

NEWS FROM OUR PASTOR

He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: "Listen! A sower went out too sow." Mark 4:2-4

Telling parables is pretty standard fare for Jesus, and many of them are in some form or another about agriculture – planting, tending, reaping. It's a common subject for him because it's a common subject for his audience.

Doesn't it seem like he should know more about it?

The Sower in Jesus' parable seems to be the worst of all gardeners, randomly tossing the seed to and fro, sometimes among the weeds (which he should have cleared out long ago!), sometimes among the rocks, and sometimes missing the field entirely and throwing the seeds on the path. It's not a surprise that he gets mixed results. It's a wonder that he gets a crop at all.

Doesn't he know that seed is precious? Doesn't he have any pride, any drive for success?

In the real world such negligence would not be tolerated. The real world is driven by results, by achievement, by success. And substandard outcomes would not be tolerated. Even the good crop would only become the baseline for next years higher goal. Waste, unproductiveness, mistakes – these things have no place in the real world.

But is there room for the extravagance of Grace?

The parable of the Sower is remarkable in its description of the depth and breath of the love of God. He does not dole it out sparingly in bits and pieces, only where it brings him the greatest return. He does not share it only based on merit or potential return-on-investment. Instead he flings it far and wide, hither and yon, as if that would be sufficient to generate his expected results.

He actually seems to believe that we will take in his love and grace and bloom, redeemed and transformed to bear the fruits of salvation in the world and bring to life his kingdom of peace and justice. He treats us like fertile ground, worthy of his Word, well prepared and fertile, perfect to fulfill the promise of creation.

He's so wrong.

We are the weed-choked field, distracted by a million shiny objects in every moment, slaves to our fears and pains and worldly desires. We are the shallow soil where seeds go to die, weakened by the struggles and challenges of being human, carrying far-too heavy burdens of sorrow and suffering. And yes, sometimes we are fertile and life-giving, but our goodness is too often short-lived. We have hope, but we are miserly with it, and the sins of hatred, violence and inequity continue to abound. Why does God even try?

No, it is not because he trusts us. It's because he trusts the seed.

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

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Choir News

But what if I can't sing? A tiny percentage of the population truly cannot sing. Most of us have been given the air and vocal cords we need, and what we may lack is confidence. Perhaps a negative experience affected your willingness to sing. We can develop and learn how to sing at any age. Choir can be one opportunity to explore the voice you didn't know you had. For more information and questions, contact Vince, at vkrysl@firstlutheranblair.org.

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.



Church Office Closed

The church office will be closed
Monday, May 29th for
Memorial Day.

(Continued from Page 1)

In the beginning, it was the Word that brought all things into being. The simple act of God speaking is the very power of life itself. And it rings loudly in our ears, no matter how we ignore it or try to shut it out. Somewhere, deep in our cold winter of our hearts, those words spoken at our baptism, stir up the gift of his Spirit and the first green shoots of life appear.

So we praise him in the time of Easter, for the unfettered, excessive, profuse way that he throws around his grace. Surely we would otherwise be lost!

-Pastor Glen

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.

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

**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.

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 April, May, and June. 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.



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

✠Family of Jimmy Shaw
 ✠Family of Tim Jensen
 ✠Family of Jerry Kobs
 ✠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
 ✠John Powell (boyfriend of Molly Dibben) - Leukemia - healing
 ✠Merriebeth Ferguson (sister-in-law of Merriellen Bourn) - cancer - healing
 ✠Chris Kesling - healing
 ✠Jeff Gunderson - 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

MWM

MID WEEK MEAL



Pickup or Delivery

We serve our meal 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

Volunteers **STILL** Needed!!

Cooks

You join a group of folks to cook the meal on
Wednesdays 1pm-3:30pm

Servers

You join a group of folks to serve the meal into to-go containers on Wednesday 4:45-6:30pm

Delivery Drivers

You deliver meals to about 6 locations on
Wednesdays 5:30-6:30pm

Please contact Erika if you can volunteer!!
All times are flexible—weekly, biweekly,
monthly, whenever it fits into your
schedule!

LET'S ROCK THE BLOCK!

Let's join Habitat for Humanity to help our neighbors in Blair!
Small repairs, yardwork, painting and more

Saturday, May 6th 8am—1pm
411 N. 24th St is Command Central

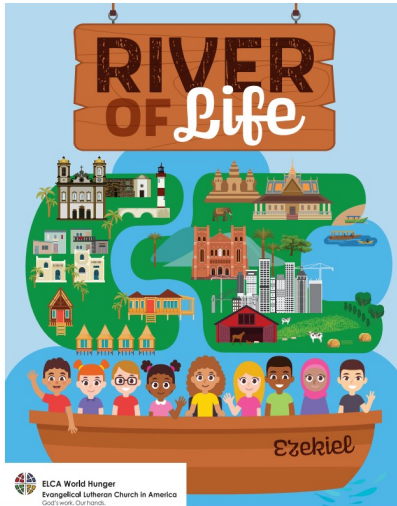
To volunteer, contact Erika or scan this QR Code:



Sponsored by Thrivent

NOTES ♦ DATES ♦ REMINDERS

VBS 2023!!



And, we need YOUR help!!

- Teachers
- Station Leaders (Outdoor Games, Art, Simulation Station and Storytelling)
- Classroom and Station Helpers
- Donate Art and Snack Supplies
- Decorating team to prepare for the week
- Behind the scenes work prior to VBS
- Kitchen Staff

Please consider being a part of our exciting week!

JULY 17—21

Mark your calendars now!!



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

**Furniture, clothing, kitchen items,
sports equipment, outdoor de-
cor....anything!**

We are taking all donations NOW!!

Contact Erika for more info.

**Come shop
JUNE 22-24!!**

CONFIRMATION

16 eighth graders will be confirmed at FLC on Sunday, May 7th. Please congratulate these students, and pray for them as they enter a new phase of their faith journeys.

Regan Blattert	LaKodah McKinnis
Lorelai Bryant	Sidney Moeller
Lane Christensen	Emily Roberts
Destiny Furchert	Brooklyn Schroeter
Havah Huber	Tucker Storjohann
Mahony Jenson	Ty Tessendorf
London Larsen	Cece Thompson
Emma Lucas	Ellie Williams

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

W.O.W. Meal is over for the summer!

Starting on Wednesday, May 3rd you are welcome to order meals for delivery or pick up with MWM since the W.O.W. meal will be over for the summer. Please reach out to Erika and or the church office to place your order! W.O.W. meal will resume when the fall Wednesday services start back up.

Martha Sorensen
Tracy Gross

Mission & Evangelism Committee

The Mission & Evangelism Committee is looking for new members.

We help with great events like the Senior Citizen Worship and Lunch which is 2 times a year. We also do other great activities around the church.

If you would like to join this great committee please call Ann Grinbergs to sign up at (402) 426-3517 or the church office at (402) 426-4073.

Reminder: Glen Andersen will be preaching at Good Shepherd Home on May 7th at 1:00pm since Pastor Glen will be helping with the Confirmation service on Sunday, May 7th. 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.

Thank You Notes

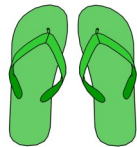


Dear First Lutheran Church,

Thank you to my First Lutheran Family for the lovely Easter Lily given to me.

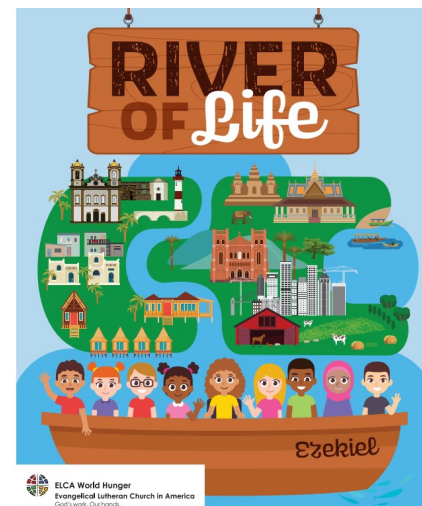
It is so thoughtful and appreciated to be remembered.

-Betty Megrue



VBS 2023

Alongside 1st united
Methodist!!



July 17-21


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

Please register your kids as soon as possible
to help us plan.

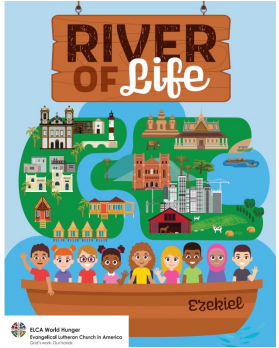
Summer worship

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





FLC YOUTH



VBS 2023

*Do you love little kids?
Be a VBS Helper!*

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



**CONGRATULATIONS
GRADUATES!!**

**Blessing of FLC Graduates
Sunday, May 14th 10:15am**

****Seniors, please let Erika know if you plan to attend.
Also, please give a senior photo & a toddler/baby
photo to Erika by May 7th.**

CONFIRMATION

16 FLC Youth will be confirmed on
MAY 7th @ 2pm

8th Graders: Don't forget Banquet &
Rehearsal! May 3rd @ 6:15pm



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



**ELCA Youth Gathering
New Orleans, LA!!**

July 15-22, 2024

**For all current 8th—11th graders!
FLC Membership NOT REQUIRED!!**

**To sign up, contact Erika
Get signed up NOW!!**

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
May 2023**

THANK YOU to ALL who contributed to our LENTEN INGATHERING for OAKS INDIAN MISSION. Because of YOU we were able to contribute \$580 in cash and \$503.90 in merchandise sent directly to the Mission, making a total value of our emphasis \$1,083.90.

FLCS BREAD FOR THE WORLD OFFERING OF LETTERS event will take place on Saturday, April 29, and Sunday, April 30 in connection with our worship services. The focus is one the reauthorization of the Farm Bill, which impacts all of us, since it deals with both farm policies and nutrition programs. Please join us in signing or writing letters to our members of Congress, which gives each of us an opportunity to impact decisions which affect us all! Should you be unable to attend worship on the appointed days, here is a sample letter you may use as a model for your own. You may either mail your letters directly or bring them to church so they can be counted with others written or signed by FLC members.

<i>Representative Adrian Smith</i>	<i>Senator Deb Fischer & Senator Pete Ricketts</i>	<i>Don Bacon</i>
<i>U.S. House of Representatives</i>	<i>U.S. Senate (two letters)</i>	<i>Douglas Cty.</i>
<i>Washington D.C. 20505</i>	<i>Washington D.C. 20510</i>	<i>Mike Flood</i>
		<i>Dodge Cty.</i>

Dear Representative Smith Dear Senator Fischer (or) Ricketts

The Farm Bill is our nation 's most important national food system legislation. It is critical to the work of reducing hunger at home and abroad. Indeed, the Farm Bill impacts each one of us. As Congress works to renew our food and farm products through the Farm Bill, I urge you to support legislation that builds healthy, equitable, and sustainable food systems.

Specifically, I ask you to:

- *Increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables by increasing support for produce specific Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) benefits to the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (Gus NP) which provides resources on top of monthly SNAP benefits for a limited number of households to use toward the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables primarily at farmers ' markets.*
- *Eliminate barriers to SNAP for marginalized populations. For example, end the ban on former drug offenders, eliminate work requirements for college students, and permit indigenous communities to administer SNAP and other federal nutrition programs on reservations.*
- *Keep food out of landfills by increasing support for post-harvest food recovery efforts and address threat to food security posed by extreme weather.*
- *Support funding for international food aid programs such as Food for Peace.*

As a person of faith I am moved to help and advocate for people experiencing hunger and poverty—no matter where they live. This is why I urge you to support a Farm Bill that builds healthy, equitable, and sustainable food systems.

Sincerely, Your name _____ (printed) Your address _____

(Social Concerns Committee May Ambassador Continued on Page 10)

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If you prefer to use email instead of writing a letter to mail, here is a link you can access. There is a link in the eblast.

A Farm Bill That Builds Healthy, Equitable, and Sustainable Food Systems (bread.org)

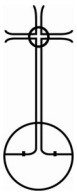
There is a link in the eblast.

https://go.bread.org/page/48001/action/1?ea.tracking.id=2023%20Farm%20Bill&_ga=2.232630876.2144615982.1674483747-1450223342.1625669142



Our MOTHERS' DAY INGATHERING for our local Crisis Center, **"THE BRIDGE,"** will begin on **Saturday, May 6 and Sunday, May 7, and extend through May 31. Needed items are:** Laundry detergent, hand soap, cleaning products, copy paper, stamps, paper products, e.g., toilet paper, paper towels, Kleenex; Snacks, e.g., Granola bars, crackers, cookies, chips, microwave popcorn; any gift certificates for fast food, gas, Walmart, etc. You are invited to place these items in the bins provided in the narthex. If you prefer to make a

monetary gift, please make our check out to **"The Bridge"** and drop it off at the church office. What a wonderful opportunity this provides for assisting these "mothers in need"!



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