



FIRST OUT VOUD!

NEWSLETTER

JUNE/JULY, 2023

Pastor Chris – Plans Turn into Action

Throughout the Strategic Planning Process, we had the opportunity to think and dream, to ponder and plan what we would like to see our congregation do in the next five years. Thanks to the work of many of our dedicated members, we now have our “FLC Strategic Plan Framework: 2023 – 2028.” It is wonderful to have identified our three main priorities and several goals that fall under each priority which will guide us as a congregation in the next five years.

Now, I want to encourage all of us to ponder which priority we would like to get involved with. Do you have a passion for seeing St. Peter become a better community? Are you someone who enjoys a variety of programming at church? Do you have an interest in finances and stewarding the gifts and resources God has blessed us with? If the answer is “Yes!” then we would most certainly welcome your abilities, your time, and your passion!

In the months ahead- please remember to stop and celebrate Father’s Day (June 18) and our Independence Day (July 4). Please also stop and consider how you would like to plug in and help with the goals and priorities we have set for ourselves as First Lutheran Church. Please read Mary Spear’s President’s article and see who you can contact to get involved.

Enjoy the summer months ahead and please, be safe as you go out and about in God’s beautiful creation!

God bless you all,

Pastor Chris

APRIL 30

Financial Report

Income - \$198,115

Expense - 158,577

Net \$ 39,538

Council President – Three Big Rocks

The strategic planning task force had many conversations over the course of our work from January - March 2023. The three “big rocks” or strategic priorities that came out of these discussions were “Engaging and Collaborating with the Community”, “Providing Programs and Services across ALL Demographics and “Having a Solid Financial Position”. At our Congregational Council retreat in March, we identified facilitators for each of these three priorities. The facilitator is responsible for putting together an action planning team and guiding the group in identifying which goal(s) the team will work on. I am the facilitator for the “community” priority, Dave Kennedy is the facilitator for “programs and services” and Harry Hunt is the facilitator for “financial position”.

As facilitator for the community priority, I would like to share an update. First, we have a fantastic team of people including Emily Bruflat, Kristy Larson, Shanon Nowell, Amy Ronnkivist, and Keith Stelter. There is always room for more, so contact me (majspear@gmail.com) if you would like to join this team. We had our first meeting, May 2, to share our stories and thoughts on what is going on in the lives of people in the St. Peter community and how our congregation might be able to address these needs.

One area of concern for our city is the lack of affordable housing. This is a complex and inscrutable problem for many communities, including St. Peter. Our team thought about how First Lutheran might be able to address this need and one possibility we would like to explore is developing affordable housing on the underutilized land we own. This would also address one of the goals of the strategic priority that states “put in place a plan that uses the building/grounds/assets of FLC to meet the needs of the community”.

There is much to learn about this topic and that is the goal of this team. To listen, study, learn and share this information with the congregation. As I stated earlier, there is room for

you to be a part of this discussion. Send me an email if you would like to be a part of the action plan team that seeks to use the buildings/grounds/assets of FLC to best serve the community.

Submitted by Mary Spear



Academic Study - Part 5: Church Music as Gift of God

The Heart of the Matter: Church Music as Praise, Prayer, Proclamation, Story, and Gift

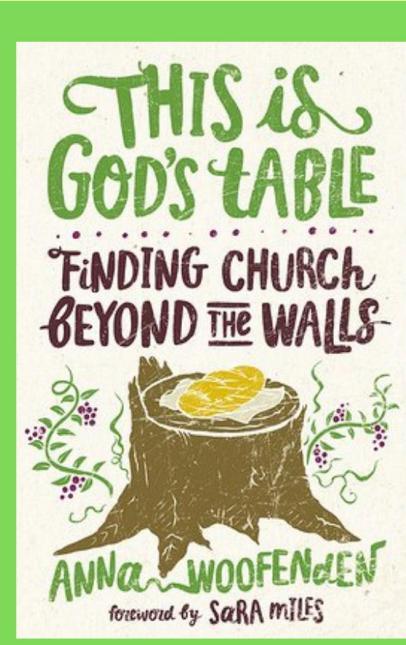
by Dr. Paul Westermeyer

This is the final installment from *The Heart of the Matter*, and it is perhaps my favorite section, beginning with several references to Amos. There is a passage (Amos 6:4-7) where the prophet is lamenting. Westermeyer summarizes, “In place of doing justice and caring about selling Joseph and the people into slavery, says Amos, you lounge on your couches, sing idle songs, and invent (or improvise on) musical instruments.” He explains that it is quite easy to use music in frivolous and self-serving ways. “The point is not to do away with music. The point is not to misuse it. The point is to concern ourselves with justice and to steward God’s gift of music with integrity.”

Another fascinating section of this chapter is the realization that music, specifically singing as a congregation, is such a unique and even vulnerable experience. Westermeyer uses the example of our faces; people with sight can see each other, and this is not really a choice unless one intentionally covers themselves up. On the other hand, we have to choose to use our voices. Putting it this way, Paul says, “Our signature as face is always present to others, but our signature as voices is not present to others until we make sounds. We express ourselves and become vulnerable to God and to one another in our song in a unique way.” Further, singing together is a great example of our bodies being greater than the sum of our parts; a group can do more than one person alone. I have always found this idea - whether in a handbell choir, church choir, or congregation - to be a compelling analogy to our vocational calling as Christians to work together for the common good.

Rather than summarizing in detail the last couple of pages about the role of the church musician in all of this (being a steward of this gift of music, striving for excellence which means many hours of private rehearsal, leading the people in one’s particular place, and doing it with kindness and compassion), I will turn back to the mission of justice. My own vision for First Lutheran is that our worship, constructed with excellent and relevant music and hymnody, propels us into our community to take the praise, prayer, proclamation, and story we have just sung into the world. In this mindset, worship is still a gathering of community, but it is most accurately about worshiping God and promising to work as one body to realize God’s vision of justice for all people.

-Emily Brufat, Director of Music



PREPARE FOR OUR AUGUST BOOK STUDY!

Emily will lead a book discussion
during First Forum after worship
on August 13 and 20 during
our Season of Creation!

Anyone can participate whether or not they read the book!

THIS IS GOD'S TABLE
by Anna Woofenden

Worship & Arts Committee - Communion, Cushions, and Music Outreach!

After some discussion about the pros and cons of baking gluten free communion bread, it was decided that it might be best to stick with the regular communion bread, and to use the gluten free wafers, moving forward. A poster with a QR code will be displayed in the Gathering Space. The QR code (or the provided web URL) will list the ingredients of the communion bread and the gluten free wafers on our website for those who are concerned about food sensitivities/allergies. This poster will also serve as a reminder that everyone - without exception - is invited to receive communion at First Lutheran Church.

We are always in need of folks who are interested in helping with worship, particularly with preparing communion. Cheryl Kauft has volunteered to be our "trainer" for anyone who's interested in learning the ropes as a communion preparer! Please contact the church office or Cheryl if you're interested in learning more about this important role (or any role) in our church! Thank you, Cheryl!

In case you haven't noticed, we have some new comfy cushions that we can use during worship! Thank you, Aileen Bipes, for finding these for us! If you are interested in donating to offset this cost, each cushion costs \$25. You can write a check labeled "cushions" in the memo or on the envelope so that Karen knows where the money is going!

This spring our music ministries have been taking our show on the road to local retirement communities in Saint Peter! These events were a special treat for everyone who participated, and we've been asked to return soon! There was an additional opportunity to participate in a musical outreach. On May 21 we took our song books to Heritage Meadows after church at 11:30. There will be more opportunities in the future for you to join in the fun!

Submitted by Michelle Doose, Chairperson of W&A

Organ Repairs Continue

Work on the organ will begin on June 12! During the summer months, be prepared for more piano and/or guitar-led music during worship while these repairs take place. There may be extra dust; feel free to mask if this might be irritating. We have a special organ recital series planned for this fall once the repairs are complete - more info on this in coming months!

Outdoor Worship Schedule

FLC will hold worship outside on the west side of the building. Chairs will be set up but you can also feel free to bring your own chair as well.

June 25 - Led by the Jeremiah Band!

July 23 - Start of Season of Creation

August 27 - Conclusion of Season of Creation

Summer Organ Recitals

The Sioux Trails Chapter of the American Guild of Organists is pleased to present its annual Summer Noontime Organ Recitals each Tuesday, 12:10 pm, June 13 through August 8. Admission is free (a free will donation will be accepted). Visit <http://www.agosiouxtrails.org> for location information about specific locations and performers.

FLC Wind Ensemble!



Join us on July 30th!

Practice at 9:00 - Worship at 10:00!

Email musicflcstp@gmail.com to sign up and get music!

Fiddle Choir - Vikarbyn Lilla Spelmanslag - Coming August 6!

Vikarbyn Lilla Spelmanslag, directed by Margaretha Mattson, comes from the Dalarna region of Sweden. They have been doing cultural exchange here in Minnesota since 2007. The group has toured around the region as well as in Japan, Ireland, and Iceland. They play Swedish, Norwegian, American, and Irish folk music.



Save the date for August 6, where this group of ten young adults will play during our 10:00 a.m. worship service, a brief "teaser" during our Fellowship time in the Gathering Space, and a concert at 2:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Please invite your friends and neighbors to this special event!

Youth & Family - Summer Activities

Sunday, July 9th 5:05pm Game 	Mankato Moondogs: Faith Night Groups Cost: \$10 per tickets (stadium seats and meal included) Must register through the office! <u>Learn more about the Moondogs Faith Nights</u>
Monday, July 10th 6:30pm at FLC	MONDAY FUN DAY: SUMMER FAMILY NIGHTS AT FIRST Bingo & Treats
Monday, July 24th 6:30pm at FLC	MONDAY FUN DAY: SUMMER FAMILY NIGHTS AT FIRST Christmas in July
Sunday, July 30th 5:05pm Game	Mankato Moondogs: Faith Night Groups Cost: \$10 per tickets (stadium seats and meal included) Must register through the office!
August 6th-10th @ Trinity Lutheran	FLC & TLC Summer Vacation Bible School Registration is Open! Pick up Registration Forms in Office!
Monday, August 14th 6:30pm at FLC	MONDAY FUN DAY: SUMMER FAMILY NIGHTS AT FIRST Fire, S'mores, & Songs

Fourth of July Parade!

Please join us on the morning of July 4th to hand out candy and pens, along the parade route as FLC greets our community! We will have a new banner to represent our updated mission statement and a float for people to ride if they prefer not to walk the route. Plan to wear your God's Work, Our Hands t-shirt (please contact the office with your size if you need a shirt) We will also have treat bags for children who participate so they don't feel they miss out on collecting candy during the parade! All ages welcome!

We will need folks to come and help decorate the float from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. on July 3rd in front of the church (weather permitting.) Stay tuned for further details as the day gets closer but please plan to join us and maybe we can even share some root beer floats after decorating the mega float! Many thanks to Ole Karstad for providing and driving the trailer/float!

A New Church Directory is Coming!

Plan now to have your free photo taken the week of Sept. 26th through Sept. 30th! There will be a \$15 fee will be required if you choose to submit your own photo so mark your calendars! Our last directory was in 2016 so we are ready!

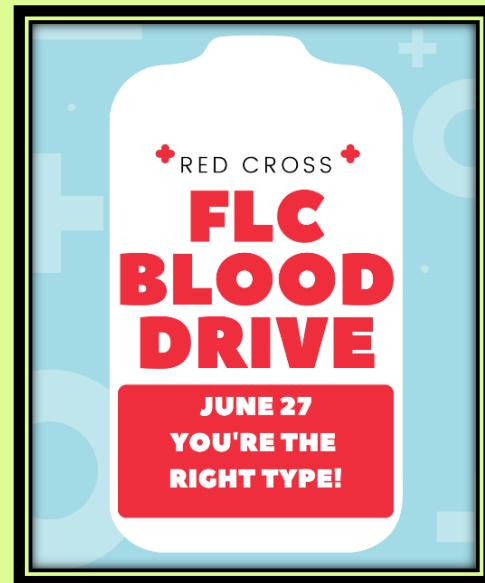
If you would like to be part of the planning team to help select graphics and formatting for the directory, please contact Betsy Paul at 507-720-5006. We will also be asking for schedulers and callers ahead of the photo shoots, greeters/hosts for the photo sessions, and editors and proof-readers for the final version. Watch for coming details and let Betsy or anyone on CCM know of your interest or willingness to help!

Live Nativity Returning – The Time to Prepare is NOW!

CCM is excited about the return of Live Nativity. Live Nativity happens over several days during advent in the FLC parking lot. This is a church-wide event and involves as many committees and people as possible. Here is a brief list of tasks/roles that will be needed leading up to and during Live Nativity:

- Actors
- Food for actors - Fellowship/Bakers - also need preparers and servers.
- Costume Prep and repair
- Dressers and prop managers for the Actors
- Interior set-up of the dining room and hallways
- Technology and Sound
- Livestock obtainers/providers
- Livestock handlers.

Please contact the church office if you would like to be involved in the return of this lovely Christmastime tradition!



Stewardship Committee –The Generosity Project

Somehow the transition between winter, spring, and summer continues to surprise me every year since I've moved to Minnesota. Somehow it just seems that winter will never ever end, until one day, I start to notice the grass peeking through the melt. Then all of a sudden, it seems like everything has bloomed, leafed, and sprouted all at once! It's as if the world simply overflows with life one day! This spirit of generosity is linked in my mind to the celebration of God's amazing gift of resurrection amidst the signs of new life growing around us. As you start to lean into summer and the overflowing gifts it gives, I invite everyone to open your hearts and minds to a sense of generosity. In the next year, you will be hearing a lot about this theme as the Stewardship Committee invites our congregation to focus on Growing in God's Grace using "The Generosity Project," an ELCA resource that aims to help move us toward First Lutheran's mission-focused goals. So, for now, may the warmth and light of this new season of abundance fill your heart with generosity!

-Submitted by Annalise Rivas, co-chair of Stewardship Committee

In Memory of – A message from Rev. Keith Pearson, ELCA Foundation

This past Memorial Day weekend I visited the graves of my parents. At my side was my beloved wife and our daughter and only child. My mother passed away quite young at the age of 66. My father lived to a good, full age of 86. There was a colorful display all across the cemetery of the various ways people memorialized their dear departed loved ones. Flags to honor those who served the country in the military. Titles of honor like "mother" and "father" to honor those who served their families with their whole lives. Words of faith and hope that look forward to our promised reunion.

The visit stirred memories of not only my parents, but my grandparents and several others in our lives, both living and passed. It also caused me to think of my own life and my legacy. How will I be remembered

when I pass? How have I honored those who were most important to me? What will become of everything I worked for in my life?

In the words of institution, the words the pastor uses to prepare worshippers to receive the bread and wine of Holy Communion we hear Jesus' own words, "...do this in memory of me." There is a peculiar distinction in the original language that we miss in most English translations. The words "in memory of me" or "in my memory" are not just a remembering of something past, but a promise that carries forward into the present. It is as if Jesus was saying, "Do this, and I will be there with you again. Do this, and what I did will happen again as if for the first time just for you."

I wish our memorials could have such staying power. Flowers wither and die. Even monuments carved in stone weather and erode, their original intricate markings and sentimental words diminished with each passing year. But what if there was a way to truly memorialize a loved one or to leave a legacy of our own that would really last?

It is possible! Many churches have an endowment or memorial fund of some sort. Individuals can create estate gifts, endowments, and trusts. A gift to one of these can memorialize a loved one or create your own personal legacy. These tools can be a way to express values and give continued encouragement of the things that were important to you or your dear departed loved ones. Such a legacy gift can become a perpetual memorial that keeps doing the work of a lifetime long after that life is over. And these are not just the tools of the rich and powerful. They are available to the average person, family, or congregation.

If you are interested in creating a memorial or legacy that lasts longer than cut flowers, I'd be happy to talk with you. And don't worry, I've got nothing to sell you and I don't work on any kind of commission. I am purely a servant of the church, here to help you carry out your wishes. I will help you create a lasting legacy for your loved ones, your congregation, and whatever charitable causes are important to you.

Gratitude from the Fellowship Committee



Barb Wilkinson, Diane Stewart, Patricia Duenwald, and Mary Long planted the bell garden on May 22

A big THANK YOU to all the Committees who participated in Sunday Fellowship this year. I believe that included all the standing committees. Also thank you to the Confirmation families who served once a month, and to the ones who celebrated Birthdays and Anniversaries, thank you. It was a good year, and we will continue to have Fellowship all summer.

The Greens – Spring has Finally Sprung!

On a breezy morning in May the Green Committee members seeded and planted the Food Shelf Garden. Now we need the sun, the rain, and God's blessing to provide vegetables for the people in need. (Check out hymn number 681.)



News from "The Kitchen"- Summer Serving Dates:

The Kitchen planning committee (consisting of members from Trinity Lutheran, Union Presbyterian, Church of St. Peter Catholic Church, and First Lutheran Church) has welcomed volunteers from Scandian Grove Lutheran Church who will be volunteering on the planning committee, serving meals 4-5 times each year, and helping to pick up local donations from Hy Vee in Mankato. The number of people we are serving has been growing. We are now serving 80-100 meals each Monday evening.

First Lutheran Church will be serving meals on May 29th, June 26th, and July 31. Volunteer sign-up sheets can be found on the table in the gathering space. Thank you to those of you who have helped to prepare a meal, serve a meal, and also help with clean-up! Your generous help and joyful spirit are much appreciated! On May 29th we will be serving a picnic supper of hot dogs, baked beans, chips, and watermelon.

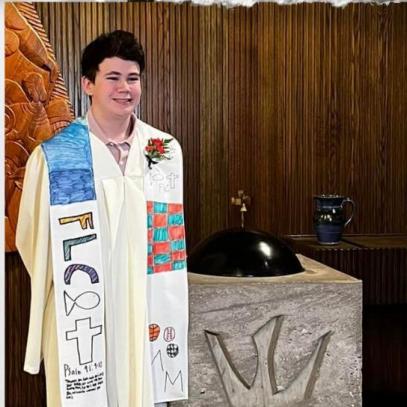
The Kitchen planning committee would also like to sincerely thank River's Edge Hospital for a generous donation to help fund The Kitchen, allowing us to continue this service to our community.

-Submitted by Marilyn Kochsieck

2023 Confirmands



Lathe Bly



Malcolm McHugh



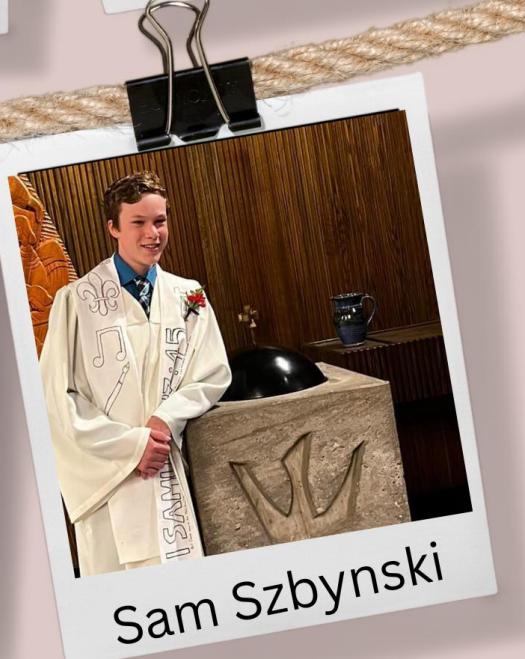
Amelia Staples



Rebekah Roemhildt



Kallie Stadick



Sam Szbynski

2023

1st communion



con- firm- ation



Graduate blessing



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
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FIRST FORUMS

getting the discussion going!

JUNE 18 @ 11:15
**REFUGEE SERVICES FROM LSS (LUTHERAN
SOCIAL SERVICES.) BARBARA WILKINSON
WILL ALSO TALK ABOUT HER EXPERIENCE.**

**WELCOME WAFFLES WILL BE SERVED IN
THE GATHERING SPACE.**