

NEWS FROM OUR PASTOR

Will we ever get Lent right?

We might have a chance this year, mostly because of when and where Lent begins.

The traditional start of Lent is Ash Wednesday, which this year falls on February 14th. Yes, on Valentine's Day.

Sure, it is unfortunate that people will have to choose between taking their sweetheart out to a nice, well-deserved romantic dinner and going to church. I fear for how that choice will often go. But for those fortunate to follow their hearts, real joy will come in the realization that this moment is not so much but choosing between two seemingly opposite celebrations, but the perfect union of that one most important gift: love.

That is not necessarily the first thing we think about when it comes to Lent. We think about sacrifice and self-denial, about penance and sorrow and guilt and how we will garner enough of each to face the darkness of Good Friday. Many of us will endeavor to give up something that makes us happy as a spiritual discipline, believing that it adds value to our life and strength to our soul. We will decorate our church in dark and somber tones and seek a level of somberness in our worship that appropriately reflects what we believe this season is for.

We will be wrong.

This is the season of love, of beauty and peace and hope and promise. Lent is a time of focused reflection on the God who risks all to accomplish his love for us. The cross is the unfolding of a story beyond human comprehension, of unfettered grace and fulfilled promise. Lent is not a competition over who is the saddest among us. Lent is a turning toward the rapture of being absolutely overwhelmed by the love of God.

And Lent is the time to make love our identity, too. We are not sent to spread guilt and shame into the world, our word and our work is not judgment and wrath and punishment. We are the image of God, his mirror toward the world, reflecting God's love in the way we love one another. As God has not held back his grace for us, so now we must not be miserly with that grace for others. Lent is the story of how much God loves us. And now our story must be about how much we love others.

This year in Lent we will reflect on five stories of amazing love: The Woman at the Well, Zacchaeus, The Good Samaritan, The Widow's Mite, and The Road to Emmaus. In these stories we will discover anew who God loves and how he shows it, and we will ask the same questions of ourselves. Who do you love? And how will you show it?

(Pastor Glen's Newsletter Article Continued on Page 2)

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Reminder: Pastor Glen will be preaching at Good Shepherd Home on the 1st Sunday of each month. Please let your friends and family that are at Good Shepherd Home know. If you have any questions please call the church office at (402) 426-4073.

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There is a purposeful discipline to the season of Lent. It is the discipline of love, not of self-righteous sacrifice. Too often our Lenten preparations are about building ourselves up, about showing off our piety and demonstrating to ourselves and others just how good we are. But the journey of Lent is the path toward our death on the cross, toward the end of pride and self-striving, the defeat of sin and death and the devil. The cross is the victory of love, and of glory of the God who loves in such and unfathomable and irrepressible way.

The cross is the end of the kingdoms of our own design to make way for the dawn of the Kingdom of God. The purpose of love is life, rising from death, bursting forward into time and space, rolling away stones and opening hearts and changing lives. And changing the world.

Let us enter this season with open hearts and hands, that God might fill us with his love and grace, that he might send us forth as his gift to the world.

-Pastor Glen

Butter Braid Sales!!



Until March 6th

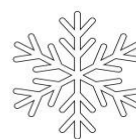
Contact any FLC Youth or contact Erika to order!

Pick up — Begins March 20th

Check the kitchen list to find out which church freezer your braids are located in!!

\$15 each

Apple
Cinnamon
Blueberry & Cream Cheese
Raspberry
Strawberry & Cream Cheese
Cherry
4 Cheese & Herb
Caramel Rolls



NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS



The FLC Youth Garage Sale is BACK!!
so....**WE WANT YOUR STUFF!!**

Furniture, clothing, kitchen items,
sports equipment, outdoor decor...anything!

We are taking all donations NOW!!

Contact Erika for more info.

Sale Dates: June 6th—8th



***WE REMEMBER IN
OUR PRAYERS-Please keep these
people in your
thoughts and prayers***

- ✠Family of Ernie Smith (Heidi Garnett's Uncle)
- ✠Family of Raymon Jensen
- ✠Family of Jordan Rishel
- ✠Helen Garnett (Jim Garnett's mom) - healing
- ✠June Jensen - prayers
- ✠Chris Chance - healing
- ✠Randy Backman - healing
- ✠Clint Clausen - prayers
- ✠Crew Workman - healing
- ✠Mike Boeka - prayers for healing
- ✠Deloris Matson - early stage lymphoma - healing & prayers
- ✠John Wick
- ✠Vivian Walvoord - healing & prayers
- ✠Betty Wolsmann - healing
- ✠Florence Larsen - prayers for healing
- ✠Marilyn O'Neil
- ✠Keith Matzen & family - prayers
- ✠Dana - healing
- ✠Clark Jensen
- ✠Betty Anderson
- ✠Sunni Wilson (mother of Melody Dubon)
- ✠Olivia Baker
- ✠Tim Grinbergs
- ✠Wayne (father of Deb Henson) - prayers for healing
- ✠Ruth Ann Persson - healing
- ✠Gordon Soderberg - healing
- ✠Irene Thorsen
- ✠Jo Royuk (mother of Anne Chrans) - healing
- ✠Russ Sonderup - prayers
- ✠Meredith Dickerson - Alpha Gal Syndrome
- ✠Zach - cancer healing/treatment side effects
- ✠Misty - healing and pain relief
- ✠Marilyn Svendgard
- ✠Sue Marsh - healing
- ✠Merriebeth Ferguson (sister-in-law of Merriellen Bourn) - cancer - healing
- ✠Chris Kesling - healing
- ✠Alex - surgery & healing
- ✠Frank Korshoj - healing
- ✠Mary LaScala
- ✠Martin Kuhr - prayers and healing
- ✠Nicole Schmidt - prayers and healing
- ✠Riley
- ✠Georgia (great niece of Debbie Katt) -prayers & healing
- ✠Kyler Reed - healing
- ✠Scott & Katie Abrams - prayers & healing
- ✠Kay Melby (Angela Ulven and Kari Hernandez's mother) - healing
- ✠Patrick McKinnis - continued healing
- ✠Stacy Thompson Green (daughter of Marcy Bottorff) – prayers & healing
- ✠Larry Kastrup – healing
- ✠Leo Aguilar-Hicks – healing for Leukemia
- ✠Lekura Parish
- ✠Maui Wildfire Relief and all those we name in our hearts.



***ELCA YOUTH
GATHERING in
NEW ORLEANS!!***

***We're still trying
to raise
\$20,000!!***

Please drop some
change in our gas
pump collection box
each week!

Thank You!



NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

MWM

MID WEEK MEAL



Pickup or Delivery

Wednesdays 5:30-6:30pm

For Planning

Text # of meals to 402-533-0918

NOT REQUIRED

For Delivery

Text name & address & # of meals

402-533-0918

**LOOK
HERE!!**

PLEASE HELP US HELP OUR NEIGHBORS!! DELIVERY DRIVERS DESPERATELY NEEDED!!

Our Fox Ridge Delivery Driver is unavailable in Feb and March due to surgery. We need help with this route AND our Johansen Manor route. Please consider giving 1 hour of your time in February and/or March to deliver meals to our neighbors!! Contact Erika

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS



ATTENTION High School Seniors and College Students: The Christian Growth Board is accepting scholarship applications for the 2024-2025 school year for post-secondary education. Any member of FLC that is currently a high school senior or college student may apply. Applications are available on the church website or by the Welcome Center. If you have any questions please call the church office at (402) 426-4073.

**The deadline to submit an application is
April 14, 2024.**

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

***Rushed on Wednesdays?
Let us do the cooking!***

W.O.W. Meal is back again!

Join us for the W.O.W. Meal
in the Fellowship Hall from 5:30 pm – 6:15 pm
prior to Worship Lab.

***** Free-will offering *****

*Come at 5:30 to fuel your body and then
stay for Worship Lab at 6:15
to feed your soul.*

Kids Singing!!

Please join us on
Wednesday, February 21st @ 6:15pm
to hear our PreK—5th graders sing about
GOD'S LOVE!!
They will also sing for the residents at Good
Shepherd Nursing Home that night!

**We are now livestreaming our worship services on
Facebook Live.**

Please join www.facebook.com/flcblair to be
alerted whenever a live video
begins. This is a real-time, virtual
worship experience, and we
invite you to join us if you can't be with
us in person.
Each live video will begin as the regularly
scheduled worship time.

Communion Update:

Thank you for helping with this
accommodation for Pastor Glen:
because it is difficult for Pastor
to bring communion to members
in the pews, if you find it
physically difficult to come
forward during
communion, we invite you to
pick up the communion
elements as you come into the
Sanctuary and receive them
during the communion liturgy
when the Pastor
indicates.





Thank You Notes

Thank you for the beautiful poinsettia. I have enjoyed it very much. Also, thanks to Rod Hansen for his visit and giving me Communion.

-Louise Mencke

Thanks so much for the Christmas poinsettia and the lovely pink rose and card for my 93rd birthday.

-Marjorie Johnson

Friends in Christ at First Lutheran,

Thank you so much for the lovely poinsettia plant which brightens up my home and my heart.

May each of us be daily reminded of the joy, love, and peace of our Lord and Savior each day of our lives.

Thanks also for the youth who came caroling here at Johansen Manor. To God alone be the glory.

-Patricia Bentsen

A special thank you to my First Lutheran Family for the beautiful Poinsettia. Also enjoyed the visit with Randy and Ruth Jensen when they brought it to me. Much appreciated the thoughtfulness.

-Betty Megrue

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

Choir News

Could the Spirit be calling you to add your voice to the choir? If so, we can promise with great certainty:

You will feel welcome, comfortable, and involved. The choir rehearsals are on Tuesdays at 6:30 pm in the choir room (take the elevator to the second floor and turn left). Regular attendance is encouraged but don't be discouraged if you can't make it each week. You are welcome to join as often as you can.

For more information and questions, contact Vince at VKrysl@firstlutheranblair.org

Come, join us in making a joyful noise!

The Christian Growth Board would like to remind members of FLC to consider including the Christian Growth Fund in your estate planning.



Safety Note from Pastor Glen:

Safety is an act of love! As COVID remains a threat in our community, and as flu, RSV, and other infectious diseases are on the move let us resolve again to use safe practices for the sake of one another. There is hand sanitizer available at the various entrances to our building and we would ask that you use it every time you enter the church. We will also make masks available for anyone who would choose to use them. At this point we will maintain our current worship and fellowship practices, but please know that we will continuously review them as is necessary to fulfill our responsibility to each other. Thank you for your sense of grace and mutual respect.

-Pastor Glen



Mark your 2024 Calendars

Feb 21st: Kids sing at 6:15pm
 Mar 6th: NO CLASS—Spring Break
 March 24th: Kids sing at 10:15am
 PALM SUNDAY
 March 27th: NO CLASS—Holy Week
 March 31st: EASTER SUNDAY!
 April 24th: End of Year
 FAMILY PARTY!!

Valentine's Day

FEBRUARY LESSON THEMES

Jan 31st & Feb 7th: Deborah Leads an Army
 Deborah displayed great leadership and strength as a judge and prophet of Israel.

Feb 14th: A Lesson about LENT
(Ash Wednesday)

The children will learn about the church season of Lent—what it means as we prepare for Jesus' death and resurrection at Easter.

Feb 21st & 28th: Samaritan Woman at the Well
 God loves us all from the inside out. Jesus did not care where the woman was from. He spoke with kindness and hope.

Lenten Family Prayer Practice: Word a Day

Use each word to add focus to your days during Lent.
Use the word to start conversation, draw a picture of the word, try to DO the word, and more!

Day 1: Dust	Day 17: Earth	Day 33: Wonder
Day 2: Grow	Day 18: Towel	Day 34: Jesus
Day 3: Tumble	Day 19: Sunshine	Day 35: Travel
Day 4: Friend	Day 20: Rest	Day 36: Listen
Day 5: Peace	Day 21: Neighbor	Day 37: Still
Day 6: Soil	Day 22: Candle	Day 38: Root
Day 7: Water	Day 23: Thrive	Day 39: Quiet
Day 8: Air	Day 24: Rain	Day 40: Spirit
Day 9: Transform	Day 25: Wait	Day 41: Beauty
Day 10: Pray	Day 26: Human	Day 42: Tree
Day 11: Rock	Day 27: Cloud	Day 43: Thankful
Day 12: Rainbow	Day 28: Family	Day 44: Angel
Day 13: Create	Day 29: Free	Day 45: Shadow
Day 14: Release	Day 30: Light	Day 46: Silence
Day 15: Fly	Day 31: Journey	Day 47: Resurrection
Day 16: Butterfly	Day 32: Flower	

Children's Offering in February

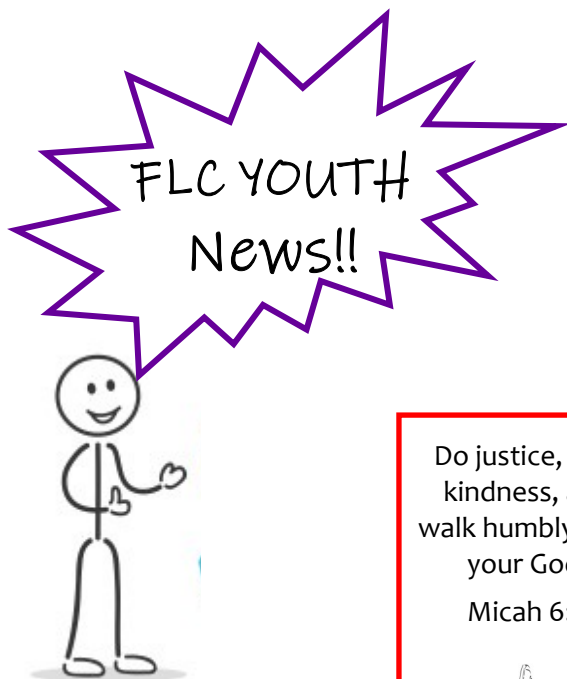
This month, our offering will be shared with
Washington County Food Pantry

The Washington County Food Pantry provides food to the hungry in Washington County. The food is provided through donations, purchases and the USDA.

All proceeds from Joseph's Coat Thrift Store are used to stock the food pantry, as well.

WASHINGTON
 COUNTY
**FOOD
 PANTRY**
 at Joseph's Coat





9 to 12 Youth Group

- Feb 4th:** Pizza
Play Sardines!!
- Feb 11th:** NO MEETING
- Feb 18th:** NO MEETING
NOYG Meeting
- Feb 25th:** Chili & Cinnamon rolls
Tie Blankets for Youth
Emergency Services

Do justice, love
kindness, and
walk humbly with
your God.
Micah 6:8



Confirmation Topics

- Feb 7th:** SERVICE NIGHT!!
- Feb 14th:** "Lent"
- Feb 21st:** 6th&7th - "Worship"
8th - Writing Project
- Feb 28th:** GUEST SPEAKER!!
Cantor, Joanna Alexander
Temple Israel Omaha

FLC Council Youth Reps

Thank you
Rylan Blattert & Triston Clausen
for your service in 2023!!

Welcome
Maddie Kempcke & Blythe Knight,
our 2024 reps!!

**CREATED
TO BE**

New Orleans (NOYG) Team Bonding #6

February 11th @ 5pm
Dinner and meeting

Created to be **FREE**
To be transformed by the Gospel!!

REQUIRED for ALL participants!!
Butter Braid Sales info
will be shared!!

Butter Braid Sales!!



February 14th—March 6th
ELCA YG (New Orleans)—Sell 6
All other FLC Youth—Sell 5
Customer pickup begins March 20th

To Serve As Jesus Served... *projects and events of the church, the community, and the world reported monthly by the FLC Social Concerns Committee.*

**FLC AMBASSADOR
SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE
February 2024**

"Courageous Conversations" is starting this Weekend!

When it was formed in 1986, the ELCA said that it would be a community where open, passionate, and respectful deliberation on challenging and controversial issues was not only expected but even encouraged. Meeting that lofty goal has not always been easy. But it is the right one. We are baptized to express the gift of our salvation in everything we say and do every day. We face hard and important questions in our daily lives. The church should be a place where we can work through those questions together. Too often we follow the ways of the world, and instead of being a community of mutual love and care the church has become torn apart by suspicion and enmity. No, talking about difficult topics does not come to us naturally. But we are the bearers of the Grace of God, filled with the Holy Spirit! Having "Courageous Conversations" well is why we exist; we need to show the world how it is done. In days defined by fear, we are the antidote to all that is wrong in the world. The health of our congregation depends on our ability to have these conversations. The depth of our faith depends on growing in understanding and love. The peace of the world awaits our example of how to live together in this complicated time.



"Courageous Conversations" are going to be after worship on Saturday, February 3rd, between services on Sunday, February 4th, and after worship on Wednesday, February 7th.

Have a Heart for Hunger Campaign – The thirteenth annual "HAVE A HEART FOR HUNGER" campaign will kick off on February 1st and continue through March 3rd in support of the Washington County Food Pantry. This is one of many opportunities that First Lutheran can assist with making sure no one in the community goes hungry. This year's special focus is "Easter Dinner". All items and cash contributions are welcome but the pantry has a special request for the following items: Canned Fruits and Vegetables, Jello, Marshmallows, Cake Mixes, Frosting, Muffin Mixes, Salad dressing, Croutons, Boxed Potatoes, Macaroni and Cheese, Toilet Paper, Individual Oatmeal Packages and Spaghetti Sauce and Jelly. Your donations should be left in the grocery cart in the narthex. These donated items will be distributed by the pantry during the month of March in preparation for the Easter Holiday.

In addition, First Lutheran will be co-hosting a food collection event with Family Fare here in Blair where patrons will be invited to donate food items while they shop. This event will be held on February 10th from 9:00 to 12:00 Noon. Volunteers are also needed to help staff the event. They are encouraged to sign up at the Welcome Center.

Thank you, First Lutheran Church, for your participation in this very important annual event for our community.

First Lutheran Needs Volunteer for Washington County Recycling. - On Saturday morning, February 24th, First Lutheran members are invited to volunteer their help as a group at the Washington County Recycling Center. The Center will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon, but volunteers may work two-hour shifts from 8:00 to 10:00 and 10:00 to 12:00 Noon. They may also work the entire four hours if so desired. Duties will include unloading cars and sorting and processing the recycled goods for shipment. The Recycling Center is located at 440 South 3rd Street in Blair.

First Lutheran has been volunteering for this community service for a number of years. It is an excellent way of helping the community and learning more about recycling here in Blair and Washington County. Potential volunteers are encouraged to sign up at the Welcome Center.



NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

Lent Theme

The season of Lent is a time of reflection and preparation for the most amazing act of love – the love of God for us brought to reality in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But our journey should be purposeful. It should lead us to lives that embody the same love for others in our words and deeds. This season in our special midweek worships gatherings we will ponder particular stories of Jesus' love – for the Woman at the Well, for Zacchaeus, for the Good Samaritan, for the Widow and for the disciples on the road to Emmaus. And we will ask two questions of ourselves: Who do you love? and How will you love them? Join us each Wednesday evening at 6:15 pm for a time of prayer and hope as we make our way to Calvary.

Ash Wednesday is coming up on Wednesday, February 14th!

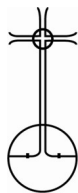
Ash Wednesday will be February 14th this year. We will be having a 12:15pm and 6:15pm Worship with the Imposition of Ashes.

Church Council Members

Here are the current Church Council Members approved at the Annual Meeting:

Gail Persson, President
Scott Garder, Vice President
Deb Katt, Secretary
Ruth Jensen
Liz Soderberg
Greg Boone
Ashley Rasmussen
Angie Hemminger
Ann Hansen

Maddie Kempcke, Youth Member
Blythe Knight, Youth Member



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
2146 WRIGHT STREET
BLAIR, NE 68008
February 2024