



FIRST THINGS

First Lutheran Church of Brookings, SD
...engaging life and the world, by and through God's grace.

Volume 24 Issue 3 June - July 2023

Fellow members in the choir of God's creation,

One evening after putting our kids to bed, I heard my son calling for help from his room. I went to see what he needed, and he told me he couldn't sleep because a song was stuck in his head. The song in his head was bothering him, keeping him awake by playing on repeat over and over. I offered to sing a different song to chase away the one that was stuck in his head. He thought that was a great idea. So I sang him *Jesus Loves Me*, tucked him back in, and shut the door. Soon he was sound asleep.

Music has an unmatched way of moving us. The power of the connections it creates in our brains is a wonder that science continues to uncover. Those experiencing memory loss, traumatic brain injury, or dementia have been observed as able to recall the lyrics of entire songs when music is played for them. It pulls the memories back from long ago that are stored not only in our brains it seems, but also in our hearts.

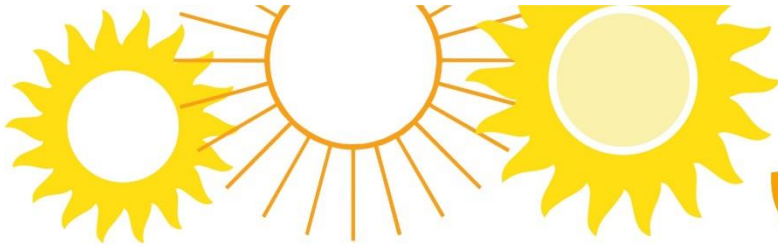
It's no wonder that our worship of God is infused with music. It is a deep and enduring part of being human. Many biblical songs, or Psalms, contain a phrase that catches my attention. That phrase is: "a new song." Several times the psalmist writes: God puts a new song in our hearts, or God wants us to sing a new song. It's easy to remember good old favorite songs from our past. They're linked to memories and have a strong connection in our brains. But what about a new song? When was the last time you learned a new tune?

Near the end of last year, I was with our youth group one Wednesday when the conversation revolved around Spotify. It's a music app, and it tracks what you listen to on it all year long. At the end of the year, it produces a report saying what your most listened to artists, songs, and genres were. The room was a-buzz with chatter. These yearly reports had just come out. Now, believe it or not, I'm a little too old to be in the know when it comes to something like Spotify. I was out of the loop and had no report to share. In fact, I couldn't remember having listened to much new music that year at all. The next week I thought "I had better download this app and listen to some new music so I can share my report next year!" My husband heard me jamming to new pop songs while getting ready in the morning, and he laughed. He observed that almost every year around the new year I attempt to listen to popular music. I promise I'm not just trying to be hip. I have a longing for a new song! And I'm not too old to learn one. My understanding of pop culture might be laughable, but I do know that God puts a desire in us to learn something new, to connect in new ways, to find meaning and inspiration all afresh no matter how old we are.

Have you ever thought about being a songwriter? Perhaps this season you might wander around this world looking for inspiration in the way that artists, poets, and composers do. Where is God calling your attention to notice something new? How might you express that? And who could you share it with? Sing that new song loudly and proudly, because God **is** doing something new in our midst. It is always a riffing on a familiar tune—that God loves this world God made, and you are God's beloved along with your neighbor. A new song is arising, though, and we are called to catch the tune. For indeed, God's mercies are new every morning...or so an old song says.

May you always have the song of God's love stuck in your head and in your heart,

Pastor Jess



JUNE

Only church activities are included on this calendar.
 Check the on-line calendar for outside meetings and events scheduled.
 (Calendar subject to change.)

1
 9:00 – 11:30 am
 Preschool Summer camp

2
 9:00 – 11:30 am
 Preschool Summer camp
 Synod Gathering in SF

3
 Synod Gathering in SF

HC = Holy Communion

4
 9:00 am Worship Service w/HC

5
 5:30 pm “Sew What”

6
 8:30 am Quilters
 9:00 am Staff Meeting
 2:00 pm Bible Study
 7:00 pm Bible Study at Mosaic

7

8
 6:30 pm Church Council

9

10
 Tie One On Quilting Bee in Activity Center

11
 9:00 am Worship Service

12
 9:00 am Staff Meeting
 5:30 pm “Sew What”

13
 8:30 am Quilters
 2:00 pm Bible Study

14

15

16
 Jongling/Heintz Wedding Rehearsal

17
 Jongling/Heintz Wedding in Sanctuary

18
 9:00 am Worship Service w/HC

19
 5:30 pm “Sew What”
MCH AND OFFICES CLOSED

20
 8:00 am Preschool Summer Camp
 8:30 am Quilters
 9:00 am Staff Meeting
 2:00 pm Bible Study

21
 8:00 am Preschool Summer Camp

22
 8:00 am Preschool Summer Camp

23

24

25
 9:00 am Worship Service

26
 9:00 am Staff Meeting
 5:30pm “Sew What”

27
 8:30 am Quilters
 2:00 pm Bible Study
 7:30ish Bible Study - after VBS

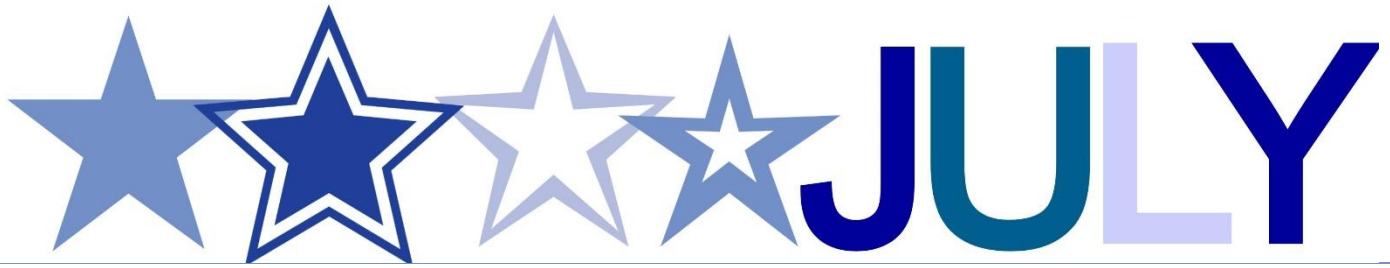
28

29

30

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 5:15 – 7:45

Hang me on your fridge – look at me all month long – then flip me over and repeat!!



JULY

						1
2 9:00 am Worship Service w/HC	3 5:30 pm "Sew What" MCH AND OFFICES CLOSED	4 8:30 am Quilters MCH AND OFFICES CLOSED	5 1:30 pm Edgewood Communion	6	7 Robbins/Howe Wedding Rehearsal	8 Robbins/Howe Wedding
9 9:00 am Worship Service	10 8:00 am Preschool Summer camp 9:00 am Staff Meeting 2:00 pm ULC Communion 5:30 pm "Sew What"	11 8:00 am Preschool Summer camp 8:30 am Quilters 2:00 pm Bible Study	12 8:00 am Preschool Summer camp	13 8:00 am Preschool Summer camp 6:30 pm Church Council Aug/Sept newsletter deadline	14 8:00 am Preschool Summer camp Youth leave for camp in Montana	15
16 9:00 am Worship Service w/HC	17 9:00 am Staff Meeting 5:30 pm "Sew What"	18 8:30 am Quilters 2:00 pm Bible Study 7:00 pm Bible Study - offsite	19	20	21	22
23 9:00 am Worship Service Youth return from camp in Montana	24 9:00 am Staff Meeting 5:30 pm "Sew What"	25 8:30 am Quilters 2:00 pm Bible Study	26	27	28	29
30 9:00 am Worship Service	31 8:00 am Preschool Summer camp 9:00 am Staff Meeting 5:30 pm "Sew What"	<p>Only church activities are included on this calendar. Check the on-line calendar for outside meetings and events scheduled. (Calendar subject to change.)</p> <p>HC = Holy Communion</p>				



The ELCA publishing house once offered a series about the practice, history, and meaning of Sunday services. The series was called 'Worship Matters', a double meaning that declares *that worship indeed matters* while also discussing *the matters of worship*. Here are a few worship matters going on this summer, because, of course...worship matters!

Adjust your Sunday rhythms for **one weekly Sunday service at 9am** all summer long.

We're calling this season a *Summer of Songs and Psalms*, highlighting your **favorite songs** all summer. If you have a favorite worship song, share it with Pat Anderson or myself, and we'll work to include it in our gatherings. (Bonus points if you would like to share *why* it has special meaning for you.) We'll also highlight the Psalms in worship as they are filled with praise, lament, hope, and love. Even **Jesus prayed the Psalms** in worship!

Do you ever wonder where your offering goes? **It goes to ministry!** Regular giving **helps children learn** about Jesus, **connects the homebound** with worship and care, provides space and food in our **Mission CoffeeHouse**, ensures the faithful proclamation of God's Word for strangers and friends, and **makes ministry happen** in many other ways! Thank you for sharing God's love through your regular offering. If you haven't recently, take a moment to consider your financial giving to FLC. Summer is a perfect time to set up an automatic offering and **keep ministry in motion**.

There are 15 Sundays from May 28th through Sept. 3rd. Can you take a Sunday (or two) to serve in worship? You can proclaim God's Word as a **scripture reader**, provide hospitality as an **usher**, lead praise and prayer as a **song-leader or musician**, or help make sure worship is heard and seen by **assisting in the Audio/Visual booth**. There are more ways to get involved and your gifts and abilities, *whatever they may be*, are welcome and needed. There are even ways to help serve if you're worshipping online. Sign up outside the sanctuary or visit with me to get connected.

If you would like to talk about worship matters, have ideas to share, or want to offer your gifts in a particular way, let's find a time to talk. Catch, call, or contact me at church.

Peace,
Pastor Trey



The Membership Records of
First Lutheran Church from
February to May 2023

BAPTISMS

**Wesley and Evelyn
Hanson-McComb**
(Children of Kevin McComb
and Jana Hanson)

Peyton Bryant
(Child of Jeramie Bryant
and Kristi Kimpe)

Karter Ledbetter
(Child of Chelsie Seas)

Lane Hannemann
(Child of Thomas
and Kayla Hannemann)

Eva Halgerson
(Child of Russell
and Kathryn Halgerson)

PASSINGS

Marge Sorenson

NEW MEMBERS

Kevin McComb, Jana
Hanson & Children

Mel and Pam Janson

Susan Neuharth

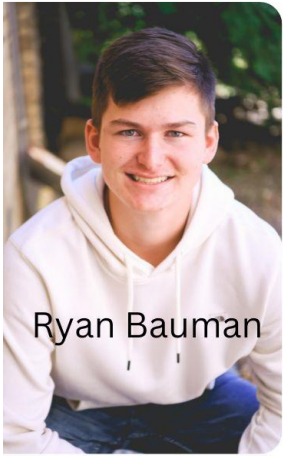
Thomas, Kayla & Lane
Hannemann

Eric, Kristin, Elleven &
Avander Stuckey

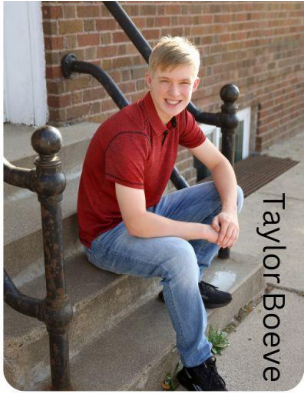
Deb Holmstrom

Ina Bende

Beverly Kuamme



Ryan Bauman



Taylor Boeve

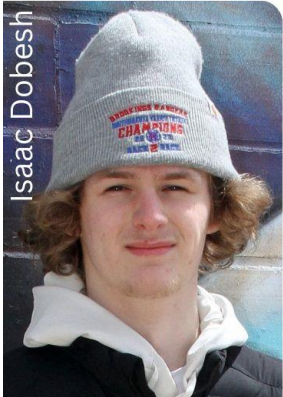
CLASS OF 2023



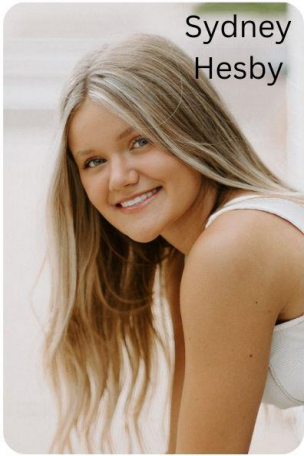
Karson Deckert



Jady Kuehl



Isaac Dobesh



Sydney Hesby



Jackson Hoffmann



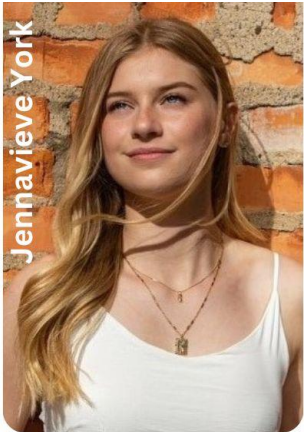
Drue Gilbertson



Kaylyn Chapman



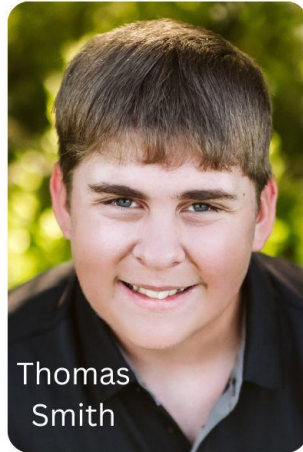
Mira Little Paso



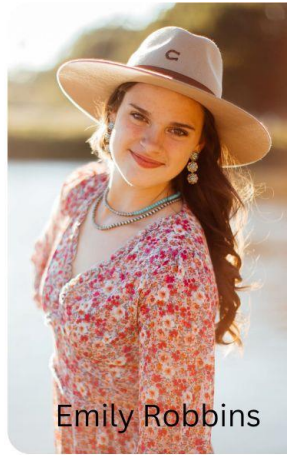
Jennavieve York



Ella Park



Thomas Smith



Emily Robbins



Grace Prusa



Timothy Melby



Ava Sandine

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES FROM YOUR FIRST LUTHERAN FAMILY



CONNECTION CORNER



“I belong to a group of people who care about me, my family, and our community.”
KELLY DECKERT

First Lutheran Church serves a central role in my connections to others through faith. Although I can connect with others outside of church, FLC provides facilities and opportunities to grow in faith that I cannot find or realize on my own. I've been part of the FLC family for over eight years now, and in that time I've made connections to others through confirmation mentoring, church council, call committee, faith steppingstones, and other groups. In reality, every time I've walked through the doors here at FLC, I've had a chance to connect with others and grow my faith. These connections have also given me a sense of pride and accomplishment that would have been much more difficult to find on my own.

These connections are an important part of my well-being, both emotionally and spiritually. As I've learned how to deal with vision loss, I've had to face the feelings of becoming more and more isolated from the world around me. Needless to say, these are not good feelings! However, I know that I belong to a group of people who care about me, my family, and our community. I can also trust that there is a group of people here who are willing to give of themselves to help others.

I'm a child of God, sealed by the cross, and a worker in his Kingdom whether I come to church or not, but when I'm here I can feel what that means and experience it firsthand. For me, this is the spirit of Christian Faith. Not only do I admire this spirit, I want to contribute to it and be part of it. Our connections to each other through our faith help us truly realize and experience what it's like to feel God's love and live in His Kingdom.

April of my senior year in high school (for all our sakes, I won't say what year), I was in senior composition class and started having a panic attack about leaving home and my family and going off to college. As soon as class was over, I went to the principal's office to call my mom and go home. I needed to get out of that building!! However, my mom wasn't home. No cell phones in that day, so now what? Our high school secretary at the time was Diane Almos. She knew me and my family fairly well and could tell I was in distress. She let me go home as long as I called her as soon as I got there—which I did. Mom came home soon after and all was fine.

PANIC!!!



A CONNECTION
STORY BY
CYNDI
JOHNSON

Fast forward many years, and I am getting ready to start my new job at First Lutheran Church. It will be my first job outside of the house following my amputation, & I am extremely nervous about how everything will work. Can I get to and from work alone? Can I do the things necessary to do my job? Will we have to make many accommodations? That morning, Pastor Jess is introducing everyone, and we got to Diane. I couldn't believe it! First day on the job and I already have a friend. I knew this was the place God wanted me to be. Since that day, I have made so many wonderful friends here at FLC. I have found so many with connections to Clear Lake and even some to my own family. I can see God's hand in all I do here. I love it!!



"Where did you see the face of God today?" Strange question! What does that even mean? Is it possible to see God's face?

~Mary Moeller

Thoroughly puzzled, I hoped others in our Belizean mission group would respond brilliantly to our leader's question as we circled chairs for evening devotions. I needed someone to enlighten me and perhaps even divert attention from the ignorant look on my (and others?) faces! As our week of service in Belize progressed, a few more responses to the "face of God" prompt emerged during devotions: "when Dee refilled our water bottles," "when the stranger on our walk invited us into her house," "when the student brought me a chair." We were learning to watch for ways the Fruits of the Spirit ("love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" - Gal. 5:22) brightened our daily interactions! "For I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of God, and you have accepted me" (Gen. 33:10). Jacob said this in great relief to his estranged twin brother Esau after being received with open arms. Expecting revenge, Jacob was surprised by forgiveness. Intentionally watching for God's grace each day and in every face = A new way of seeing that elicits thanksgiving and peace.

"I don't need to be injured to make connections" – Ross Abraham

Six years ago, I was in a car accident that left me banged up and in double knee braces and on crutches for the entire summer. I have the summer off from my job and was looking forward to variety of activities and projects that all required a certain amount of mobility that had to be scrapped. So, I now had a rather dull and depressing summer on my hands. During that time, I received a pastoral visit, and I also decided to make the effort to attend summer Sunday services at First Lutheran in a search to lift my spirits and keep my hopes up. I hadn't planned to be particularly social, but I heard my name read in the prayers and was surprised at all the words of encouragement I received from the members at church. People I had never talked to before started checking up on me, and the pre-church coffee group greeted me warmly as I hobbled through the Mission Coffeehouse. I felt truly cared for and more part of the church community than ever.

Eventually I had surgery on my knee, ditched the braces and crutches, and got back to walking and running, but I will never forget the gigantic smile on Pastor Dave Schoeld's face when he saw me walking down the aisle toward him for communion without crutches for the first time after the accident!



The experience left me humbled, grateful, and very glad that I had a community to lean on at FLC. I was reminded that there are helpful, kind, empathetic, and great people at FLC, and I don't need to be injured to make connections with them.

It also left me knowing what a benefit I can be to someone else

who may be having a tough time, and I am much more willing to step in and help out.



MISSION TRIP 2023

Thank you.....Thank you.....Thank you

The 2023 FLC Belize Travel Team say **Thank You** to supporters **for your words of encouragement and prayers** for our recent mission trip. Six members were first-time travelers and new to **experiencing mission work, connecting with our tuition scholarship students, and witnessing firsthand the relationships and partnership** FLC has developed over the years in the Belize ministry. Team members were Brooke and Kya Sherard, Channing Oien, Dee Herrig, Jim and Nancy Schade; returning members were Debbie Pederson, and Kathy Greenlee.

First, we returned to a mission field identified by the FLC team 14 years ago, supporting Mr. Nehru's ministry in a remote poverty-stricken village near Corozal in early March. Gathering under a makeshift shelter, **we worshipped, sang, played, and shared a meal** with about 50 villagers. **Our relationships here have deepened; FLC now sponsors 4 students from that first group of children we met!**

We also served at the Alvin Young Nazarene High School. Debbie and Dee Herrig helped Dee Shanley in her sewing class while others painted the new kitchen. We enjoyed this time of fellowship with staff and students and attended their morning chapel. Jim drove the school van and problem-solved the gauge issues, discovering that it requires a new computer console. We discussed future school and student needs with our long-time teacher-friend Mr. Bay and the principal, Miss Geraldine.

We also spent 5 days at Camp Se Konsa, a camp for children with disabilities. We were privileged to help host the first overnight the camp had ever offered to guests. While it was challenging to help prepare the camp, design an appropriate program, and adjust to very modest accommodations, we had a wonderful experience. **The team saw many smiles, lots of excitement, and tears of joy in leading worship and craft activities! We were reminded of the many home comforts we take for granted.** One team member commented, "The people here have so little, yet they are so happy!"

Jean Gentry traveled to Belize later. She helped tile the school's computer lab. Jean also assisted Dee with sewing projects, working with both students and adults. **Jean visited with our sponsored students and reviewed their 2023-2024 school-year applications.** She and Dee attended traditional Holy Week activities, and created *La Fombras* (seed/plant carpets) used for the Good Friday procession.

God provided so **many opportunities for spiritual and personal growth in the connections we made.** At the end of the week, we took time to reflect and rest at a resort. **We had renewed and created relationships, grew closer to team members, developed an appreciation for the spiritual gifts of our team, made new friends in a new country, and saw the face of Jesus in the people we met every day!**

Belize a very easy country to visit! Many people also speak English; it is both safe and affordable. Team members covered their travel, food, lodging, and additional personal costs. Dee Shanley is an excellent trip coordinator: she has developed wonderful relationships with people in the community, understands the culture, and knows the beautiful places of interest to visit in Belize.

**If you are looking for both a personal and spiritual adventure, consider this opportunity:
*a Belize Mission Trip in 2024!***

THANKS BE TO GOD FOR A SAFE & SPIRITUAL ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME!



Front row, left to right: Jim Schade, Nancy Schade, Dee Shanley, Debbie Pederson, Dee Herrig, Kathy Greenlee
Back Row, left to right: Brook Sherard, Ramone, Kya Sherard, Channing Oien





**MISSION COFFEE HOUSE
TIP JAR DONATIONS
TOTAL OVER
\$3,000
IN MARCH AND APRIL!!!**

Welcome to summer and let the sunshine in! We have slowed down a lot in some areas and have a challenge keeping up in others. In all our minutes here, we love seeing the happy, smiling faces of our patrons. The word is spreading around how great this place is because we are seeing new customers every week!

Our summer schedule hours are Monday-Thursday from 8:00 to 2:00 beginning May 28th. We will stay busy with many activities scheduled. I will continue making rolls on Tuesday and Thursday for all the roll lovers in the community. We sure go through a lot of coffee as well but also receive a lot of donations for our Mission of the Month tip jar.

Thank you to Kurt at Kool Beans for the great Fair Trade product and service. Thank you to all the amazing volunteers!! We could not make this happen without you. Thank you to First Lutheran for all your support!!

Sincerely,

Jeanne



Jeanne Eclov (C) from the MCH presents a check in the amount of \$1,565.84 to Gail Seeklander and Debbie Brandwein from the Brookings County Food Pantry, our March Mission of the Month.



A check in the amount of \$1,573.83 was presented to our April Mission of the Month, Special Training and Riding Skills (S.T.A.R.S.). Pictured above is Kristine Skorseth and her volunteers, along with Jeanne Eclov.

LOVE
YOUR *neighbor*
AS **YOURSELF.**
Mark 12:31

Save the Date!

Saturday June 10, 2023

Please join us any time between 9:00am and 4:00pm

First Lutheran Church

Mission Coffee House and Activity Center

337 8th St, Brookings, SD 57006

Tie One On

Goal: 100 Lutheran World Relief Quilts



WELCOME all experience and all skill levels
(ages Middle School - 100+)



To Register scan QR code

1. Open camera
2. Hold the camera up to the QR code
3. Tap banner

Lunch provided with registration

Questions? Contact: **Julie Abraham**
(605) 690-6292
j.b.abraham67@gmail.com

*Accepting donations of fabric, sheets, cash, gift cards

Are you a Wanna-Be, a Not-Me, a Never-Been, or even a Has-Been quilter? Then we're looking for you to be a

Born-Again!

quilter by joining us Saturday, June 10 anytime between 9-4 for a quilting bee in the FLC Activity Center. Our goal of producing 100 Lutheran World Relief quilts on that day requires many willing workers with a variety of skilled and unskilled talents. Please contact Julie Abraham to register for free lunch and childcare, and to help us prepare for you and all your friends/family! 605-690-6292 or

j.b.abraham67@gmail.com.

Together, we'll Tie One On!

Music News

When in our music God is glorified, and adoration leaves no room for pride, it is as though the whole creation cried: Alleluia!" ELW 851

People often ask me what my favorite hymn is. My reply is usually ambiguous because I cannot choose a favorite! There are too many hymns that are meaningful to me.

This summer you have a chance to sing your favorite hymn in worship. At the back of the sanctuary, there is a large jar labeled Favorite Songs. Please write the title of your favorite, on the slip of paper provided, and drop it in the jar. Every effort will be made to include your favorite song in worship this summer. The liturgy being used this summer is "Now the Feast and Celebration" by Marty Haugen. This is a liturgy that has been used before. The music is joyful and upbeat.

Now that the year is over for the handbells and choir, I want to thank all who gave their time to enhance our worship throughout the year. One of the highlights, for me, was our combined children's choir and sanctuary choir for Palm Sunday. The children added excitement to the piece. What a great year! A special thanks to Barbara Horten for her leadership with the handbells, Mary Ermel for making the organ sing, instrumentalists who enhanced worship, and all members of the handbell choir and sanctuary choir. We had a great year! I am humbled by the inspirational moments I have had directing the sanctuary choir and listening to the handbells. What a fine group of musicians and people. First Lutheran is truly blessed.

And now, "God be with you 'til we meet again." ELW 536
Pat Anderson, Music Coordinator for 8:30 worship



PRESCHOOL NEWS

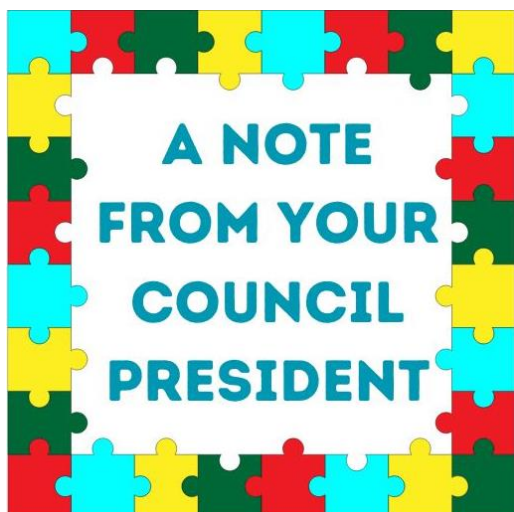
SCHOLARSHIPS NEEDED There are a couple of families who would love the opportunity for their child to attend First Lutheran Preschool. (Their older child attended). Unfortunately, these families are going through some very difficult times. If anyone is interested in sponsoring a scholarship or even a partial scholarship, for these deserving families, please contact me for more details. The preschool phone number is 605-697-2756 and my email is sueann@firstlutheranbrookings.org.

STILL SPOTS OPEN If you or anyone you know would like to register a child for the 2023/2024 school year, we still have a few openings available. We offer preschool classes to children that are 2, 4, and 5 years old. We also offer a Jr. K class. Children must be 3 years old by September 1 and potty trained to attend. If you have any questions, or would like more information, please call the preschool office at 605-697-2756 or email me at sueann@firstlutheranbrookings.org.

It has been another wonderful and rewarding year for the staff at First Lutheran Preschool. We appreciate all the support we receive from the church staff and the congregation. We hope you all have a fun and safe summer.

I wish you all a happy summer full of SUNSHINE!!!!

SueAnn



Is it really June already? Time flies when you're having fun. Haven't the First Things Monday Morning emails been fun? The connection stories are so great to read and energize me for the week ahead. Then seeing the puzzle pieces on our walls really gives the visual to all the connections that FLC facilitates!! Can't wait to see 52 puzzle pieces by next Easter. Send your story in and be a piece of the puzzle. Shout out to all thinking they'd like to be more involved in the inner workings of FLC....we will have 2 open Council positions to fill at our annual meeting this fall. Pray on it and reach out to Pastors, office, or a Council member if any questions or interested. Enjoy your summer!

Kris Seas, Council President

First Lutheran Church Children's Ministry Newsletter

June and July 2023



I am so happy it's summer

I am disappointed I haven't seen my Journey to

Discipleship friends for a while now.



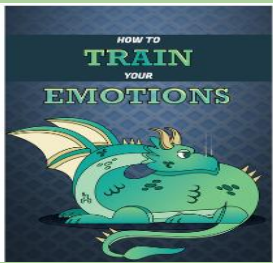
I am excited for Vacation Bible School (VBS)



VBS 2023

How to Tame your Emotions

June 26-29 5:45-7:30



Adults accompany your children.

ALL are welcome.

Children 3-adults.

Nursery will be available for those 0-3.

We will explore how God helps us tame our emotions.



Have you registered your children or youth for Journey to Discipleship '23-'24?

Summer is when the bulk of planning happens for the upcoming year. We need students registered to create classes, decide on spaces, order supplies, and so much more.

We need volunteers to know how many classes we can create, what rotations we can facilitate, and more.

PLEASE be sure to register your children!

If you are age Middle Schooler to Adult who would like to volunteer to help with Journey to Discipleship, Faith Steppingstones, or the Nursery, please let us know.

Dates to keep in mind.

- VBS June 26-29
- Back to School Blessing August 20
- August 27 & 30th Journey to Discipleship Volunteer Training
- Rally Day, Welcome 3-year-olds to Journey steppingstone, Sunday Journey family meet up September 10
- Family meet up night for Wednesday Journey to Discipleship September 13
- Lord's Prayer Kinder Steppingstone class September 17
- Kindergarteners blessing at services September 24.

Summer

We think of summer as a time of being outdoors, swimming, playing games, and being with family. Some children and youth spend a good amount of time alone during the day, some work, some caring for themselves or siblings. Some of the children in our area don't have consistent access to meals like they do during the school year.

Take the time to check in with our children. If you taught Journey and would like an address for your students to drop them a little note, contact Kari York. Volunteer with VBS where you can form relationships with children of our community. Help in the nursery, give parents a break and again get to know the children who are being cared for as well as the young people caring for them.

There are so many ways to ensure the children of our community feel seen, safe, and cared for.
God Bless You!

Speaking of summer... **Are your children or family attending church camp this summer?**

I would love to hear all about it. I would love to see pictures. Send me an email or let's get together.



YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

Happy Summer Friends!

What an ordinary academic year we had here at FLC! After years influenced by covid and staff changes that is a celebration in and of itself. Thank you to all the hands and hearts that made this year run smoothly! Special thanks to the Children, Youth and Family team; your gumption and insite help to make my world go round!

An exciting adventure will be in the midst when you all read this... **I'LL BE IN THE HOLY LAND!** As a continuing education experience I will be traveling with a tour group led by 3 women ELCA Pastors throughout Holy sites in Palestine and Israel! I am absolutely ecstatic to learn more about foundations of our faith and bring back stories and experiences to share with the whole congregation and knowledge to enrich the faith lives of our youth! Watch highlights from my journey on the FLC's social media from June 1st - 10th! I will also be sharing about my trip upon my return on a Sunday this summer and in the next newsletter. Please pray for my pilgrimage and all the folks who have made such a journey.

6-8TH GRADE CONFIRMATION:

We wrapped up Confirmation this year with a celebration to remember! In April Our Confirmation and Youth Group students hosted a **POST-EASTER VIGIL** open to the public and for the Journey to Discipleship students. Through stories from the Old Testament small groups performed skits and told the stories of the Bible that point the way to the Resurrection of Jesus. We began in the gym with the story of creation, we processed in song to the Fellowship Hall for more drama filled stories and ended in the Sanctuary with the retelling of the Gospel. The celebration of baptism that came after was filled with joy, where we had 4 Journey students baptized together! To finish the night in a fellowship we enjoyed a dessert reception with a delectable spread of treats and even a chocolate fountain! A deep and joyous thank you to all of our mentors and leaders who show up in the imperfections of life to be another trusted adult in the lives of our youth: Jill Heller, Kris Seas, Deb and Ken Tiefenthaler, Mike Twedt, Levi Silva, Cheryl Melby, Amber Overby, Diane Almos, Andrea Morlock, and Stue Lewis y'all are stupendous!

9TH GRADE CONFIRMATION:

To wrap up our year on the *Wheel of Wellness* we gathered with 9th graders and their families to reflect upon the year and what confirmation means to them. Faith projects are on the horizon for each student as they prepare for their Affirmation of Baptism next fall. We provide the space to celebrate their faith milestone in a myriad of ways with something as straightforward as a faith statement to something more complex as creating a work of art a Minecraft church. All the

avenues of reflection will be accompanied by a Bible verse and explanation of its significance in the life of the student. It is such an honor to journey with our students through their faith and the next phase of the confirmation experience is a fun one!

HIGH SCHOOL:

The year came to an end quickly as we found new rhythms of summer activities and end of the year celebrations. We were so excited to celebrate the graduation of 19 of our high school seniors. We hosted a Stepping Stone dinner with the seniors and their parents to reflect upon transition, failure, excitement, and the movement of the Holy Spirit. On Sunday May 21st we hosted our

Senior Sunday celebration where our amazing FLC Quilters bestowed our seniors with their very own quilt as a token of care as they transition into the next phase of their life. As Stuie Lewis put it aptly in his ministry moment during the service, “Do us a favor and don’t leave us forever, come back to visit from time to time.” We send our seniors out into new ventures with prayers and blessings, please remember to keep them and their families in your prayers in the coming months. To all of our Quilting friends, thank you for your commitment to our youth and community, your work is cherished and your intentions are felt.

SUMMER YOUTH TRIP:

Plans are drawn and we are pumped to get our *Flat Grass* trekking feeting on the mountains! If you take a look at the large bulletin board at the top of the ramp to the sanctuary you can see a little rendition of our trip out to Montana via a train! The days are ticking by and we have started counting the days rather than weeks or months. Margie Fiedler, Executive Director of Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp in MT (where our youth will be backpacking) stopped by on Sunday May 7th to chat in service and celebrate communion with us. Margie wanted to thank all who took the time to chat with her and also for the gifts received for the camp. Each and every gift helps share the love of Christ with all. Fun facts learned that Sunday: there are folks in our congregation who went to school and worked at camp with Margie back in the day, what fun connections! We have 8 students eagerly attending our wilderness adventure in July. We are excited to unplug from the whole world and focus on what is in front of us, who is beside us and how God is moving in and around us! Join us on a Sunday in August for reflections from our trip at the service!

DRUM ROLL PLEASE....next summer we are headed to *New Orleans* for the National Youth Gathering! In July of 2024 we plan to gather with more than 10,000 youth from around the country to celebrate our Lutheran faith with the theme of “Created to Be”. The week will be filled with speakers, service projects, musicians, and so much more in the corridors of historic New Orleans! Students in 8th - 12th grade are encouraged to attend and **this year will be the first year with a young adult experience too! So friends who are 18-35 will have space dedicated to them as well!**

Keep your eyes peeled for the upcoming Rolls days this summer!

In peace and prayer,
Madison, Director of Youth Ministries

EASTER VIGIL



Deliverance from the fiery furnace



Enjoying the chocolate fountain



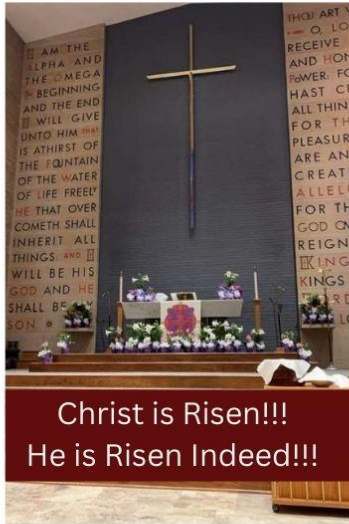
4 young people were baptized this night

Pastors sharing their version of the creation story



DANCE PARTY

HOLY WEEK



The sanctuary and the Daums looking their best for Easter morning



The staff enjoys a breather during a busy, busy week of preparations



SENIORS SUNDAY

Some of our amazing quilters



Stuie Lewis spoke about what it was like to have this group of seniors from confirmation through graduation



The youth joined the Sanctuary choir on Palm Sunday to bless us with special music



Kindergartners were blessed with children's bibles this spring

Palm Sunday processional



Enjoying the Palm Sunday brunch





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Want to get this newsletter in your inbox? Provide the church office with your email address. Email: office@firstlutheranbrookings.org

If you have an article or information for the August & September Newsletter, please have it to the church office no later than 5:00pm July 13.

If you would like information put in the Sunday announcements, please have it in the church office by the **Monday** before.
Thank you!



Join us for Sunday service on Facebook Live when you are out of town.

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