

NEWS FROM OUR PASTOR

It could have turned out differently for Jared.¹

Once upon a time, there was a chance for a different life for Jared, a different ending. He was baptized in a Christian church, he had grandparents of sincere and deep faith and a family tree full of committed and caring church-going aunts, uncles, cousins. In his time he attended Sunday School and Confirmation as all children should do and as many in fact do. A path was set for him toward a life that most of us would consider normal, a path that should have led to happiness and fulfillment and peace.

If only he had followed it.

Instead, he grew up a troubled kid in the manner of most troubled kids. There were family problems. He failed at school and dropped out. He plunged into a life filled with alcohol and drugs and scrapes with the law, he spent more and more time in and out of various programs and jail. And then that fateful night, at the far-too-young age of 24, he drank a bottle of Tequila and got behind the wheel of his car and that mistake cost him his life and his family much grief, which they did not deserve.

And whose fault is that?

We might wonder about the forces that had broken his life, the missteps of his parents or the bad influences of his peers or the slights of his community. But was I responsible? I had undertaken a sacred oath and lifelong calling to stand with the Jared's of the world, to proclaim the love of God to them in word and deed, to be an instrument of the grace that I believe very deeply has healing and life-giving power.

But I had not done that. In truth, Jared, like many others, stood outside of my reach. He never attended church services, never listened to one of my sermons or shared one of my bible studies. He never came to me for counsel or care. He existed, instead, in a different world, a distant diaspora, not a person but a statistic that puzzled and questioned me, an enigma that I could not solve. He was a stranger who I only experienced as the subject of an occasional conference workshop and who existed only on the fringes of my prayers. Whether it was because I never tried or because I never could, the heart-breaking truth is that I never reached him.

And he died. And I buried him – my one and only chance to be his Pastor.

After Jared's funeral, I was confronted by the truth that the decline of the church is much more than low attendance or budget shortfalls. For all of our good intentions and faithful works, the church – me! – is barely saving those who sit week after week in her pews, much less the vast majority of God's children who had already wandered away from the sheepfold. Jesus had placed this sacred charge on his followers, to feed, to love, to protect, to save lost sheep.

It is an overwhelming call.

¹Not his real name

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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.

(Continued from Page 1)

We live in a world that celebrates the bright and shiny. We envy and emulate churches that look impressive and seem successful. But that's not our mission, that's not our purpose. We are not called to be great, we are called to be good. We must not measure ourselves in the world's terms – size, wealth, status – but in the measure of grace that flows in and through us. We must stop counting the number of persons in our pews and instead count the numbers of Jared's near and far who live just beyond our grasp.

This is harder work.

In 30 years I have not found the perfect answer to this hard question. Nor do I know who has. But I pray that we would at least start asking it. And I believe that the answer (if there is one) has less to do with growing churches than it has to do with growing hearts. We need to be freed from what not matter so we serve better what does. As we consider what lies ahead for our church and our community, may we be mindful of those who are desperate for grace.

-Pastor Glen



Another RECORD!!

We raised over **\$9,300** for our trip, and we are still receiving donations!!

We really appreciate all the donations of items, the advertising, the hours in work, the prayers, the well wishes, & the purchases!!

Thank you for supporting our youth attending the ELCA Youth Gathering in 2024!!

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

New Christ in Our Homes are here

Christ in Our Homes-If you would like a Christ in Our Homes daily devotional they are available at the Welcome Center in the Narthex and also on the usher table outside of the LIFE Center for July, August, and September. The Christ in Our Homes is a book that has a daily devotional to read and pray. Please stop by and pick one up if you would like or if you need one delivered please call the church office at (402) 426-4073.

Faith Chests

The men's group of First Lutheran has in the past built faith chests to give to individuals baptized at First Lutheran church to use in their faith journey. When the Covid pandemic started we were no longer able to build those chests. Several people have asked if we are going to resume building faith chests, to that end we are looking for members who would be interested in helping make faith chests again.

We have all of the equipment and components necessary and need helping hands to build, sand, stain, and attach hardware and finish the chests. We normally work 1 night a week for a couple hours, if enough interest is shown we could have 2 groups on different nights.

No previous experience building faith chests necessary, we have a few men who have experience building chests but we need more to continue with this wonderful project.

This group is very informal and is not limited to men, we would welcome ladies interested in working with wood, or helping assemble, sand, stain, etc. If interested contact Dawn in the church office 402-426-4073 or Rick Ruhge @ rickruhge@gmail.com or 402-802-5898.



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

✠Family of Fern Rohde
 ✠Family of Alisa McClusky - healing (daughter of Marjorie Richendifer)
 ✠Family of Larry Cada
 ✠Family of Yvonne Rowlette
 ✠Family of Jeff Gunderson
 ✠Sunni Wilson (mother of Melody Dubon)
 ✠Stephanie Johnson - healing
 ✠Olivia Baker
 ✠Tim Grinbergs
 ✠Betty Wolsmann - evaluation & healing
 ✠Wayne (father of Deb Henson) - prayers for healing
 ✠Ruth Ann Persson - healing
 ✠Gordon Soderberg - healing
 ✠Marian Ward - healing
 ✠Irene Thorsen
 ✠Jo Royuk (mother of Anne Chrans) - healing
 ✠Russ Sonderup - prayers
 ✠Meredith Dickerson - Alpha Gal Syndrome
 ✠Zach - cancer healing
 ✠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
 ✠June Jenson - prayers & healing
 ✠Frank Korshoj - healing
 ✠Mary LaScala
 ✠Debbie Kempcke - cancer - healing
 ✠Kenny Truhlsen
 ✠Clark Jenson - prayers and healing
 ✠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
 ✠Mr. S. Akot - healing
 ✠Patrick McKinnis - continued healing
 ✠Stacy Thompson Green (daughter of Marcy Bottorff) – prayers & healing
 ✠Lisa Garcia – strength & healing
 ✠Larry Kastrup – healing
 ✠Leo Aguilar-Hicks – healing for Leukemia
 ✠Lekura Parish
 ✠Oaks Indian Mission and all those we name in our hearts.



NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

VBS "Peace Bag" Supplies Needed!!

The VBS kids will be creating "Peace Bags" to give our neighbors in need. If you would like to donate to this project, please place any of the following items inside the VBS Tub outside the Sanctuary before July 10th.

- Mini Hand Sanitizer
- Dried Fruit Packets
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Bottles of Water
- Chapstick
- Socks
- Band-aids
- Gallon size Ziploc Bags
- Pocket Tissues
- Granola Bars (no peanuts)
- Peanut Butter Crackers
- Mini Notebook with Pen
- Gum

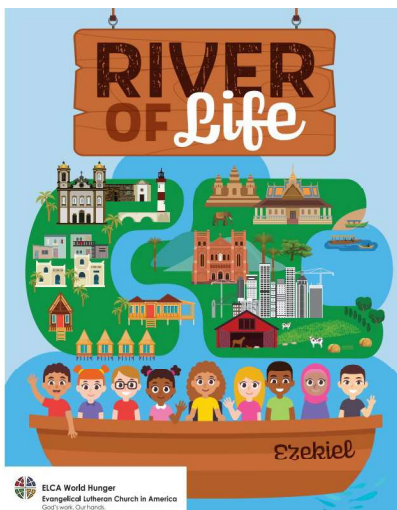
THANK YOU for helping us help our neighbors!!

VBS 2023!!

Contact Erika if you would like to assist or purchase supplies/snacks!!

JULY 17—21

Mark your calendars now!!



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.

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

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS



ELCA Youth Gathering
New Orleans, LA!!
July 15-22, 2024

Students Attending:

SENIORS

Sierra Baker
 Rylan Blattert
 Eli Cada
 Leah Chance
 Triston Clausen
 Ally Collins

JUNIORS

Lainey Bilau
 Nadia Davey
 Haylie Jensen
 Maddie Kempcke
 Blythe Knight
 Brynn Lundgren
 Cady Quick
 Ryleigh Schroeter
 Mackenzie Storjohann

SOPHOMORES

Sophie Kempcke
 Abby Leggott
 Maelie Nelson
 Kenna Nielsen
 Ruby Petersen
 Ella Pike
 Ally Sullivan
 Brady Work

FRESHMEN

Regan Blattert
 Lorelai Bryant
 Lane Christensen
 Emily Roberts
 Brooklyn Schroeter

Approximate costs to attend the Gathering (7 days):

Registration = \$375/person = \$13,125

Transportation (Bus) = \$15,500

Lodging (Hotel) = \$30,000

Food = \$2,500

Tshirts = \$2,100

Fun Activity = \$1,775

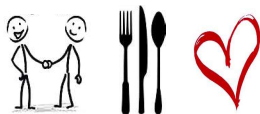
Total Costs for 35 people = \$65,000

Current Funds Raised = \$31,917

We are raising funds to make sure this experience costs no more than \$100 for each student to participate. We cover all costs for 7-8 adult leaders, as well.
 Thank you for your continued financial and prayerful support as we work toward our goal!

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.

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

MWM**MID WEEK MEAL****FLC MEMBERS!!!**

Please help us spread the word!

Tell folks about this ministry!

Tell people who may want to volunteer.

Tell people who could use a meal.

Tell people who help fund this ministry.

Pickup or Delivery

Pickup in the east parking lot
2146 Wright St.

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

DONATE COOKIES!!

Call Erika or click this link to donate 3 dozen cookies this summer.

<https://signup.com/go/hfewWuF>

**Please see the Summer
Worship Schedule:**

Saturday @ 5pm in Sanctuary

Sunday @ 8:15am in Sanctuary

Sunday @ 10:15am in LIFE Center

*Sunday @ 7pm in Prayer Garden -
Started on Sunday, June 4th*

**Pastor Glen's Bible Study–
Breaking The Code, A Study of the Book of
Revelation**

Starts this Wednesday, June 28th

You are invited to a new Bible Study with
Pastor Glen

titled Breaking The Code, A Study of the Book of
Revelation. It will start on Wednesday, June 28th
at 6:30pm. You can attend in person or online
with Google Meet. The Bible Study will take
place in the Chapel.

The Bible Study will be for 8 weeks.

If you have any questions you can contact
Pastor Glen at (402) 426-4073.

Church Office Closed

The church office will be
closed

Tuesday, July 4th.

Happy 4th of July!





LIFE Night Coming Soon!

Watch your email for more
info coming soon!

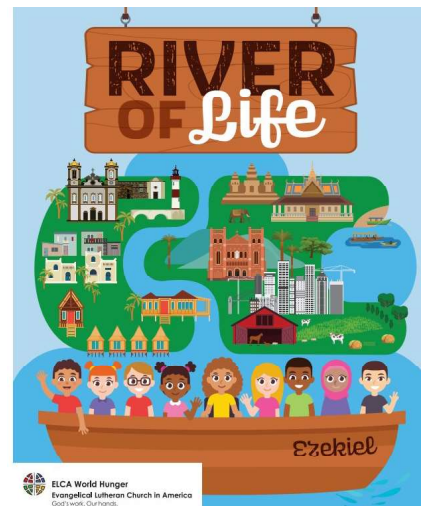
Worship Lab begins on
August 23rd @ 6:15pm

LIFE Night Classes begin on
August 23rd @ 6:45pm

Please register all PreK—5th
graders using the Google Link
on www.firstlutheranblair.org
and in email coming in July!

VBS 2023

July 17-21



Invite your friends, and
get registered!!

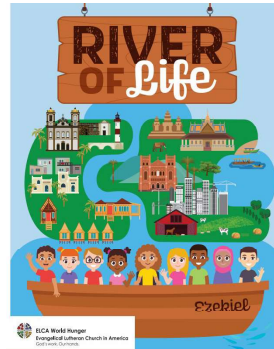
Go to www.firstlutheranblair.org to
register on our Google Form!



Summer worship

Saturday @ 5pm in Sanctuary
Sunday @ 8:15am in Sanctuary
Sunday @ 10:15am in LIFE Center
Sunday @ 7pm in Prayer Garden

FLC YOUTH News!!



VBS 2023

Do you love little kids?
Be a VBS Helper!

July 17th-21st
9am—12pm
Contact Erika!!

CREATED TO BE

New Orleans Update

August 13th @ 5pm
Brownie Sundaes!!

Fundraising Update
Covenants
Meeting Plan for 2023-24

**REQUIRED for participants
AND parents!!**

678 Confirmation

In July, please watch your email
and your mailbox for
**REGISTRATION INFO
& GOOGLE FORM LINK!!**

Do justice, love
kindness, and
walk humbly with
your God.

Micah 6:8



Summer worship

Saturday @ 5pm in Sanctuary
Sunday @ 8:15am in Sanctuary
Sunday @ 10:15am in LIFE Center
Sunday @ 7pm in Prayer Garden



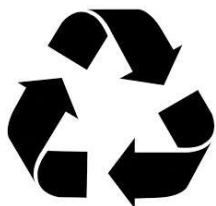
To Serve As Jesus Served... *projects and events of the church, the community, and the world reported monthly by the FLC Social Concerns Committee.*

**FLC AMBASSADOR
SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE
July 2023**



Update on our Mother's Day Ingathering for The Bridge Crisis Center. The Social Concerns committee thanks all of you who gave items and money in support of The Bridge Crisis Center. The Center helps mothers and children who are in situations of great need in Washington, Burt, Dodge Cuming and Saunders Counties. At this writing totals figures have not been determined but will be reported in the August Ambassador.

The Summer Garden Market is Open! You are invited to share your excess garden produce, your flowers, and your baked goods! Proceeds will go to **ELCA WORLD HUNGER**. Produce may be brought to the church and placed on the Garden Cart any time when the church is open--preferably prior to 3:00 P.M. on Fridays and between 4:00 P.M. and 7:00 P.M. on Saturdays.



FLC Volunteers needed for Saturday, August 26th at the Washington County Recycling Center. Twice a year FLC provides volunteers for our local recycling center. The Social Concerns Committee has scheduled August 26th for our next effort. As we'd love to have a great turn out, please look forward to signing up in August.

2023 Crop Hunger Walk sponsored by Church World Service. As we look to the autumn, please note that the annual Crop Walk to support efforts to alleviate hunger is planned for Sunday, October 8th. Part of the funds raised locally remain in the community. Please plan to participate.

FLC Social Concerns Committee is seeking new members. Come join a busy team that works to help others in the community and around the globe and who truly desire to "Serve as Jesus Served." If that sounds like you, please contact Eric Filows (402-739-0978), Trudy Hutton (402-426-4358), Lynette Jennings (402-278-0164), John Mark Nielsen (402-427-4443), or Jim Peterson (402-426-2716) for more information. Our next meeting will be held in the church library on Monday, July 10, at 7:00 p.m.



NOTES♦DATES♦REMINDERS**FLC Treasurer's Financial Update:**

Dear FLC Congregation,

We are so lucky to have you as a member of the FLC community. Thank you for your support and continued participation. We are happy to provide congregants like you with programs and events that lift us up and remind us of the importance of having a giving spirit.

To continue offering the services that we do, we are here to request an increase in giving throughout the remainder of 2023.

Through May, FLC is behind our revenue budget by \$41,767. Our remaining year budgeted revenue is \$356,000

(approximately \$50,000 per month) which means that in total we need to generate giving of approximately \$400,000 prior to December 31. Please take a look at your current financial situation and see if there is a way you can help FLC meet its revenue budget. By doing so, this will allow for sufficient funds so FLC does not have to dip into reserve accounts to pay for general expenses.

Please visit the FLC website for the various ways in which you can donate:

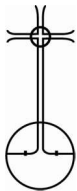
<http://www.firstlutheranblair.org/giving/> [firstlutheranblair.org]

If you have any questions about how to donate, please feel free to contact the church office at 402-426-4073. You can also stop by the church's main office in person or drop your donation in the collection plate during our next service.

On behalf of the church council, thank you again for being such an important part of the FLC community.

Sincerely,

Chad Leggott
FLC Treasurer



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
2146 WRIGHT STREET
BLAIR, NE 68008
July 2023