



THE FIRST PERSPECTIVE

August 2023
First Lutheran Church, Stephen, MN

Greetings, dear First Lutheran faith family!

I hope your summer has gone well so far. Treasure this time as we come into August – summer is going by fast! I promised in my July article, I would spend some time (and paper space) to say more about the community I belong to, the Lutheran Franciscans. I'll be at our annual retreat July 31-August 4, so I figured August would be a good time for more on this important aspect of my life. So, here we go!

What is a Franciscan? 'Franciscan' refers to Francis of Assisi, who lived in the 1200s, some 300 years before Martin Luther, and was a forerunner to the Reformation. Francis was born to a well-off family, but when Jesus came into his life, he radically shifted gears, gave up all possessions and money, and sought to follow Jesus as purely and closely as he could. The movement quickly caught on around Europe, but the people who followed were not monks or nuns living in a monastery or convent, but regular, everyday Christians (clergy entered later on and the movement became institutionalized). People seemed to love how clear it was to follow Jesus.

Lutherans have religious communities? Yes! In Europe, these communities have existed since the Reformation, including Lutheran Franciscan ones. In the early 20th century, the movements of these intentional communities came to the United States, and the first Lutheran community was formed, consisting of all women, the Deaconess Community. There's a long history to get from there to here, but in 2011 the Order of Lutheran Franciscans was birthed.

The word "Order" just refers to an 'ordered' or specific way of life. It's like a little family! Because of that, we call each other by a familial title (brother, or sister, or sibling), which is why I get introduced as Br. Jeff! Again, you are welcome to call me Pastor or Pastor Jeff, since I am called to serve as your pastor.

What does being a Lutheran Franciscan look like? Our life is an intentional one, modeled by Francis of Assisi's desire to just follow Jesus closely. We do make vows for this life (like other religious orders), but for us Lutherans, all of it points back to what God has vowed to us in Holy Baptism, that we are named and claimed by God's grace and love, it is God's work in our life, and God calls us to follow Jesus. Here's a quick summary of our vows and how we interpret them for our modern context.

- Poverty = living simply and not being caught up in material possessions, just as Jesus wasn't (John 19:16-30). For me, this is like minimalism – I usually only wear one color (brown, the color associated with the Franciscan movement) and I don't have many possessions; the ones I do have I'm taught to hold lightly.
- Chastity = loving without distinction. This is not celibacy! All Christians are called to be chaste – that is, to love as Jesus loved. This is the new commandment Jesus gives us on the last night of his life (John 13:31-35). For me, this means giving of myself, my time, and my attention to my wife & family, but also not playing favorites in the church and (trying) to see Jesus in everyone I meet.
- Obedience = being joyfully formed by other's wisdom. The root of the word 'obedience' is 'to hear to listen.' For me, obedience is about being humble, as Jesus is humble (Matthew 11:29-30), and always being willing to listen first.

After all, we have 2 ears and only 1 mouth!

Continued on Page 2

A few more tidbits:

- The Lutheran Franciscan community here in the United States is associated with the ELCA, but we don't live in one location; we're spread out everywhere, from Minnesota, to Michigan, to California, to Texas, to Pennsylvania, to Virginia, and many other places around the country (and also Canada).
- There are about 50 of us connected with the community on various levels, those who have taken vows are about 60% of that number, with more being added each year.
- We welcome all people – women and men, married and single, lay and ordained, as well as anyone who identifies as part of the LGBTQIA+ community.
- We go through 6 years of spiritual formation to be part of the community. I currently serve as the overall Minister of Formation for that piece of our life.
- We have four focuses for our life together: spiritual formation & renewal, accompanying the poor & marginalized, care of creation, and ecumenical bridge-building.

If you want to know more about the OLF community, check out our website (which I actually helped design): www.lutheranfranciscans.org.

I know is all likely pretty new to you – the brother title, the brown robe, the conversational preaching. You could boil it down to this: I'm just a child of God who is called to follow Jesus, just like the rest of us (and all Christians), and I do that in a particular way that works for my life and my soul. It's not about being 'separate' from the world or 'above' anyone else – I'm just a down-to-earth guy who loves Jesus and God's people, and wants to live a simple life of service and love and let God take it from there.

As the Franciscan tradition like to say as a greeting, peace and everything good to you!

Your pastor,

Rev. Br. Jeff Brown, OLF



BROTHER JEFF'S INSTALLATION & WELCOME POTLUCK

Sunday, August 6th, Brother Jeff's Installation will be here at First Lutheran. Service time will change to 10 am with the potluck to follow. People from the Stephen community (and the surrounding area) are welcome to join us and meet Brother Jeff and his wife Caitlin.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! PARSONAGE CLEAN UP DAY



On Sunday, September 10 at 4 pm, we will meet at the Parsonage and clean. Both inside and out. All those interested in helping, please come and join us. **Many hands make light work.** Besides, if you're curious about the remodel project, now's your chance to check it out! There will be a list of tasks in the September newsletter.





CHURCH NEWS

THE MARTHA/RUTH CIRCLE will meet for Bible Study on Monday, August 14th at 6:30 pm in the fellowship hall. Jan Anderson is the hostess.

LOOSE CHANGE: Loose Change Sunday is the 3rd Sunday of each month. August Loose Change: St. Gianni's

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 Heggen, Penny Jensen 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.

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.

AUGUST & SEPTEMBER FOOD SHELF NEEDS

"THIRST COMES FIRST" is the theme for August and September. Any beverage, liquid or powdered drink.

Some suggestions:

Case or six-pack of water bottles | V-8 juice | Boost or Ensure | Grape, Apple or Cranberry juices | Canned orange, pineapple or grapefruit juice | Kool Aid | Crystal Lite packages

Please contact Jane Smidt, FLC Coordinator, at 218-478-2456 if you have questions.

Remember, personal care and household items are always needed.

Baskets are located by the back door and in the Fellowship Hall.

QUILTER NEWS

Quilters meet the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 9:30 am. If there is a change, it will be announced. Please join us in the Fellowship Hall. Sewers and non-sewers are welcome. Next meeting: August 8th.



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 the the bulletin can be printed correctly.

SERVANT GROUP

8/6	Potluck, Church Council will serve
8/13	Nona Carl, Pat Heggen, Nina Platt
8/20	Steve & Michelle Weberg, Peggy Noel
8/27	Mark & Laura McGregor

USHERS

8/6	Alvin & Becky Nybladh, Lee Bukowski
8/13	Tara & Tyson Jarshaw, Tamara & Trevor Benitt
8/20	Garrett & Stacy Winge Family
8/27	Kelsy & Erin Anderson; Jonathon & Amanda Anderson
9/3	Ken & Pat Heggen, Whitney Weisenberger, Matt Kroulik
9/10	Chris & Angie Mills, David & Kayla Smith

CELEBRATE RECOVERY PROGRAM AVAILABLE IN WARREN

Are you someone with a hurt? A hurt, meaning an emotional reaction to another person's behavior or to a disturbing situation (abuse, divorce, abandonment, codependency, relationship issues, grief, stress, loss, etc.)

Do you have a hang-up? Hang-ups are negative, mental attitudes that are used to cope with people or adversity (anger, depression, fear, worry, anxiety, forgiveness, etc.)

Are you struggling with a habit you can't break? A habit is a repeated action which can develop into an addiction. Examples include: alcohol, drugs, food, gambling, sex, pornography, shopping, smoking, etc.

Celebrate Recovery is a Christ-Centered, 12 Step Recovery Program for anyone with hurts, hang-ups, or habits.

Celebrate Recovery invites us to experience God's healing power in our lives by working through 12 steps as well as 8 principles that are based on the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-12.

By working through these principles, we begin to grow spiritually. We become free from our addictive, compulsive, and dysfunctional behaviors. This freedom creates peace, serenity, joy and most importantly, a stronger personal relationship with God and others.

As we progress through the program, we discover our personal, loving and forgiving Higher Power - Jesus Christ, God's only Son.

Please come and join us in this amazing journey of recovery.

Meeting Location: Warren Covenant Church
Every Tuesday 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm, starting August 8, 2023
Childcare is provided
112 North 6th Street, Warren

Follow us on Facebook at Warren Covenant CR

Questions? Feel free to contact Joyce at 218-201-1758



Special First Lutheran Church Council Minutes July 26, 2023

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

Also in attendance: Pastor Jeff & Deanna Swendseid

President Connie called the meeting to order.

New Business:

- August 6th is the installation of Brother Jeff. Church will be at 10 AM, followed by a potluck. Council will take care of serving & cleaning up the potluck.
- Brother Jeff would like to move the council meeting from August 2nd to the 9th. Council meeting will be at 7:30 PM on August 9th.
- Brother Jeff brought forth the idea of his in-laws renting our parsonage for part of the year. They are currently living in CA, and would like to be here for part of the year (March – November). This is just a conversation right now. If it becomes closer to a reality, it will be presented again to council.
- The parsonage committee wants to do a work day at the parsonage. September 10th will be the date at 4 PM.
- **Treasurer position:** Darlene would like to do the treasurer position as well. Mortenson will continue doing payroll, and Darlene will do the rest. Pat made a motion to appoint Darlene as treasurer starting August 1, 2023 and add her to the signature card at the bank. Sharon seconded it. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Melanie made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Whitney. All in favor, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

The next meeting will be August 9th at 7:30 PM.

Melanie McGlynn, Church Council Secretary

A CALL TO CHURCH STEWARDSHIP

Every month the church council receives a report of the monetary donations to First Lutheran Church. We don't discuss or calculate the non monetary donations to First Lutheran, and those volunteer hours add up quickly.

There are so many ways to volunteer at First Lutheran. This is not a complete list, but something to get you thinking about how to best serve your church family.

- Lawn Mowing
- Snow Shoveling
- Lay Reader
- Stream on Facebook
- Ushering 2 to 3 times a year
- Serving coffee twice a year
- Deep cleaning once a year
- Special music
- Altar committee
- Substitute teacher for Wednesday school
- Quilting
- Decorate (and undecorate) for Christmas
- Summer flowers
- Clavinova- just pushing buttons, not actually playing so yes you can do it!
- Head Usher(s)- we would love to have a few people serve as head ushers for special events



There are jobs for families, retirees, college students, elementary students, everyone who is a member of our First Lutheran family. If you have a project you would like to add to our list, please talk to Betsy or Whitney. Updating the parsonage, staining our new entry doors and our monthly food shelf donations are examples of recent special projects.

We hope you remember First Lutheran with your monetary donations but we also need all hands on deck for the little jobs that make our church family run smoothly. If you have questions about volunteering, your Stewardship Committee, Betsy and Whitney can point you in the right direction.

CALL FOR HELP WITH TWO CHURCH PROJECTS

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.

MEMORIALS

UNDESIGNATED

Karen Schendel
Larry and Eileen Opp
Bruce and Aase Hamnes
Curtis and LaVonne Lundeen
Penny Jensen
Carter Hjelle
Michael and Cheri Douglas
Bill Sylvester
Michael and Cheri Douglas

Michael Lankowicz
Larry and Juanita Eftefield
Vernon Dagoberg
Ingrid Bazey
Tim and Darlene Bates
Roger and Jane Smidt

NEW SIGN

Karen Schendel
John and Shawna Peterson
Mark and Beth Kroulik
Nancy Gajeski
Kenneth and Pat Heggen
Tim and Jody Paulson

NEW SIGN, cont.

Pat Kroulik
Kenneth and Pat Heggen
Earl and Jan Anderson
Geoff and Deanna Swendseid

HARMONY PARK

Michael Lankowicz
John and Shawna Peterson

EDUCATION FUND

Karen Schendel
Geoff and Deanna Swendseid

Personal Care Kits

Cleanliness may not actually be next to godliness, but it certainly helps a person feel more human. When families find their homes destroyed, or must flee for their safety, soap and a towel rarely make the cut for what they can carry. Arriving in a refugee camp or other place of safety, they are scared, vulnerable and dirty from the travel. The simple items included in a Personal Care Kit provide much-needed self-care, critical germ fighting, and the chance to regain dignity amidst situations of fear and uncertainty.

Please review the General Assembly instructions on page 1 before collecting items for Personal Care Kits.

Include the following items in each Personal Care Kit:

- One light-weight bath-size towel (20" X 40" to 52" X 27"), dark color recommended
- Two or three bath-size bars of soap equaling 8 to 9 oz, any brand, in original wrapping; no mini or hotel size bars
- One adult-size toothbrush in its original packaging*
- One sturdy comb. There are many different types of hair texture, so no picks or fine-toothed combs; remove packaging
- One metal nail clippers (attached file optional), remove packaging

*Toothbrush multi-packs may be used by sealing an individual toothbrush in a business-size envelope; no plastic bags or wrap.

Do not add other items or leave out any of the items listed. All items should be new and in good condition. Wrap all the items in the towel and secure with ribbon, yarn, or rubber bands. Do not enclose the kit or any of its contents in plastic bags.

Shipping Note: LWR's approximate cost to handle and ship one Personal Care Kit overseas is \$2.65 (including the addition of a tube of toothpaste). See Page 15 to learn how to support the LWR Quilt & Kit Shipping Fund.



Visit lwr.org/kitvideos to watch a video with tips and tricks for assembling Personal Care Kits!

WANT TO GET THE MOST BANG FOR YOUR BUCK?

Buy in Bulk!

Purchasing kit items in bulk saves time and money. Here are some tips to get started:

ONLINE: Many websites, such as overstock.com, carry items appropriate for LWR kits and often have sales. Inspect items carefully to make sure they meet LWR guidelines and are of good quality.

CLUB STORES: Does anyone in your congregation have a membership to Costco, Sam's Club or BJ's? You can get bulk prices for kit items from these stores.

ASK: Some local stores may be willing to place a bulk order for you and even cut you a discount if they know that you'll be using the supplies to help people in need. It never hurts to ask!

Visit lwr.org/buyinbulk for a list of resources to help you buy supplies in bulk.

"We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Thessalonians 1: 2-3



Monetary donations will also be accepted and items will be purchased.

BROTHER JEFF'S CONTACT INFORMATION AND OFFICE HOURS

Brother Jeff Brown | Email: flcpastor@wiktel.com | Phone 218-230-6583 | Office Hours: Sunday -Thursday (Friday off)

CHURCH OFFICE INFORMATION:

Secretary: Darlene Bates | Email: firstl@wiktel.com | Phone 218-478-3895 | Office Hours: Tues-Wed-Thurs 9am - 12 pm



AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

- 8/3.....Seth McGregor
- 8/4.....Charlotte Rogus
- 8/6.....Robert Dammann
- 8/7.....Matthew Benson
- 8/9.....Bruce Hamnes
- 8/14.....Ethan McGregor
- 8/17.....Chris McGlynn
- 8/18.....Jessica Rogus
- 8/19.....Kylee Clausen
- 8/19.....Jerome Hoper
- 8/26.....Larry Nybladh
- 8/29.....Steve McGlynn
- 8/31.....Neil McGlynn
- 8/31.....Clara Rogus



AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

- 8/2..... Kyle & Paige Pietruszewski
- 8/11Mark & Beth Kroulik
- 8/28Chris & Angie Mills

Women of the ELCA
Northwestern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization

35th Annual Convention Saturday, September 9, 2023

Registration & Coffee 9:00-9:30 am
Day includes worship, business meeting,
speakers, fellowship and lunch.
Concludes by 5 pm

Zion Lutheran Church
505 Main Ave N
Thief River Falls, MN 56701

**Love your Neighbor
as Yourself**

Mark 12:31

Hosted by Conferences 1, 2, 3

Visit the NW Minnesota Synod website to register:
<https://www.nwmnsynod.org/events>

2023 Synod Road Trip - Conference 1

Monday, August 21, 2023 - 5:30 - 7:30 pm
Bethel Lutheran Church in Greenbush

Agenda

- 5:15 PM - 5:55 PM: Registration
- 5:30 PM: Meal Served
- 6:00 PM: Road Trip Content Begins
 - Devotion
 - Synod Updates
 - Hear Conference specific Updates
 - Q&A Time
- 7:30 PM: Sending Blessing



THE FIRST PERSPECTIVE
 FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
 PO BOX 72
 STEPHEN, MN 56757

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

AUGUST 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
All Sunday Services are celebrated in-person or on Facebook Live		1	2	3	4	5
6 10 am Worship Installation of Brother Jeff/ 11 am Potluck	7	8 9:30 am Quilting	9 7:30 pm Church Council *Note date change	10	11	12
13 9 am - Worship 10 am - Fellowship	14 6:30 pm Martha Ruth Circle	15	16	17	18	19
20 9 am Worship with Communion; Loose Change Sunday	21 Great Synod Roadtrip (Pg 7)	22 9:30 am Quilting	23	24	25	26
27 9 am - Worship 10 am - Fellowship	28	29	30	31		

Published monthly by the Congregation of First Lutheran Church, Stephen, MN
 Copyright: First Lutheran Church, Stephen, MN 56757