



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

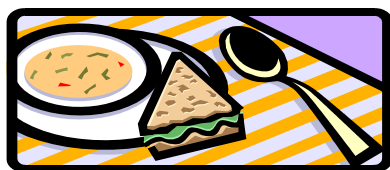
**9:00 AM Feb 4**  
Reader: Marcia Hellandsaas  
Greeters: Grace Alex  
Ushers: Justin & Cari Forbes  
Comm: Steve Sanford  
Coffee Hr: Cameron & Jan Dodge  
Comm @ 11:00 Confirmation Students

**9:00 Feb 11**  
Reader: Anne Beard  
Greeters: Steve & Val Williams  
Ushers: Lloyd & Ardyce Alvether  
Coffee Hr: Ann Beard/ Val Swenrud

**7:00 PM Feb 14**  
**Ash Wednesday Worship**  
6:15 PM Ushers: Terry & Angie Moe

**9:00 AM Feb 18**  
Reader: Barbara Curren  
Greeters: Jeff & Mindy Meyer  
Ushers: John & Janet Johnston  
Comm: Steve & Brenda Lautenschlager  
Coffee Hr: John & Janet Johnston  
Comm @ 11:00 Confirmation Students

**9:00 AM Feb 25**  
Reader: Jean Wold  
Greeters: Mitch Haugeberg family  
Ushers: Mitch Haugeberg family  
Coffee Hr: New Member Welcome  
Potluck Brunch



**First Lutheran Lenten Fellowship Supper will continue until March 21<sup>st</sup> at 5:30 PM. This is open to everyone wanting food and fellowship before the 6:15 Worship**

There was an article written by a pastor in Arizona who stated this observation, "The number one complaint I hear from people is, 'I don't have time. I don't have time for hobbies, sleep, my marriage, relationships, kids, and reading my Bible.' You do, you just gave that time away. You give your time to the things that matter most." I wonder if any, or most of us, would agree to that statement. How well do we manage our time? Or, do we just adapt to the whirlwind of day to day living because everyone else is doing so? Do those habits cause us to become tired, overwhelmed, and rundown to the point that we begin to neglect or cut out the areas of our life that we think we don't need? Such as church! Are we living in ways that are sustainable and will help us thrive in the long term? God has created us to be healthy beings – spiritually, physically, relationally, emotionally, and mentally. And we glorify God for the gift of life that we have. But how well do we take care of ourselves? Are we able to look far enough into the future, and determine if we can healthily sustain ourselves? Now, some of us might be able to sustain ourselves by cutting out those areas that seem unimportant to us. The problem is the cutting itself. Does it enable us to thrive in a healthy way in all the ways listed above? Are we spiritually healthy, and if not, what are we doing about it? The same holds true for all of those other parts of our beings that require attention, and allow us to glorify God for making us who we are. But, we need to pay attention to all areas that can keep us whole and allow for rest. The Presbyterian minister and author, Tim Keller, further explained, "God liberated his people when they were slaves in Egypt, and God ties the

Sabbath to freedom from slavery. Anyone who overworks is really a slave. Anyone who cannot rest from work is a slave – to a need for success, to a materialistic culture, to exploitative employers, to parental expectations, or to all of the above. These slave masters will abuse you if you are not disciplined in the practice of Sabbath rest. Sabbath is a declaration of freedom. Thus, Sabbath is about more than external rest of the body; it is about inner rest of the soul. We need rest from the anxiety and strain of our overwork, which is really an attempt to justify ourselves – to gain the money or the status or the reputation we think we have to have. Avoiding overwork requires deep rest in Christ's finished work for your salvation. Only then will you be able to walk away regularly from your vocational work and rest." Well, that's a bit to chew on. I think for us, we have to think in terms of letting go – and not only just letting go of sin, but our burdens, stresses, and anxieties. We can accept our limitations much easier when we let God handle whatever we can't handle. Remembering the Sabbath and keeping it holy is not only a matter of putting God first in our lives, but allowing ourselves to intentionally slow down and allow ourselves to be ok with not having to do everything. Certainly, life is a balancing act, and we often don't get it completely right. Believe it or not, we do have the ability to control our own calendar, and not to become slaves to it. Finally, in his book called, "The Rest of God," author Mark Buchanon says that at the end of your day ask, "Where did I feel most alive, most hopeful, most in the presence of God? And where did I feel most dead, most despairing, farthest from God?" Part of Sabbath rest is celebrating that God is in control, accepting that, and continuing to rejoice in God's goodness.

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





**Women of the ELCA Circles**

**Wednesday, February 7**

6:00 PM WELCA General mt. @ church  
Program and a dessert potluck fair

**Monday, February 12**

5:00 PM Hope @ the Horizon

**Tuesday, February 13**

2:00 PM Garden @ the Horizon

**Wednesday, February 14**

1:30 PM Peace @ church



Dead line for Clarion articles  
Email/drop off your articles.

**March 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Thank You!**



Thank you to the following for sponsoring the Sunday morning broadcast of FLC worship for the month of January: PowerHour.com; in memory of Ray & Jessie Stenberg; Garden WELC Glen Beard family in memory of Clinton & Olive Beard

**We need radio sponsors!**

Please check your special dates and call the office (444-3244) to sponsor a Sunday in 2018.

The cost is \$110.00 per broadcast.



**We would like to welcome the newly baptized to First Lutheran Church:**

Lavin Jean Dwyer,  
daughter of Tom & Olivia

Hunter Wayne Soleim,  
son of Justin & Molly





## First Lutheran Church Council

### Highlights of January

**Present:** Ari Johnson, Mark Sparby, Stefanie Russell, Glen Beard, Angie Moe, Craig Paulson, Mikka Haugeberg

**Absent:** Steve Holen, Gretchen Stenehjelm, Megan Wirtz, Erica Johnsrud

**Others present:** Pastor (s) Rob Favorite, Mark Honstein, Alyssa Quade

Meeting was called to order by President Ari Johnson. Devotions were given by Craig Paulson.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**WELCA:** Anne Beard reported the completion date for the egress windows at the parsonage will be June 15<sup>th</sup>. The WELCA are requesting input from the Worship Committee in replacing the Advent wreath.

### Committee Reports:

**\*Finance report:** Moved to accept the treasurers report. MC.

**\*Property:** Motion was made and approved to give the committee the discretion to move Food Pantry/ Sunday School Rooms around.

**\*Worship:** Worship for Lent begins at 6:15 pm. Soup Suppers at 5:30 PM. Music is picked out. Caroline Schwartz would like to have a Last Supper drama - possible preformed around Palm Sunday.

**\*Stewardship/Evangelism:** no report

**\*Youth/Education:** Mikka Haugeberg reported the LYO is trying to plan an event once a month. Pastor Alyssa has an event schedule tentatively planned through July. *Sonshine Kids* will be held at FLC in January. A Super Bowl Party is being planned for February 4<sup>th</sup> starting at 5:30 PM. Everyone is invited.

**Staff: Reminder that the Annual Meeting is on Sunday January 28. New Member Sunday is February 25.**

**\*Other Business:** none

### Next meeting:

**TUESDAY Feb 13<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00 PM**



## Growing, Together in Christ.

This year we are in the odd position of having Ash Wednesday on Valentine's Day and Easter on April Fools' Day. So as Valentine's Day begins our Lenten journey this year, we can examine the things we really love, the things that may get in the way of our love for Jesus. Food is one of the things I love, and I recently found this humorous poem for kindred spirits this Lent:

### The Dieter's Psalm

The Lord is my Shepherd,  
I shall not want.  
He maketh me lie down  
and do pushups,  
He leadeth me on long walks.  
He restoreth my waistline.  
He leadeth me past the refrigerator  
for mine own sake.  
Yea though I walk the bakery aisle  
I shall not waiver, for Thou art with me.  
With broccoli and carrots  
Thou comfortest me.  
Thou preparest a diet for me  
in the presence of many delicacies;  
Thou anointest my salad  
with low calorie dressing,  
my cup of water overflows.  
Surely rye crackers and diet soda  
shall follow me all the days of my life  
and I shall dwell with pangs of hunger  
forever.

I am sure that most of us have been able to relate to the psalmist's cry once or twice in our lives. Food is a powerful force in our lives. There are other powerful forces that affect us such as our spouses, our children & our grandkids. Our friends & family have a large influence in our life as well as our jobs or even our hobbies. None of these things are negative in and of themselves, but when they take away from our relationship with God, or when we come to desire them more than God, then they have a negative influence and our priorities need to shift.

God wants to be FIRST regarding our Family, Income, Responsibilities, Stuff and Time. During this Lenten journey, since it begins on Valentine's day, perhaps it would be good to ask ourselves some questions about what we love more, ponder our answer and compare it to what the Bible says.

What do we love more:

- 1) Our Family, or our God?  
*"If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord."* (Romans 14:8)
- 2) Our Income or our God?  
*"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.'* (Malachi 3:10)
- 3) Our Responsibilities or God?  
*"Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."* (1 Cor 15:58)
- 4) Our Stuff or our God?  
*"The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it."* (Psalm 24:1)
- 5) Our Time or our God?  
*"Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil."* (Eph 5:15-16)

Let me encourage us all to take time this lent and evaluate each question, one for each week of Lent, and work to adjust our priorities so that we do put God FIRST in our lives. Let us demonstrate our love for God this way, starting Valentine's Day, so that by April Fool's Day we are fools for Christ at Easter. God's blessings on this Lenten journey.

Together in Christ, Pastor Mark

