



Grace, peace and greetings to all of you!

Change is hard, but it is something we all need. It is an ongoing part of life. Our lives are in a state of constant flux, and life demands adjustments for our schedules and plans. Essentially, change is normal. But people's spiritual lives call for more than slight changes. Spiritually speaking, change is not about trying harder or having a better life. Mark Twain reportedly said that church is good people standing in front of good people teaching them to be good people. The change people need is not simply about being a better person; that would be a misunderstanding of change and being transformed. The church can, at times, communicate the need for change in peoples' lives, but it ends up understood as some sort of therapeutic moralistic deism—where a faraway God makes life better and makes you a better person. But that is not the gospel. In our faith, we don't want to produce good religious people. We see what becomes of good religious people from the encounters Jesus had with the Pharisees. God wants—as should we—to see people transformed at a spiritual level rather than a behavioral level. The change people need most is not in their circumstances, but in themselves. It is not the ability to try harder, but it is a life entrusted to Jesus. Transformation occurs not because we “do,” but because Christ has “done.” Here are three principles about the change we all need. 1. Real change starts with new life. The disciple Paul wrote, “So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). The very heart of the Christian faith revolves around change; it is living out a new life. Christian transformation always involves something old passing away

and something new taking its place. Spiritual change is needed by all of us, no matter what our background happens to be. We are constantly in need of this change, no matter who we are. But too many people misunderstand the words. They believe, “If I change, then God will like me more.” The bid to be better accompanies the hope for divine blessing. But this is the false change that comes often from our religious upbringing. It is a misunderstanding of the teaching of the gospel. In the Old Testament, we see how this cycle played out in the life of Solomon. He tried to change through human ingenuity when he needed divine intervention. With access to wisdom, finances, military power, and everything else one could possibly hope for in this life, Solomon found life to be no more than chasing the wind. He needed an outside force to grant something new rather than continuing after something old. We need to give up on changing our own lives. Rather than wasting our lives on trying to change, we should give over our lives to God to grant us a new life. In John 3, Jesus was approached by someone who needed change. Nicodemus had the right background, the right spiritual training, and the right position in society, but had not been transformed. He was a moral and religious man. But Jesus informed him of the need to be “born anew” (John 3:3). Nicodemus did not need more rules, but rather a new life. Nicodemus, like many of our listeners, had to unlearn many things—the idea that rules and regulations bring about lasting spiritual change. They don't. Rules can modify behavior, but only the gospel can impart new life. We should never be satisfied with merely a new way of life. Only a new life will suffice. 2. Real change is a process, not a destination. Nobody ever gets to a place of being everything God has called them to be while we are still on earth.

It is part of why we yearn for the eternal life with him. Our life is one of growth.

The transformation we encounter because of the gospel is how God is shaping our lives to mirror Jesus. By removing the human desire for significance and replacing it with the divine nature of sacrifice, God sets our lives in a new direction. It is a new process we partake in that causes life to have true significance—reflecting God's glory. Transformation happens in a moment to secure a person eternally, but it is consistently happening moment by moment to change that person daily. 3. Change is letting go and grabbing hold. God doesn't force anyone to change, but he calls us to change. He says things like, “Be holy as I am holy,” and it sounds like an impossible task. But its possibility comes by the work of God and not the work of man. The transformation that comes to us spiritually empowers us to move from religious behavior to spiritual acceptance of God's work. Paul put it this way:

“That is not the way you learned Christ! For surely you have heard about Him and were taught in Him, as truth is in Jesus. You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self corrupted by deceitful desires; and to be being renewed in the spirit of your minds; and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to God's likeness in righteousness and holiness.” (Ephesians 4:20-24).

We are called to put off the “old self” and take hold of the “new self.” But we all know that letting go of the familiar is difficult, even when the new that is offered is better. The change we all need is the change offered by Christ. It is a transformation that we are privileged to serve in this life.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Rob



April Worship Assistants

9:00 AM April 1 Easter

Reader: Lorri Honstetin
 Greeters: Rollie & Judy Dahl
 Ushers: Brain Anderson/ Kevin Sullivan
 Comm: Karla Quale

11:00 AM

Comm: _____

9:00 April 8

Reader: Owen Hamre
 Greeters: Brandon & Brittany Bradford
 Ushers: David & Celeste Berg
 Coffee Hr: Arlene Johnson/Arlys Frazier

9:00 AM April 15

Reader: Sue Jorgenson
 Greeters: Ken & Carol Sanford
 Ushers: Donna Slais/ Duane Wold
 Comm.: Owen & Laurie Hamre
 Coffee Hr: Robin & Stacey Arndt

11:00 AM

Comm: _____

9:00 AM April 22

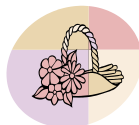
Reader: Ari Johnson
 Greeters: Curtis & Jennifer Sorenson
 Ushers: Shane & JeAnne Homiston
 Coffee Hr.: Karn Pederson

9:00 AM April 29

Reader: Marcia Hellandsaas
 Greeters: Mark & Dori Sparby
 Ushers: Jayson & Amy Lund
 Coff Hr.: LYO



**McKenzie County Healthcare
 System Auxiliary
 Pancake Dinner
 Sunday, April 15th
 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
 Civic Center
 \$5 per person --- \$20 per family**



IN MEMORY OF.....

To the Building Fund

Paul Bergem	\$ 365.00
Glennae Brenno	\$ 125.00
Dale Jorgenson	\$ 20.00
Coralie Brugger	\$ 653.00
Les Thorland	\$ 600.00
Allen Shelley	\$ 20.00
Loren Berwald	\$ 110.00
Betty Fridley	\$ 500.00
Eli Renbarger	\$ 500.00
Holly Washburn	\$ 2,425.00

To the FLC Choir

Holly Washburn	\$ 500.00
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To the General Fund

Holly Washburn	\$ 375.00
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Thank You! RADIO SPONSORS

Thank you to the following for sponsoring the Sunday morning broadcast of FLC worship for the month of March: the Evanson families (Ed, Ilene, Susan, Adene, Janet) in memory of Holly Washburn; in memory of Herb & Delores Maston by their family; in honor of Bob & Deb Wisness' 40th Wedding Anniversary by their children, Jessica, Valerie, Andrew & Matthew. 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.



**We would like to welcome the newly baptized to First Lutheran Church:
 Matthew Walton and Gary Beagles**



Women of the ELCA

Wednesday, April 4

10:00 AM FLC WELCA General mt. @ church

Monday, April 9

5:00 PM Hope @ the Horizon

Tuesday, April 10

2:00 PM Garden @ the Horzion

Wednesday, April 11

1:30 PM Peace @ the church
 2:00 PM Banks @ Sue Wold's



Saturday, April 14th

**Upper Missouri Cluster,
 Women of the ELCA,
 Spring Gathering "I Remember"**

Registration (\$12.00)
 From 9:30 -10:00 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 Val Swensrud (770-4820) so we will have a head count for lunch.

Guest Speakers: Macedonia Ministry & Chelce Detert (Creative Dimensions)
 There will be door prizes, Book Exchange and Entertainment.

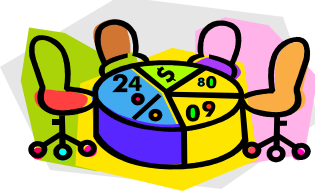


**WELCA -FLC
 Spring Luncheon
 Fund Raiser
 Thursday, April 19th**

11:30 AM – 1:30 PM
 @ FLC Centennial Hall

EVERYONE INVITED!





First Lutheran Church Council

Present: Glen Beard, Jeff Meyer, Keith Helmuth, Craig Paulson, via conference call: Gretchen Stenehjelm, Angie Moe

Absent: Jeremiah Beard, Erica Johnsrud, Mikka Haugeberg, Megan Wirtz, Steve Holen, Pastor Alyssa Quade

Others present: Pastors Rob Favorite, Pastor Mark Honstein

Guest: Ari Johnson

Meeting was called to order by President Glen Beard. Keith Helmuth gave devotions. Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Committee Reports:

***Finance report** – committee has not met yet.

***Property:** the carpet cleaner has been sold.

***Worship:** hymns are picked out through April

***Stewardship:/Evangelism:** Caring/Sharing is going to a new format

***Youth/Education:** Communion classes have started for the 4th graders. First Communion will take place on Palm Sunday.

Staff: Pastor Rob will conduction the installation of the council on March 11. The Shepherd Hill Singers Benefit Concert on April 9. Pastor Mark reported that GriefShare is going well.

***Other Business:** A motion was made to settle with Vercon. Motion was made to allow the American Legion Post 29 to hold their District meal/ Auxiliary meeting at the church. A motion was made to table discussion about letting groups use the Church and our facilities until next meeting.

Next meeting: April 11th @ 6:00 PM



March was filled with fun and adventure as our Children made “story cartons” at FLC’s *Sonshine Kids*. Each egg in their carton holds tangible material that helps them tell their friends and family about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Along with waving palm branches and leading the family service in music with the small children, our 4th graders partook in their 1st communion on Palm Sunday. Throughout lent, our confirmation students were behind the scenes cleaning up after our Wednesday evening Lenten Soup & Service. Later in March, the older youth and their parents filled our fellowship hall for their first Mission Trip class where they learned this history, culture, and present struggles of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. They are gearing up for and excited to learn, grow, and serve on their upcoming missions trip to Pine Ridge.

In April the youth have two big opportunities for fun and learning. On April 10th, from 6:30-8:00 PM there will be a media/sound system class at the First Lutheran Church, free of charge for Lutheran members. All members are encouraged to attend the class, but youth will especially benefit from it as they move into a more technologically advanced era. There will also be an LYO event April 8th from 7:00-8:00 PM at the First Lutheran Church. There will be a devotional alongside fun nerf gun games.

As always, the children will be singing the last Sunday in April, the 29th.

Though they will not have Sunday school the 1st Sunday in April as it is Easter Sunday. Speaking of Easter, our Youth will be serving Easter Brunch from 8:00-11:00 AM at the First Lutheran Church. There will be a free will donation to help LYO raise money for their upcoming missions trip. Also, in April, the children will have *Sonshine Kids* at the Presbyterian Church the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month.

Thank You & Blessings,
Pastor Alyssa



Shepherd’s Canyon Singers April 9th 7:00 PM First Lutheran Church

This singing duo from Arizona raises money for the Shepherd’s Canyon Retreat. It is a place to experience a renewing, reviving and refreshing for church workers—clergy, teachers, directors of Christian education, music minister, church secretaries, spouses and others. Their goal is to provide the recovery of spiritual and emotional vitality in a safe, peaceful and confidential atmosphere.

Come and support their ministry in song!





Growing, Together, in Christ.

“Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain.”
(1 Cor 15:12-14)

Dateline Jerusalem—“On the eve of the annual celebration of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, the 1 million inhabitants of this city were shocked by the announcement that a body, identified as that of Jesus, was found in a long-neglected tomb just outside the boundary of the city. Rumors had been circulating the last week that a very important discovery was about to be announced. The news, however, far outstrips all of our wildest guesses. The initial reaction of Christians here and around the world has been one of astonishment, bewilderment, and defensive disbelief. We will have to wait and see just what effect this discovery will have on the 2,000-year-old religion. To the mind of this unbelieving writer, it appears that Christianity will have to take its place on the same level with the other religions of the world. No longer can its followers claim that, unlike other religions, the tomb of its founder is empty. Evidently, a 2000-year-old lie has come to an end.”

The Apostle Paul states that if the above were true, your faith in Christ is worthless and you are still under the curse of your sins. What a horrible thought! But Paul wrote earlier, *“For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ*

died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.”
(1 Cor 15:3-8)

At the time of Paul’s letter, over 400 people who had seen our risen Lord were still alive as witnesses to the truth of what Paul wrote. There was no denying it at the time. Unfortunately, the most amazing news story of all time has become diluted through time, distance and misinformation, but it is still true! Has your mind and heart grasped the eternal significance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Do you believe it? How would you have reacted if you read the story at the beginning of my article in the news last Saturday? How deeply would it have affected you? If you would have really been upset, then how does the fact that Jesus’ resurrection is true affect you? Has it changed you?

Pastor Marguerite Rourk wrote in Lutheran Women Today several years ago, “Because of Easter, we will never have to go to the tomb; we will only go *through* it. When we die, our completed resurrection life is only a stone’s roll away, and out we come—brand new. In infinite goodness and mercy, our Lord blesses us with his call to resurrection life *now*. True, it is a temporal calling, one for this life, but when we live our baptismal miracle, joined to Christ’s death and resurrection, we accept his grace-gift. A gift is meant to be used and enjoyed, so let’s get on with it!” I couldn’t agree more! The truth of the resurrection should excite us! This life and all its problems are not the end! Hallelujah!

One day we will shed our mortal coils and join our Lord in heaven, along with more loved ones and ancestors than we ever knew we had, and we will be pain free, complete, full of joy and in the presence of Almighty God. As the old hymn goes, “What a day that will be, when my Jesus I shall see! When I look upon His face, the one who saved me by His grace. When He takes me by the hand and leads me through the Promise Land, what a day, glorious day, that will be!

The fact that Jesus’ resurrection is true, means that eternal salvation is true for all who trust in Jesus as well. It means Heaven is real because Jesus told us He was preparing a place for all His followers. We have hope in life after death, hope in a Savior who has power over death, and hope in this life that the same Lord who promised to be with the disciples is with us no matter what we are going through, or how far we feel like we have strayed from Him. And for that we can truly say all month and even all year, **“Alleluia, He is risen!**

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!”

Together in Christ, Pastor Mark

