



THE FIRST PERSPECTIVE

July 2023

First Lutheran Church, Stephen, MN

Greetings, dear First Lutheran faith family!

It is my joy and privilege to get to serve you as your next called pastor. I'm looking forward to meeting each of you, and doing ministry - together - in the name of Jesus. We'll have plenty of time to get to know each other, but here are a few things about me!

I am a...

- **Child of God:** I was raised in an ELCA church in Cut Bank, MT (near Glacier National Park), where I was baptized and confirmed. My faith came alive for me when I sensed hearing God's call to pastoral ministry in high school.
- **Husband:** I just got married in April to the love of my life, Caitlin! She's also a pastor at First Lutheran in Karlstad, and together we have six (yes, 6) pets between us (5 cats and a dog). We also have Nora (10) and Alice (9) as children, who live in Fargo with their mom, stepdad, and siblings.
- **Brother:** I have one sister (Hallie), but you've probably noticed my other title, other than Pastor. "Brother" refers to the Order of Lutheran Franciscans (OLF), which is a community of ELCA Christians, dedicated to living simply, loving deeply, and listening for God's voice. You will notice a brown robe instead of a white one, and I'll be in sandals, too. More to come on all of that in my August article! (Note: you are welcome to call me by either title, Brother or Pastor 😊)
- **Creation enthusiast:** Growing up right by Glacier NP, I was constantly outdoors. I love northwestern Minnesota and spending time in God's creation here. Caitlin and I are often hiking state parks on our days off!
- **Musician:** My mom instilled in me a love of music. I started piano around age 7, and still love to play. Inspired by my home pastor, I was able to use that solid foundation and background to teach myself guitar in high school and college, and I love playing Bible camp songs with kiddos! I can also croak out a few good notes with my voice, too.
- **Education:** I'm a graduate of Concordia College in Moorhead and Luther Seminary in St. Paul. In 2022, I also completed a certificate program to be certified as a spiritual director, who is someone trained to listen deeply for God's presence and activity in another person's life. Ask me more about this sometime!

You'll notice right away that my preaching style is conversational and interactive. And, there will be things that I do in worship that are different from what you're used to. But know this - it is my hope that everything we do, especially in worship, leads us to deeper faith and life with Jesus. For me, it's that simple - a deep faith and wonderful life found in our God who loves us more than we can imagine.

I am so excited to get to be with you all as your pastor. I ask that you pray for me, that I may serve you and Jesus well. This is Christ's church, and I trust God will lead us in our ministry together! Peace and all good to you!

Your pastor,
Brother Jeff



JULY BIRTHDAYS

7/2..... Tamara Benitt
 7/2..... Linda Donarski
 7/3..... Nixon Pietruszewski
 7/5..... Abi McGlynn
 7/6..... Cayson Clausen
 7/8..... Alana McGlynn
 7/8..... Griffon Nelson
 7/9..... Paige Pietruszewski
 7/9..... Paige Smith
 7/9..... Kalen Szczepanski
 7/10..... Ethan Hendricks
 7/11..... Dave McGlynn
 7/12..... Kasen Benitt
 7/12..... Emmie McGlynn
 7/15..... Nic Winge
 7/17..... Joyce Nelson
 7/17..... Sawyer Sundby
 7/18..... Brynlee Benson
 7/18..... Jan Bukowski
 7/18..... Peyton Mills
 7/21..... Kyle Pietruszewski
 7/25..... Lon Woinarowicz
 7/27..... Nina Platt
 7/28..... Dorothy Nybladh
 7/30..... Connie Troska



JULY ANNIVERSARIES

7/16..... Penny and David Jensen
 7/16.... Lon and Melissa Woinarowicz
 7/17..... Jan and Earl Anderson
 7/21..... Eileen and Larry Opp
 7/25..... Cheri and Michael Douglas
 7/26..... Sharon and Garry Kotts
 7/28..... Ann and Tom Woinarowicz



CHURCH NEWS

THE MARTHA/RUTH CIRCLE will meet for Bible Study on Monday, July 10th at 6:30 pm in the fellowship hall. Nancy Gajeski is the hostess.

LOOSE CHANGE: Loose Change Sunday is the 3rd Sunday of each month. July Loose Change: Violence Intervention Project.

BULLETIN SPONSORS: If you would like to honor or remember a family member, you can sponsor a bulletin. Sponsorships are \$20. Please contact the office with your request.

ALTAR COMMITTEE: Reminder to change the paraments and fill the candles. Communion is served the 1st & 3rd Sundays. Committee members prepare the altar.

LAY READERS: Please consider signing up to read during services. If you haven't been a lay reader before, contact the church office to find out more. Thank you Nona Carl, Ava Weisenberger, Jane Smidt and Pat Hegen for reading this past month.

THRIVENT MEMBERS, are you throwing away \$500 a year? You have the opportunity to use this money to help causes of your choice. Contact Ellen Anton for more info.

JULY FOOD BANK: Watch the weekly bulletin for information on the July Food Bank needs.

SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER: Confirmed College Students, remember the scholarship application for the Selma Fodstad and Wilson Scholarships are due.

Do You Have News To Share?

Send announcements and events you would like to share in the newsletter to firstl@wikel.com by the 20th of each month.

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF KITS

The school items are soon on sale. We will be doing school and health care kits again this year. A list of what we need is at the church. If you have questions, call Ellen at 218-686-2899.

CALL FOR HELP

Board of Trustees, would like to put out a call for people to work on two different projects. Pressure washing the black discoloration on the stone exterior of the church. It requires people and pressure washers that heat the water, fuel oil Aladdin type. Second, the exterior windows need painting. Anyone interested please contact Brian Hendricks for details.

BROTHER JEFF'S CONTACT INFORMATION AND OFFICE HOURS

Brother Jeff Brown | Email: brotherjeff@lutheranfranciscans.org | Phone 218-230-6583 | Office Hours: TBD

CHURCH OFFICE INFORMATION:

Secretary: Darlene Bates | Email: firstl@wikel.com | Phone 218-478-3895 | Office Hours: TBD

DATE SET FOR BROTHER JEFF'S INSTALLATION

On Sunday, August 6th, Brother Jeff's Installation will take place at First Lutheran. The time of service will be moved to 10 am followed by a potluck meal.

JULY COUNCIL MEETING

There will not be a Council Meeting on July 5th. We will be holding a special council meeting to discuss two items of business. All other business, please hold on to it for the August meeting.



THANK YOU SO MUCH. Our heartfelt gratitude for the love, compassion and support you have shown our family during this difficult time. He will be missed beyond measure.

With Love, the family of Michael Andrew Lankowicz

SERVANT LISTS

Please note the dates that you are scheduled to acolyte/usher for Sunday Worship. If you are not able to serve that Sunday, please find a substitute. Then, notify the church so the bulletin can be printed correctly.

ACOLYTES

7/2	Mason Smith, Paige Smith
7/9	Ava Weisenberger, Rylan Wonarowicz
7/16	Olivia Winge, Kory McMahon
7/23	Madison Wonarowicz, Carrie Jensen
7/30	Brynn Benitt, Liam McMahon

USHERS

7/2	Larry & Eileen Opp, Chad & Pennie Korynta
7/9	Kyle & Paige Pietruszewski, Kelly & Kristen Clausen
7/16	Jeff and Jamie Nelson, Gannon & Chrissy Nelson
7/23	Larry & Karen Nybladh, Gale Frei & Fanny Schaefer
7/30	Korey & Eiley Sundby, Josh & Alissa Sundby
8/6	Alvin & Becky Nybladh, Lee Bukowski
8/13	Tara & Tyson Jarshaw, Tamara & Trevor Benitt



First Lutheran Church Council Minutes
June 7, 2023

Members Present: Connie Troska, Kris Ann Pietruszewski, Melanie McGlynn, Jess Rogus, Sharon Kotts, Betsy Jensen, Whitney Weisenberger, Krissy McMahon, Pat Heggen, and Brian Hendricks.

Also in attendance: S.A.M. Marilyn Grandstrand, Pastor Jeff, Caitlin Jensen, Deanna Swendseid, Shawna Peterson, and Merilee Marty.

President Connie called the meeting to order.

Pat gave devotions.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Motion by Betsy to accept the May minutes as well as the 2 special meetings held, seconded by Jess. All in favor, motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Deanna presented May's offerings. She is officially not our treasurer, but once again pulled together this month's offerings. Sharon made a motion to accept the minutes. Kris Ann seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Offerings for May

April 30th - \$1,906.00
May 7th - \$2,779.00
May 14th - \$1,503.00
May 21st - \$7,105.00
May 28th - \$2,510.00

April Loose Change - \$69.32 - Area Relocation Services
May Loose Change - \$282.85 - Marshall County Social Services

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Deacons:

- Pastor Jeff will not be gone in the next month.

Trustees:

- The gutter guy contacted Pat about the church's gutters. He will be here in the next few days to give us a physical estimate.
- We have a CD at Valley Bank that has come due. American Federal has substantially better rates at this time. The trustees will do more research.
- The trustees have put out a call for help pressure washing the brick on the outside of the church. They will see what volunteers they get. Otherwise they will get some bids on hiring the work to be done.

Parish Education:

- VBS will be on June 19-21 from 5-8 PM. Park River will be coming in to run it.
- Bible Camp information was in the newsletter. If kids are interested they should contact someone on the Board of Education.

Stewardship:

- Betsy has a quote for the toddler musical flowers for Harmony Park. We have a \$2000 grant which will cover most of them. The park has been used a lot, and now we will have instruments for toddlers! Kris Ann made a motion to purchase the toddler flowers. Melanie seconded it. All were in favor, motion passed.

Pastor's Report:

- Connie & Deanna attended the Synod Assembly. They will type something up for next month's newsletters.
- Marilyn will be meeting with Pastor Jeff about upcoming weddings, church bulletins, and other "extras" that are done on a weekly basis.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Motions via email: This is not the best way to get motions approved. If something needs approval it will either have to wait until next month or we can hold a special meeting to get things approved.
- Connie will continue to do the newsletter. Since it is now separated from the secretary's office, Connie will do the newsletter for \$150/month. Kris Ann made a motion, Pat seconded. All were in favor, motion passed.
- William McGlynn has been folding the newsletters for the past 2 years. He has now graduated, and has found a replacement for himself. Blaine Smith will be folding the newsletters going forward. William will train him before he goes to college.
- Connie has been working with Darlene for the transition to secretary.
- Brother Jeff has some questions about his compensation package. He would like to submit his mileage versus having a set payment each month. He worries about getting overpaid for his mileage. Council approved that Pastor Jeff will submit his mileage monthly for the 1st 6 months. After 6 months, things will be evaluated. Pat made a motion, seconded by Whitney to approve this. All were in favor, motion passed.
- People's Church in Bemidji is our sister church. We have made contact with them, as there were some issues with them cashing checks we had sent them. They have had some transition and are excited to grow our connection with them!

Kris Ann made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Sharon. All in favor, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

The next meeting will be August 2nd at 7:00 PM.

Melanie McGlynn
Church Council Secretary

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL HELD IN JUNE

First Lutheran Church hosted Vacation Bible School for our elementary students. We were lucky to have four staff members from Park River Bible Camp come in to work with our youth.

Throughout the week we had approximately 15 kids join us for our three days of VBS. Our kids were able to participate in music, crafts, stories, skits, games and more. We know summer days are busy but we are thankful that our kids have this great opportunity.

Thank you to First Lutheran Church Council for providing these great experiences.

Thank you to our families for encouraging your children to come.

Thank you to our kids for their great attitudes.







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 PO BOX 72
 STEPHEN, MN 56757

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
 US POSTAGE PAID
 STEPHEN, MN 56757
 PERMIT NO. 1

JULY 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
All Sunday Services are celebrated in-person or on Facebook Live						1
2 9 am Worship w/ Communion	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 9 am - Worship 10 am - Fellowship	10 6:30 pm Martha Ruth Circle	11 9:30 am Quilting	12	13	14	15
16 9 am Worship with Communion; Loose Change Sunday	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 9 am - Worship 10 am - Fellowship	24	25 9:30 am Quilting	26	27	28	29
30 9 am - Worship 10 am - Fellowship	31	Published monthly by the Congregation of First Lutheran Church, Stephen, MN Copyright: First Lutheran Church, Stephen, MN 56757				