategic plan framework.

The plan was finalized on March 19 and was brought to council on March 21 where it was unanimously approved. I haven’t gone into all the details and considerations that went into the strategic plan, but members of the strategic planning team will share more about the process at a First Forum to be held on Sunday, April 30th after worship. Also, we will provide an opportunity for you to ask questions and discover ways to get involved.

It’s ironic that even though we now have a strategic plan, the work is just beginning. It needs an action plan, and those actions need to be tracked, reported on and refined. As I write this, the congregational council will meet for a retreat on Saturday, March 25 to begin developing action plan teams that will discern ways to achieve these goals. We will be asking members to join these teams to help fulfill the goals of our strategic priorities. It is a call to each of us to deepen our personal connections to God, one another, and the work of the church. You bring life to these priorities and goals. If you see a strategic priority that interests you and want to contribute, please contact the church office and we will get you onboard. As with the coming of spring, this strategic plan breathes life into our congregation and offers newness to our life together.

First Lutheran Church Strategic Plan Framework 2023-2028

Mission Statement

God's work, our hands to serve all people

Vision Statement

United in faith with a commitment to serve all people, we are sent to do God's work by actively bringing together the congregation, communities, and generations.

Core Values

We value:

- Seeking inclusion, diversity, and justice;
- Feeding our faith for growth and renewal;
- Providing a place of worship, fellowship, learning, and musical opportunities for all ages and abilities;
- Working for healing and reconciliation; and
- Sharing generously of our first fruits: time, talents, and resources.

Strategic Priorities & Goals:

- Engaging & Collaborating with the Community
- Goal #1: Explore and implement joint activities with St. Peter churches and faith communities.
- Goal #2: Continue and expand community-based activities across all demographics and races.
- Goal #3: Develop and implement a plan to match the interests/skills/talents of the FLC staff and congregation with community needs.
- Goal #4: Put in place a plan to use the facilities/grounds/assets of First Lutheran Church to meet the needs of the community.

Providing Programs & Services to ALL Demographics

- Goal #1: Explore opportunities for multi-generational ministry.
- Goal #2: Create opportunities for people to grow and renew their faith.
- Goal #3: Grow youth/young adult ministry through a variety of programming, experiences, and collaboration.
- Goal #4: Explore and implement new ways to use technology to connect people to church.

Having a Solid Financial Position

- Goal #1: Implement a plan to achieve and maintain financial stability.
- Goal #2: Ensure that FLC has a financially balanced budget and reserve funds.
- Goal #3: Develop and put in place a process to match the budget to identified needs and wants of the church.

Submitted by Mary Spear

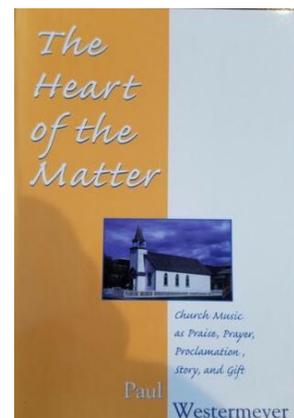
Academic Study: An Essay Continued

The Heart of the Matter: Church Music as Praise, Prayer, Proclamation, Story, and Gift

by Dr. Paul Westermeyer

Part 3: Church Music as Proclamation

Proclamation is the pastor's job, right? Well, this is partially true, and the congregation certainly does not "preach" in the same way. (Although, Westermeyer makes a case that the pastor's sermon is songlike in nature!) Like a verbal proclamation, the church's music "is heard against a backdrop of silence," and it "requires intelligible vocals, but this time they are borne and broken open by music." Westermeyer continues, "As Luther might say, the



Word of God is proclaimed in words, and wonder of wonders, words about the Word of God can be sung.”

Westermeyer’s thesis in this section is that “[m]usic proclaims, interprets, breaks open the Word of God.” He provides three examples of how this is true:

1. A singing congregation proclaims to all who are present.
2. Music has been and still can be a tool used to proclaim scripture. How often do we use music to proclaim the psalm, whether as a congregation or by using a choir? Occasionally, hymnody has even been used to proclaim the gospel (Mary’s Magnificat in Luke comes to mind.) Reading lessons is rather new compared to centuries of singing or chanting them.
3. Various types of compositions (“[m]otets...chorale preludes, cantats, and Passions by Bach”) were written as means of proclamation. Westermeyer writes, “They may work for concerts in some purely musical sense, but they only really come alive when they are placed in their native soil as proclamation in the context of a worshipping assembly.”

Where does this leave the church musician? Aside from ways already noted above, one way that perhaps we do not consider as often is the musician’s expertise in phrasing, diction, and enunciation. This training can allow the cantor to work with lectors and help them to read ancient texts with flow and understanding. Westermeyer believes that “[t]hese are necessities in good reading, which is becoming a lost art in many churches and the culture at large. Musicians can help repair the breach so that the lessons can be understood.”

Here’s an application for our church community: if you have always wanted to read lessons or chant psalms during worship but want more instruction, feel free to set up a time to meet with me. I would be more than happy to work on this in a similar way that I would approach a text set to music. Together, we can all proclaim the scriptures in many and various ways.

-Emily Bruflat, Director of Music

UPCOMING
this summer

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| JUN 12 | KICKBALL & TREATS 6:30PM AT FLC |
| JUL 10 | BINGO & TREATS 6:30PM AT FLC |
| JUL 24 | CHRISTMAS IN JULY 6:30PM AT FLC |
| AUG 14 | FIRE, S'MORES, SONGS 6:30PM AT FLC |

Monday Fundays!
Summer Family Nights
at First Lutheran Church

BRING A FRIEND!
ALL AGES WELCOME!

Youth & Family - Out Loud!

-Calleigh Carlson, Director of Youth & Family Education

Sunday School Schedule:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Sunday, April 2nd 10:00am | <i>Sunday School sings in Palm Sunday Worship Service!</i> |
| Sunday, April 9th | <i>NO CLASS! He is Risen! Happy Easter!</i> |
| Sunday, April 16th 9:15am-9:55am | <i>Sunday School Class!</i> |
| Sunday, April 23rd 9:15am-9:55am | <i>Last Day of Sunday School Bash!</i> |

Formation/Confirmation Schedule:

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Wednesday, April 5th | <i>NO CLASS! Holy Week!</i> |
| Wednesday, April 12th | <i>6:30PM-7:30PM at FLC</i> |
| Wednesday, April 19th | <i>6:30PM-7:30PM at FLC</i> |
| Wednesday, April 26th | <i>Last Day of Class Bash! 6:30PM-7:30PM at FLC</i> |



High School Youth Group Schedule:

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Wednesday, April 12th 7:30pm-8:30pm</p> | <p>Our combined High School Youth Group will be gathering for food, fun, and games at First Lutheran Church this month!</p> | <p>HS YOUTH LOCK-IN <i>April 14th 2023</i> 6:30PM-11:30PM AT FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH MARK YOUR CALENDARS! BRING A FRIEND AND BE READY FOR FUN!</p> |
|--|---|---|

**CURRENT 8TH-9TH
GRADE BOYS AND
GIRLS**

**WEEK
OF
JUNE
25TH**



2023

SUMMER TRIP

**BOUNDARY
WATERS CANOE
AREA WILDERNESS**

**COST
\$150-\$200**

MARKSZYBNSKI@GMAIL.COM

2023 Summer Camp Schedule

| | WEEK | 2 - 4 GRADE | 4 - 6 GRADE | 7 - 9 GRADE | 10 - 12 GRADE | SPECIALTY | CROSS-GENERATIONAL | OFFSITE OPPORTUNITIES |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|---|--|------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | June 11 - 16 | | 4th - 6th Grade Camp | Confirmation Camp 7th - 9th Grade Camp | CIT Training | | ABC Camp June 11 - 12 GPGC June 14 - 16 | |
| 2 | June 18 - 23 | | | | See Offsite Opportunities for another camp experience! | | | 10th-12th Flambeau River Ramble with Camp Amnicon |
| 3 | June 25 - 30 | 3rd - 4th Mini June 25 - 27 | 4th - 6th Grade Camp | 7 - 9th Grade Camp | | | GPGC June 28 - 30 | |
| 4 | July 5 - 7 | 2nd - 3rd Mini July 5 - 7 | 4th - 6th Mini July 5 - 7 | 7th - 9th Mini July 5 - 7 | | | GPGC July 5 - 7 | |
| 5 | July 9 - 14 | | | | Agape - Ages 14 + July 9 - 14 | SOS Camp July 10 - 14 | | |
| 6 | July 16 - 21 | | 4th - 6th Grade Camp | 7 - 9th Grade Camp | | | ABC Camp July 16 - 17 Family Camp July 21 - 23 | |
| 7 | July 23 - 28 Christmas in July | 3rd - 4th Mini July 23 - 25 | 4th - 6th Grade Camp | 7 - 9th Grade Camp | | | GPGC July 26 - 28 | |
| 8 | July 30 - Aug 4 | 3rd - 4th Mini July 30 - Aug 1 | 4th - 6th Grade Camp | Confirmation Camp 7th - 9th Grade Camp | | | GPGC August 2 - 4 | |
| 9 | August 6 - 11 | | 4th - 6th Grade Camp | | | Explorer Camp (5th - 8th Grade) | ABC Camp Aug 6 - 7 GPGC Aug 9 - 11 | |

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Stewardship Committee – Your Gift of Time is Needed

One of the goals of our Stewardship Committee each year is to help increase the overall size of our weekly Worship Assistants pool. From greeters to ushers to communion preparers/servers and beyond, it takes a small army to pull off a “normal” Sunday worship service behind the scenes.

Within this small army are a great group of devoted people who are looking for some assistance! In other words, WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Let me be the first to disclose, “It’s not that hard!” I did not have to attend a 6-week training seminar about “proper ushering techniques.” But rather I received a brief overview, by some wonderful members of our congregation who clearly had more experience than I, in how to usher. Not only is it a simple task, but it feels great to help! Additionally, with only 1 service at 10:00 AM each Sunday, there is no reason why we can’t have all weekly spots filled well in advance, even with all our crazy schedules and vacation plans.

My family and I are very blessed to be able to call First Lutheran Church home. We are also very thankful to be surrounded by so many talented stewards. Thanks to all for sharing your time and talented gifts!

Hebrews 13:16

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Submitted by Brett Petersen

April Worship Assistants – Sign-Up Online or in the Gathering Space

| Sunday | Reader | Greeter | Usher | Usher | Fellowship | Communion Server | Communion Server | Communion Server | Communion Preparers |
|--------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 2-Apr | Need | Need | Mike Stewart | John Nadeau | Stewardship | John Bipes | Cindy Nadeau | Need | Banks Family |
| 9-Apr | Need | Need | Carol Solberg | Bill Kautt | Fellowship | Cheryl Kautt | Sharon Domeier | Need | Hunts |
| 16-Apr | Amelia Stapels | | Keith Stelter | | Twaddle/Little | | Sharon Domeier | Need | Stewarts |
| 23-Apr | Judy Fienen | Cheryl Kautt | Need | Need | Fellowship | Barb Wilkinson | Cheryl Kautt | Need | Neubauers |
| 30-Apr | Mary Spear | Mary Spear | Need | Need | Boy Scouts Pancake Breakfast | Mary Spear | Sharon Domeier | Nancy Timm | Kelly Harrell |

The Kitchen- Scandian Grove has Joined!

Scandian Grove Lutheran Church in Norseland has joined First Lutheran, Trinity Lutheran, Church of St. Peter, and Union Presbyterian church in providing meals on Monday evenings at Trinity Lutheran. We welcome them in joining this worthwhile endeavor. First Lutheran volunteers will be serving dinner on May 1st. Sign up sheets for volunteers are on the table in the gathering space. We have been serving dinner to between 50-60 people every Monday night. Dinner is served between 5:30 and 6:30. Volunteer positions include:

3:00pm-5:30 Cooking and Set-up

5:30-6:30 Serving the meal

6:30-7:30 Clean up

Serving at The Kitchen is a great volunteer opportunity. Hope you all will consider volunteering sometime in the coming year! If you are not free on Monday evenings, there are other ways to help. Monetary gifts to The Kitchen are always welcome. Contact Marilyn Kochsiek at 612-695-6270 if you would like to make a gift, or write a check to First Lutheran with "The Kitchen" in the memo and it will be directed appropriately.

If you have a group of friends who have a great recipe that will serve 60 people and would like to plan, cook and serve a meal you would be very welcome! We are also setting up a rotation of drivers to pick up donated bakery items at Hy Vee in Mankato . Pick-ups are made before 7 a.m. on Sunday mornings. A large car or a van is best for pick- ups as there are usually 5-6 grocery carts full of bakery items. Bakery items are then delivered to Trinity Lutheran by Monday Morning. If you are interested in being on the rotation, contact Marilyn Kochsiek.

Submitted by Marilyn Kochsiek

Get On The Beam – Habitat For Humanity

During the month of April, First Lutheran will be participating in Habitat for Humanity's "Get On the Beam" fundraising effort. There will be a 2" x 4" stud in the gathering space with a "bank" attached to it. You are invited to put a monetary donation in the "bank" and then sign your name on the 2 x 4 as a permanent reminder of your support. Donations will be used toward the purchase of building materials for Habitat homes and the beam will be incorporated into the framework of a Habitat home in this area. Thanks in advance for your donations!

Submitted by Jan Jensen

Green Committee - Environmental Stewardship

Thank you to everyone who donated to "Light Up the Winter." First Lutheran donated 163 light bulbs to the St. Peter Food Shelf in February! We will soon be making plans for FLC's Food Shelf Garden. Anyone interested in helping with the garden should contact Judy Fienen or Barb Wilkinson.

As children of God, we are called to take care of the earth and all of God's creatures. Individually and as a community we can commit to engaging in practices that promote environmental stewardship such as reducing, reusing, recycling and composting



Composting

- Backyard Composting
- nuts, shells, coffee grounds, coffee filters, tea bags, fruit, vegies, peelings, pits
- (All these items can be placed in the community compost drop sites, as well.)
- Community Compost Drop Sites
- Food Items
- Baked goods, pasta, bread, cereal
- meats, bones, fish, dairy products (yogurt, cheese)
- Compostable Paper Items
- Paper bags, food soiled paper, pizza delivery boxes
- Flour and sugar bags, napkins, cardboard egg cartons
- Paper towels, parchment, wax paper
- Compostable dishes (bowls, plates, cups, utensils and straws)

Recycling

Single Stream Recycling Guidelines No need to remove stamps, address labels, tape, paper clips, staples, wire, metal fasteners, rubber bands, spiral bindings, caps, lids, or plastic tabs. Flatten all cardboard boxes. Do not flatten plastic containers. Empty and rinse all of the following containers:

- Aluminum and metal food and beverage containers
- #1, 2, 4, 5 plastic food and beverage containers
- Newspapers, junk mail, greeting cards, paper bags
- Food and beverage glass bottles and jars
- (Empty and rinse all containers.)
- Paperboard boxes (please flatten all cardboard boxes)

Plastic Bag and Film Recycling at Designated Drop Sites

Please recycle only clean, dry plastic bags and film. Remove receipts or any other items from bag. Acceptable items include:

- Retail, carryout, produce, newspaper, bread, and dry-cleaning plastic bags.
- Zip-top food storage bags
- Plastic shipping envelopes (remove labels), bubble wrap, and air pillows (deflate)
- Product plastic wrap on cases of water/soda bottles, paper towels, napkins disposable cups, bathroom tissue, diapers, and sanitary napkins.
- Furniture and electronic wrap
- Plastic cereal box liners (but if it tears like paper, do not include it.)
- Only recycle in local participating collection locations like the community center, Family Fresh, etc.

Subitted by Sue Jackson

**FLC will be Closed April 10 for
Easter Monday.
*No Bible Study***

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Saint Peter, MN 56082

Non-Profit Organization

U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #3
Saint Peter, MN 56082

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Website: www.flcstp.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/FLCSTP

FIRST FORUMS

getting the discussion going!

APRIL 16: TRISH HISCOCK-AUSTIN - GRASS & ROOTS OUTDOORS

APRIL 23: MARTI TITUS - NEW ADULT DAY PROGRAM

**APRIL 30: FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH'S
STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK 2023-2028**

MAY 14: TODD PRAFKE - STATE OF THE CITY

