



## Grace, peace and greetings to all of you!

In my ministry, there are moments when I get to read, not just for fun, but also to learn new things of a theological nature. Most of the time, I will read articles from theological magazines or off the internet, and then there are books that also challenge me to look at life a little differently. I can honestly admit that there are books or articles that I read that do not interest me after reading a few sentences, but there are articles or books that come along that really spur the imagination.

I have just read one such article in which the first sentence says, "God has given you so many limitations because he loves you." Now, that's a point for pondering. I can certainly understand that God has given us gifts to use in our service to others. But limitations? We don't generally like to admit those. If you are like most people, you might not feel loved for your limitations. In fact, we are more inclined to feel that the less said about our limitations, the better.

But, just maybe, we look at ourselves from the wrong perspective. Maybe, we are just too focused on looking at ourselves. God gave us our finiteness with both limited strengths and weaknesses, and He did this that we might know and delight in His glorious love for us. When we focus on ourselves, we may become envious of the gifts of others, rather than understanding that they, too, have limits.

The story of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is a prime example of distinguishing gifts and limitations. In the movie "Amadeus," the composer Antonio Salieri is portrayed as an accomplished composer in the court of the Austrian emperor. He was on top of the world, and well-respected. But along came a young composer whose manners were rude, who had no

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common sense, had no financial management skills, and who drank excessively. But this young composer had a gift of music that surpassed any skill of any other composer of that era, including Salieri. And it drove Salieri to near insanity because he could not understand why God had created someone with severe limitations, but was a genius with music. That was Mozart whom Salieri envied. Salieri coveted Mozart's gift.

Because God has created each of us with our own limitations, God loves us despite those limitations. We experience the love of God in those places of our lives where grace is most needed. Because God loves us so much in spite of ourselves, we, in turn, can share that love and caring with others no matter what their gifts or limitations are.

In this article, it also says, "In the Father's giving his only Son for us in our wretched, undeserving state to die in our place, we have been loved with the greatest love possible." And later, "When God gave me my strengths, few though they are, his purpose wasn't to give me some basis on which to feel good about myself. He gave them to me so that I could have the astounding privilege of loving someone else by graciously serving them in a place of their need, and then by receiving their grateful love in return."

Maybe, we might ask ourselves, "What opportunities is God giving me in my limitations to experience more of his gracious love?" Maybe, we are just not seeing ourselves the way God sees us.

***Yours in Christ, Pastor Rob***

### ***New members welcomed at First Lutheran***

Allen & Bambi Shelly & Emma, Tucker, Mia and Tanner;  
Erik and Kelsey Linseth & Grant, Jeslyn Brad and Kris Bird & Cami



### **April Worship Assistants**

*Calling chair, Sylvia Leiseth*

**9:00 AM April 2**  
Reader: Owen Hamre  
Greeters: Sylvia Leiseth & Dale Fritz  
Ushers: David & Celeste Berg  
Coffee Hr: JoAnn Faulkner  
Comm: Karla Quale

**9:00 April 9**  
Reader: Ari Johnson  
Greeters: Nyla Dahl  
Ushers: Curtis & Jennifer Sorenson  
Coffee Hr: Lloyd & Ardyce Alvshere  
**11:00 AM –First Communion**  
Comm: Ron & Karen Broderson

**6:15 PM Maundy Thursday, Apr. 13**  
Usher: \_\_\_\_\_

**6:15 PM Good Friday, Apr.14**  
Usher: Brian Anderson

**9:00 PM Easter Vigil, April15**  
Usher: \_\_\_\_\_

**9:00 AM April 16 Easter**  
Reader: Don Stenberg  
Greeters: Ken & Carol Sanford  
Ushers: Nick & Amy Polivka  
Comm.: David & Celeste Berg

**11:00 AM**  
Comm: \_\_\_\_\_

**9:00 AM April 23**  
Reader: Marcia Hellandsaas  
Greeters: Brandon & Britany Bradford  
Ushers: Mitch Haugeberg family  
Coffee Hr.: Brooks & Carol Kummer

**9:00 AM April 30**  
Reader: Sue Jorgenson  
Greeters: Jaret & Megan Wirtz  
Ushers: Mike & Stef Russell  
Coff Hr.: Arlene Johnson & Arlys Fraizer



### **First Lutheran Church weekly offering for February:**

**05: \$ 6,828.00**  
**12: \$ 4,117.00**  
**19: \$ 7,381.00**  
**26: \$ 3,424.25**  
**Total: \$21,750.25**  
**Needed for the month to meet budget: \$24,572.00**





**First Lutheran Church Council**

**Present:** Ari Johnson, Gretchen Stenehjelm, Angie Moe, Erica Johnsrud, Craig Paulson, Megan Wirtz, Brandee Proffit, Mark Sparby, Stef Russell, Pastor Rob Favorite, Pastor Alyssa Quade

**Absent:** Mikka Haugeberg, Steve Holen, Pastor Mark Honstein

**Others present:** Glen Beard

Meeting was called to order by President Ari Johnson. Pastor Alyssa Quade gave devotions.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved with one correction.

**Committee Reports:**

**\*Finance report** was approved.

**\*Property:** Ornamental grass needs to be trimmed down before spring.

**\*Worship:** Lenten Worship and Soup Suppers are in full swing. Palm fronds Easter plants are ordered.

**\*Stewardship:/Evangelism:** tickets for "Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage" are on sale with the event being held March 24/25. A fund raiser for UMM request for FLC to sponsor a UMM summer camp missionary is being planned.

**\*Youth/Education:** Memory work was added to the Sunday school curriculum. Every third Sunday the children will sing at the 11:00 AM worship service. Erica Johnsrud will contact Garrett Gudmunsen about what is happening with County-wide

**Staff:** 1st Communion will be on Palm Sunday with instruction the following 2 Sundays. The website is being updated and Pastor Alyssa would like new church activity picture to post. She is also working on praise bands for the 11:00 AM worship service of fall 2017. The bands are currently practicing.

**\*Other Business:** Ari is to sign a new oil lease.

**Next meeting: April 12th @ 6:00 PM**



**Women of the ELCA**

**Wednesday, April 6**

10:00 AM FLC WELCA General mt. @ church

**Monday, April 10**

5:00 PM Hope @ the Horizon

**Tuesday, April 11**

2:30 PM Garden @ the Horzion

**Wednesday, April 13**

1:30 PM Peace @ the church

2:00 PM Banks @ Jeni Anderson's



**Saturday, April 29th**

**Upper Missouri Cluster,  
Women of the ELCA,  
Spring Gathering**

Registration (\$5.00) at 9:30 AM.

We want to encourage all Women of the ELCA to come and bring a friend, Lutheran or not! Those planning to attend should call me (Linda Berquist- 842-2063) before April 18th so we will have a head count for lunch.



**McKenzie County Healthcare  
System Auxiliary**

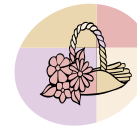
**Pancake Dinner**

**Sunday, April 2nd**

**10:00 AM – 1:00 PM**

**Civic Center**

\$5 per person --- \$20 per family



**IN MEMORY OF.....**

**To the Building Fund**

Gordon Levang	\$ 20.00
Arnold Peterson	\$ 20.00
Ralph Folven	\$ 220.00
Randy Slais	\$ 755.00
Carl Olson	\$ 20.00
Florence Johnsrud	\$ 500.00
Nancy K Lawlar Vance	\$ 500.00



**WELCA -FLC  
Spring Luncheon  
Fund Raiser**

**Thursday, April 6th**

11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

**@ First Lutheran  
in the Centennial Hall**

**PULLED BEEF SANDWICHES  
WITH  
A VARIETY OF SALADS & DESSERTS  
\$ 10.00 per person**

**EVERYONE INVITED!**



**Thank You!**

**SPONSORS**

Thank you to the following for sponsoring the Sunday morning broadcast of FLC worship for the month of March: in memory of Arno & Dorothy Bellin by their children; in memory of Helen Linsley; Delores Quale.

Please check your special dates and call the office (444-3244) to sponsor a Sunday in this new year.

The cost is \$110.00 per broadcast.





## CAMPER SUNDAY!

**Sunday, April 30<sup>th</sup>!**

Please join us for a fun Sunday celebrating UMM Camper Sunday!! Come to church **dressed for camping!**

“Camp Meals” will be sold to earn money for the UMM Missionary work! Each Camp meal will include:

Hamburger, potatoes, carrots and onions plus seasoning, all wrapped in foil, just like a campfire dinner! This will be a **FREE Will offering** to pay for the meals. The proceeds will be used to sponsor a Upper Missouri Camp Missionary at UMM in Epping. Camp Missionaries or Camp Counselor’s often chose to go into Ministry work. Financial support is needed to become a UMM Missionary sponsor.

Camper meal will be pre-sold starting in mid-April. Meals can be picked up at 10:00 a.m. (uncooked) or at 12:00 p.m. cooked hot and ready to EAT! Signup sheets will be passed out in church or available in the Narthex.

Nick Johnson from Upper Missouri Ministries will be speaking at both services on Sunday, April 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Get your camp gear on! Order a Camp Meal for lunch on Sunday, April 30<sup>th</sup>!** Meals to go, or “dine in”, with your camp meal at First Lutheran Church!



## It's about the Body

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 says, “<sup>12</sup>For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup>For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

I have not been on staff at FLC for very long, but in my short time here my faith in fellowship has been strengthened and encouraged. I believe that fellowship is vitally important in personal spiritual growth.

Fellowship offers us new ways to see/view God. We learn from each other’s experiences with God. We learn more about scripture through someone else’s understanding/interpretation of it. We are strengthened in our faith by being with others who have lived out the faith much longer than we have. I see the enlightening effects of fellowship at our weekly bible studies, council meetings, Sunday School, Lenten services, Sunday services, the monthly woman’s bible study, and even in confirmation classes.

Fellowship also offers the physical/tangible presence of God. When someone is detached from the body of Christ and tragedy strikes, loneliness, confusion, depression and despair become the four walls that box a person in and prevent healing. Through fellowship, the body of Christ can pry open those dark walls, allowing God’s healing light to shine through. I witness this in the aftermath of funerals and the cold dark season that follows the holidays. I see this through quiet hugs when the congregation ‘passes

the peace’ at church. I see this in gentle conversations when someone who has walked the dark valley offers support to someone who is currently walking in it, weather that be the valley of addiction, divorce, depression, job-loss, etc. I have seen this through a hand on a shoulder that says “I am here for you. You’re not alone.” I see this in the Monday afternoon Grief Share session, and even in the quilting room as people help carry each other’s burdens.

Fellowship causes us to grow. It is more than coming to church and absorbing words and sounds like we do with entertainment. In Christian fellowship, everyone participates. Participating in worship is more than praying together. It is helping others grow in their relationship with Christ, and in this, we also grow. It includes mentoring a youth or young couple, cooking and setting up for funerals and events, collecting school supplies for children in need. I see this growth through participation when I watch parents explaining the 10 commandments to their kids; and when I watch the quilters stacking the quilts for baptized babies. I see it through young parents who put together service-project events to teach our youth what it means to be Jesus’s hands and feet to our community. I see it when a congregant visits a shut-in. It takes guts to go outside our comfort zone to help someone else in their faith walk. Yet going outside our comfort zone to help someone else is exactly what God uses to help us to grow.

Fellowship is vital to our personal and spiritual growth. I hope you are encouraged as you fellowship with the body of Christ. May your understanding of God expand as you experience the tangible presence of God through fellowship.

Sincerely, *Pastor Alyssa*







### Growing, Together, in Christ.

*“20Then Job arose, tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell on the ground and worshiped. 21He said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” 22In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrongdoing.” (Job 1:20-22)*

Try a little exercise with me. Perhaps you have done this before, but it is good to be reminded of these things. You are going to need a pencil so go ahead and grab one, I’ll wait..... Got one? Good. Now what I want you to do is write on the list below the five most important people and/or things in your life. Just top five most important people / things. No one will see the list but you so be honest.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Did you write them down? No? Well, we can’t really go on until you do, so please write them down. I’ll wait..... Got it done? Ok, good. Now, If you read the passage of scripture from Job, and know the context, you probably have an idea what is coming next, but don’t spoil it for anyone. Did you hear in February that a bunch of tornadoes ripped through the south? Well imagine that your home was hit and now all your possessions are gone: the house, the car, the boat, the barn, all of it, all gone. If any items on your list are

possessions, they are now gone and you have to cross them off. Go, ahead and cross any items off, I’ll wait..... Did you do it? I know it is hard to think about, but humor me and cross them off the list. It is just an exercise, ok?

Do you have anything left on your list? Well, buckle up because now there has been a horrible vehicle accident and all of your family, including pets have been killed. What happened to Job has now happened to you, so if you have any family on your list, you must now cross them off. The sooner you do it, the quicker we can get this exercise over and you will see the point in the end. Did you do it? I’ll wait.....

Ok, that was a tough one, but hang on because now you got a call from the doctor and they have some concerns. They need to run some tests and it is not looking good. We all know many in our congregation who are now battling cancer and other illnesses. It is a challenge in life and has now happened to you, so if your health or fitness were on the list, cross them off. We are almost done, as is your list I’m sure, and you might be wondering, “What was the point of this depressing exercise?”

Well, in the story of Job, we have a man who lost everything in the first 20 verses of his story, and still praised God. It is not that Job did not care about everything he lost, rather he knew that God was greater than all things, and that his life was in God’s hands! *“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”* Job kept things in eternal perspective. We were born with nothing, and we can’t take it with us when our lives on earth come to an end. But God is eternal, and is greater than anything we may possess.

The first time I did this exercise, the person leading it wanted to make it clear that if God was not on our list, we would lose everything and be utterly lost and despondent in the end. But God is

someone we can never lose due to disaster, accident or diagnosis. God is always with us, and God very much wants to be at the top of our list! Do you remember the greatest commandment? *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your mind, and with all your soul and with all your strength.”* God wants, and deserves, to be first in our lives, more important than anything else. God is more important than all our possessions (which come from Him), than our family (which come from Him), and more important than our selves (which were created by Him.) So is he at the top of our list?

The second time I did this exercise, the person leading it wanted to make it clear that, like Job, we can always go to God when we experience these terrible losses in life. We can take our grief and pain to Him. What happened? God knows. Why did God allow it to happen? Ask Him. How can we continue on? Ask Him. God wants to hear from us since He created us for relationship with Him, and with each other. And if God is our most important relationship, then we can go to God and receive His comfort and peace even when we don’t have answers to our why questions. In the end, however, we must let God be God, as Job did, and not try to control things ourselves.

As we enter Holy Week and approach Easter, remember that God used the worst event in human history, the crucifixion of Jesus, for the salvation of all who believe. God took something horrible and used it for our benefit. God knows what it is like for a loved one to die a horrible death, and Jesus knows what it is like to feel abandoned by God. He experienced all that we have experienced and is here for us in our struggle. May we look to Him and trust Him to use the losses in our lives for our good and His glory.

Together in Christ, Pastor Mark

