



THE FIRST PERSPECTIVE

February 2024
First Lutheran Church, Stephen, MN

Dear First Lutheran faith family,

I hope and pray that winter has been treating you well! Please know, my prayers are with each of you every day!

February brings us to the church season of Lent. Lent is a special season of 40 days that is meant to reorient our lives back to Jesus. What's different about this season from any other day or time, is that it's something we all do together, both as a congregation and as the global, universal Church!

We begin this holy season on February 14th, Ash Wednesday. Since Ash Wednesday falls on Valentine's Day, note that you can't spell Valentine without 'lent' at the heart of the word! VaLENTine... In this worship service, we are marked with ashes on our foreheads, which is a Biblical practice that reminds us of our need for God always. These ashes are made from the palm branches from last year's Palm Sunday. This may not be the most romantic way to spend Valentine's Day evening, but this practice is a sign of our humility and repentance, a symbol of a new start and our coming back to God.


During the season of Lent, we will have some extra opportunities for you to grow in your faith:

- **Wednesday Bible Study, Wednesdays at 6 pm.** This Bible study comes from ELCA World Hunger. I hope to have folks sign up for bringing food, too, so we can nourish our bodies as we nourish our minds and spirits in study of Scripture.
- **Wednesday Worship Services, Wednesdays at 7 pm.** These services will focus on the theme "Seasons of Our Souls," which I developed for our Synod in my contracted work for faith practices. Each Wednesday, we'll look at a season (spring, summer, autumn, winter), how each is a metaphor for our spiritual lives, and how we can grow in faith when we experience each season.



As disciples of Jesus, we are called into this season of Lent to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. As your pastor, I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent – which includes things like self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love – all strengthened by the gifts of Word and Sacrament. Let us journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection!

Your pastor,
Brother Jeff



CHURCH NEWS

THE MARTHA/RUTH CIRCLE: Martha/Ruth circle will not meet until March.

LOOSE CHANGE: Loose Change Sunday is the 3rd Sunday of each month. February Loose Change will be decided at the February Church Council Meeting.

QUILTERS: The Quilting Ladies meet on the second and fourth Mondays of each month. All are welcome to join them!

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.

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

Do You Have News To Share?

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



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2/2.....	Colin McGregor
2/3.....	Betsy Jensen
2/6.....	Olivia Winge
2/7.....	Ellie Klamar
2/8.....	Sarah Berg
2/12.....	Jeff Nelson
2/13.....	Larry Opp
2/16.....	Fanny Schaeffer
2/18.....	Greyson Benson
2/18.....	Pennie Korynta
2/19.....	Mark Anderson
2/19.....	Loren Hoepfer
2/24.....	Blaine Smith
2/28.....	Kristen McGregor



FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

02/28.	Amanda & Jonathan Anderson
02/29.....	Deanna & Geoff Swendseid

MEMORIALS

In Memory: Luther Johnson

Mike & Cheri Douglas - Undesignated
 Penny Jensen - Altar Fund
 Cliff & Jean Nyland - Undesignated
 Myron & Kris Ann Pietruszewski - Schendel Family Fund

In Memory: David Rud

Penny Jensen - Altar Fund

In Memory: Sandra Rud

Penny Jensen - Altar Fund

In Memory: Roger Regimbal

Penny Jensen - Altar Fund
 Cliff & Jean Nyland - Undesignated

In Memory: Tom Rogus

Penny Jensen - Altar Fund
 Cliff & Jean Nyland - Undesignated
 Tim & Darlene Bates - New Sign Fund
 Myron & Kris Ann Pietruszewski - Schendel Family Fund

In Memory: Arlyss Anton

Tim & Darlene Bates - New Sign Fund

In Memory: George Carter

Penny Jensen - Altar Fund

In Honor: Duaine Rud

Penny Jensen - Altar Fund

In Honor: Connie Troska

Penny Jensen - Altar Fund

In Honor: Barb Heggen Andre

Penny Jensen - Altar Fund

FLEXIBLE FEBRUARY FOOD SHELF

It's FLEXIBLE FEBRUARY again! Shifting from food to sundry household and personal care items this month. Items include: TP, Laundry & dish detergent dryer sheets, tooth paste and brushes (adults and kids) waxed dental floss, shampoos/conditioners, body wash/soap. As always, any food items accepted too! Any questions please call Jane Smidt, coordinator for FLC at (218) 478-2456

First Lutheran Church Council Minutes January 3, 2024

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

Also in attendance: Darlene Bates, Deanna Swendseid and Pastor Jeff.

President Connie called the meeting to order.

Betsy gave devotions.

Secretary's report: Melanie presented December's Secretary's Report. A motion was made by Betsy to accept the December minutes, seconded by Jess. All in favor, motion carried.

Treasurer's report: Darlene presented December's offerings. Brian made a motion to accept the treasurer's report. Melanie seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Offerings for December

December 3rd.....	\$2,606.00
December 10th.....	\$1,690.00
December 17th.....	\$3,907.98
December 24th.....	\$5,056.70
December 31st.....	\$9,325.00

Vanco.....\$492.12

December Loose Change

Bencke's/Missionaries\$113.00

Membership changes: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Deacons: Nothing

Trustees:

- The CD in Hallock that we were told came due, actually did not. There was an error on their end. We filed a complaint and were reimbursed for the mistake.
- Brian will replace the thermostat that is faulty.
- We have had feedback on the new light bulbs put in. We will continue to update the rest of the light bulbs in the sanctuary to make it brighter. Kris Ann made the motion, seconded by Sharon. All in favor, motion carried.
- We will have some windows that will need to be updated upstairs.
- Gutters have been installed!

Parish Education:

- Wednesday School & Confirmation start up again next Wednesday, January 10th.
- January 14th the kids will sing in church.
- Kids will sing again on Ash Wednesday, Which is February 14th.

Stewardship: We need to start thinking of a Lenten Offering Fund.

Pastor's Report:

- Brother Jeff will be starting at the school Monday-Thursday. This will be January 29th-March 14th.
- Our Lenten theme will be "Looking at the Seasons of Our Soul".

Old Business:

- Annual Meeting will follow church on Sunday, January 28th. Council will volunteer to bring food.

New Business:

- We were able to find some tables and chairs at an auction to update our older tables and chairs. A huge thank you to Erin Anderson for the use of a trailer to pick up the tables. We will unload them to look at them.
- The volume on the microphones has been acting up. Betsy will contact HB Light & Sound about testing the system.
- We have talked about TVs on the walls to project the service power point up for the people in church as well. We don't want to do something permanent until we see if people like it. We will purchase a 65" TV with rolling stand. Pat made a motion to purchase a TV with a rolling stand, Sharon seconded it. All in favor, motion carried.
- Camera 2 went out again. After unplugging, it worked. We will unplug the cameras each Sunday to hopefully fix the problem.
- The carpet on the West steps needs to be addressed. With the ice, it is dangerous for people to walk on. A lot has been done to try get rid of the ice, but nothing has seemed to help.

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

Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

The next meeting will be February 7th at 7:45 PM.

Melanie McGlynn
Church Council Secretary

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

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

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
 US POSTAGE PAID
 STEPHEN, MN 56757
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FEBRUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
All Sunday Services are celebrated in-person or on Facebook Live				1	2 Pastor's Day Off	3
4 9 am Worship with Communion 10 am - Fellowship	5	6	7 6 pm - Wed. School 6:30 - Confirmation 7:45 - Council	8 Giving Hearts Day	9 Pastor's Day Off	10
11 9 am - Worship 10 am - Fellowship	12 9:30 am Quilting	13	14 Ash Wed. 6 pm - Bible Study 6 pm - Wed. School 7 pm - Ash Wed. Serv.	15	16 Pastor's Day Off	17
18 9 am Worship with Communion 10 am - Fellowship	19	20	21 6 pm - Bible Study 6 pm - Wed. School 7 pm - Ash Wed. Serv.	22	23 Pastor's Day Off	24
25 9 am - Worship 10 am - Fellowship	26 9:30 am Quilting	27	28 6 pm - Bible Study 6 pm - Wed. School 7 pm - Ash Wed. Serv.	29		

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