

The *First* Word

Volume 25, Issue 5

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL — HELENA, MONTANA

March 2024

Seek FIRST His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33

Special March Dates

First Edition Book Club.....	Mar. 2
Home of Lori Northrup	
Third Sunday in Lent.....	Mar. 3
Dorcas Circle Quilters.....	Mar. 6
Fourth Sunday in Lent.....	Mar. 10
Daylight Saving Time begins	
W.O.W. Bible Study.....	Mar. 12
<i>Lifelight: Parables of Jesus</i>	
Fifth Sunday in Lent.....	Mar. 17
Dorcas Circle Quilters.....	Mar. 20
O.W.L.S.	Mar. 21
Palm Sunday.....	Mar. 24
FLS Easter Break.....	Mar. 24-Apr. 1
W.O.W. Bible Study.....	Mar. 26
<i>Lifelight: Parables of Jesus</i>	
Maundy Thursday.....	Mar. 28
Good Friday.....	Mar. 29
Easter Sunday.....	Mar. 31

Because Jesus said so

One intriguing person in the Passion account is the thief on the cross whom Jesus promised a same-day entrance to paradise (see Luke 23:43). Pastor and radio host Alistair Begg says he can't wait to meet that man and ask how everything unfolded. "You were cussing [Jesus] out with your friend," Begg says. "You've never been in a Bible study. You've never been baptized. You didn't know a thing about church membership, and yet you made it!"

In a sermon, Begg pictures an imaginary angel at the pearly gates, growing

frustrated during the sinful thief's entrance interview. After receiving no clear answers from the thief about doctrines such as justification, the angel finally asks, "On what basis are you here?" The thief simply replies, "The man on the middle cross said I can come."



— The Newsletter Newsletter

The olive presses of life

Gethsemane, the name of the place where Jesus prayed before His betrayal, is an Aramaic word for "olive press." During Bible times, olives were pressed three times to remove all the valuable oil. Before being arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus felt the full pressing weight of our sins on His shoulders. Surrounded by olive trees, praying fervently while sweating drops of blood, the perfect Son of God asked His heavenly Father three times to remove the cup of suffering.

Instead of removing that trial, God used it to redeem and save humankind. Likewise, God uses our hardships to refine and strengthen our faith.

In *The Rock, the Road and the Rabbi*, TV host Kathie Lee Gifford and Messianic Rabbi Jason Sobel speculate that if Peter, along with James and John, hadn't fallen asleep in Gethsemane, he may have had the strength to not deny Jesus later that night.

"All of us must be vigilant to watch and pray so that we don't succumb to the temptation to deny the Lord when we go through the olive presses of life and feel like we are being crushed by our situation and circumstances," the authors write. "We must remember that it is the crushing that brings out the true inner value and worth of the olive."

— The Newsletter Newsletter

Blessed be the
God and Father
of our
Lord Jesus Christ!
By his great mercy
he has given us a
new birth
into a
living hope
through the
resurrection
of Jesus Christ
from the dead.
1 Peter 1:3, NRSV



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Tell everyone what HE has done
PSALM 26:7

You are cordially invited to join your sisters-in-Christ in Polson, Montana, for the LWML Montana District Convention, April 26-28, 2024! Registration forms and more information can be found inside the *Winter Montana Missive* in the church foyer or online at www.montanadistrictlwml.org!

Warm hearts craft beautiful blankets to warm newborns

Many thanks to those who participated in the Baby Blanket Drive for Options Clinic. We donated 55 fleece/flannel blankets! Your generosity enables new moms to provide warmth and comfort for their newborns.

— *Ruth Stelter and Janice Larison*



Pastor Miller

Blessing of the Blankets—February 4, 2024

Options
clinic



TRINITY
LUTHERAN CAMP

Trinity Lutheran Camp is located on Flathead Lake 2 miles south of Bigfork, Montana, on 40 acres of beautiful forest land. The camp is a non-profit ministry of Trinity Lutheran Church in Kalispell, Montana, and serves to strengthen campers and families through their relationship with God.

2024 Summer Camp Dates

3rd/4th Grade Day Camp.....	June 17-19
3rd/4th Grade Overnight Camp.....	June 19-21
5th/6th Grade Camp.....	June 23-28
7th/8th Grade Camp.....	June 30-July 5
Servant Event Week.....	July 7-12
High School Week.....	July 14-19
Basketball Camp.....	July 21-26

For detailed information and to register:

www.trinitylutherancamp.org

Select *Summer Camps 2024* in the menu

Or contact

Camp Director Mel Reiner

mel@trinitykalispell.org

Camperships (scholarships) available!

Valentine cookies a big hit

The Fellowship Committee wishes to thank all those who baked or purchased Valentine-themed cookies to share with our adult disabled community in the Helena area.

Helena has three day centers that offer constructive activities during the week, allowing for socialization and skill development for those adults.

Over 200 adults were served, and the cookies were well-received and enjoyed by all!



The *First Word*

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Linda Fromm.....Editor
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Volunteer Staff.....Printing/Collation

Deadline for the April issue of the *First Word* is Wednesday, Mar. 20. Place articles in the *First Word* box in the church office or email to: lindafromm@mac.com



Promised Treasures

This Lenten season, we are experiencing a fresh opportunity to embrace God's amazing love for us, His baptized children, in new ways. St. Paul clearly says that *"faith comes from hearing"* (Romans 10:17), but the Gospel is also communicated through the physical senses of sight, smell, touch, and taste.

In Matthew 13:52 Jesus says that *"every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."* So each Wednesday in Lent as well as during Holy Week and Easter, we are taking **a weekly journey to concretely see, smell, touch, and taste** a number of Biblical elements, connected to our Savior and the love He poured out for us and for our salvation.

Just as Israel wandered through the wilderness under Moses for forty years, awaiting the Promised Land, **we await heaven in the wilderness of this life.** Life as exiles in the wilderness of this world is not easy and pain-free. In this vale of tears, we await our real home, the new promised land of heaven. Until we enter our eternal promised land, however, the Lord calls us to be His light in this dark world.

All these beautiful Old and New Testament elements remind us of God's eternal love in Christ, fill us with renewed hope, and increase our joy, knowing that **because we are His baptized children, God is near to us now more than ever!**



Rich blessings as together we journey through this season to Calvary's Cross and the Open Tomb!

Pastor Miller

Announcing Two Special Events!



Brian Young (yes, he's Dale's brother)

Director of Creation Instruction Association,
and the Semisaurus Mobile Creation Museum

will lead **Bible Classes** and a **Seder Meal**
at First Lutheran on **Sunday, March 17!**
Watch for further details and please plan to attend!



Join Us for Lenten and Holy Week Worship



† Ash Wednesday – February 14 – Sitting in Dust and Ashes!

Lent begins with ashes. After Job endured ashes and crosses of suffering, God graciously delivered him out of them. Jesus Christ washes and raises us out of every suffering, trial, and sin with renewed purpose, hope, and joy. All of these were nailed to the cross with our Lord Jesus Christ and we are clothed anew to serve Him each day.

† Midweek of Lent 1 – February 21 – The Gift That Sweetens and Preserves!

We are each God's own dear child, baptized, washed, and seasoned in Christ. Jesus died on Calvary's cross to vaccinate us completely from sin's power and eternal death. He comes to deliver and preserve us amid all our troubles. He is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

† Midweek of Lent 2 – February 28 – God Gives Life!

Like a potter, our heavenly Father remodels us every day, conforming us more and more to the image of His Son, Jesus. We grow to appreciate how rich the inheritance given to us in our Holy Baptism.

† Midweek of Lent 3 – March 6, 12:10 and 6:30 p.m. – Our Sin, His Forgiveness!

Jesus Christ dispels our sin and fills us with joy that we may reflect to the world. God's Word exposes our sin, and in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. As His baptized children, we reflect His love to others.

† Midweek of Lent 4 – March 13, 12:10 and 6:30 p.m. – Source of Life!

Jesus is the true life given by the Father to us. In Him and, is life forgiven, meaningful, renewed, and satisfied. In Jesus Christ, we have all that we need and more, every day and for eternal life.

† Midweek of Lent 5 – March 20, 12:10 and 6:30 p.m. – Hope and Victory!

Christians remain hopeful even when life, trouble, and circumstances declare something opposite. The ultimate victory in Christ encourages us to remain strong even when sin, death, and trial oppose us.

† Palm Sunday – March 24, 8:15 and 11 a.m. – From Jerusalem to Calvary!

We raise our palms and praises, sing Hosanna!, and follow Jesus up the Via Dolorosa to the cross.

† Holy (Maundy) Thursday – March 28, 12:10 and 7 p.m. – The Lord's Supper!

Jesus was baptized into death. On this night, we celebrate receiving the testament which our Lord inaugurated in the Lord's Supper. Once again this year, we who are God's people will appreciate how He pours out to us His forgiveness, life, and salvation in His sacraments.

† Good Friday – March 29, 12:10 and 7 p.m. (Tenebrae) – The Old Rugged Cross!

Jesus' cross brings peace, forgiveness, salvation and our lives are rescued, sweetened, and lightened.

† Easter Sunday – March 31, 6:30, 8:15, and 11 a.m. – Welcome to the Promised Land!

As Joshua led the people of Israel across the Jordan River and into the Promised Land, so Jesus crossed the river of death by His death and resurrection and leads us to the promised land, which will never end. Although heaven is not ours fully, yet, it meets earth as Christ is risen from the dead!



Cherish what God has given

— from your Board of Stewardship

In the Small Catechism, Luther follows a pattern when explaining the Ten Commandments. With each commandment, there is something prohibited, and something commanded. There is something wrong which must be avoided, and there is something right which must be done.

The one time this pattern is not followed, however, is with the Sixth Commandment.

“You shall not commit adultery. What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other” (SC I).

Here, the catechism focuses solely on the positive: we should live in a chaste and decent manner in both word and deed, and husbands and

wives should cherish and honor one another.

Keeping this commandment, and all of the commandments, is a lot easier if you see your chastity and your spouse as a gift from God that is to be protected and cherished. In the same way, you will find keeping the Fourth Commandment easier if you see your parents and other authorities as a gift from God, given to you for your blessing.

This is the key stewardship insight that runs through all of the Christian life: Everything that we have has been given to us by God. We deserve none of it. All of it comes to us by God’s fatherly kindness and open-generosity. If I know that everything I have — every possession, every relationship, every ability — is a gift from God, then my perspective changes. All of

these things are both gifts to be cherished, and things that I should direct towards God’s purposes. My possessions should be shared generously according to how God has called me in my family, church and community. My spouse should be cherished, loved and encouraged in faith. My children are on loan from my own Heavenly Father, and I have but a brief time to show them the path of righteousness. My neighbor is a gift from God so that I can imitate His kindness toward me.

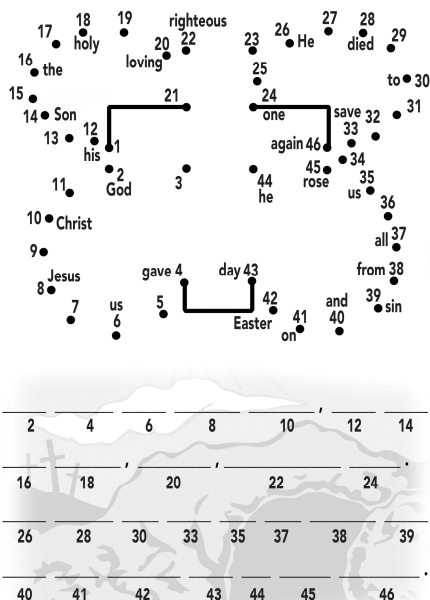
No matter the gift, everything has been given to me by God so that I may participate in His own goodness and open-handed generosity.

— LCMS stewardship ministry
LCMS.org

Just for KIDS!

Puzzle!

Connect the dots to find two symbols of Easter. Then write the words in the correct blanks to complete an Easter poem.



Answer: God gave us Jesus Christ, his Son, the holy, loving, righteous one. He died to save us all from sin, and on Easter day he rose again.

Grape EXPECTATIONS

Try this chilly new take on a healthy snack.

What you need:

- 30 grapes, washed and dried
- ½ cup vanilla yogurt
- 4 graham crackers, crushed
- Toothpicks
- Parchment paper

What you do:

1. On a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, arrange grapes in a single layer. Freeze for two hours.
2. Insert a toothpick into each grape.
3. Dip each grape into the yogurt, coating half of it.
4. Roll each dipped grape in the crushed crackers. Place back on the parchment.
5. Freeze for two more hours. Enjoy!

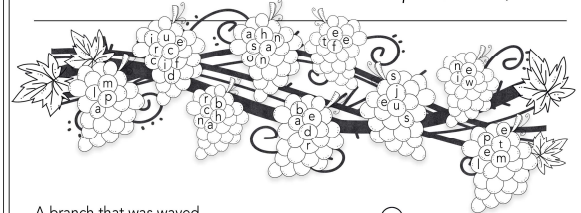


PUZZLE

A LASTING LESSON

Before dying on the cross, Jesus teaches the disciples an important lesson.

Directions: Use the clues to unscramble the letters in each grape cluster. Then write the circled letters in order below to complete John 15:5, NIV.



- A branch that was waved _____
- How Jesus was put to death _____
- A stick attached to the vine _____
- People shouted this to Jesus _____
- Jesus washed these _____
- This was broken and eaten _____
- The Messiah _____
- A drink from grapes _____
- Jesus drove the money changers from here _____

“I am the vine; you are the branches.

If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear _____ ;
apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5, NIV

Answer: pruned, branch, fruit, bread, feet, hosanna, crucified, palm, much, fruit

Easter cards to benefit First Lutheran Youth programs go on sale March 3

Janice Larison, founder of the CARDS 4 KIDS ministry at First, is busy designing unique Easter cards, and advises that packages of 10 cards will be available beginning on Sunday, March 3. The packages include a variety of themes and are suitable for your friends and family members, and the cost is a very reasonable \$5 per package.

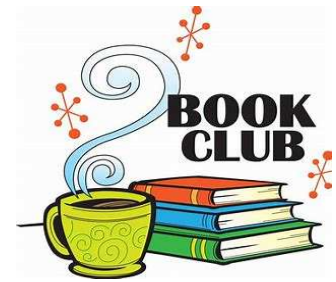
Janice will also have a small basket of birthday cards Available for purchase.

She asks that you please consider donating used holiday cards if they contain no writing on the picture side.

Janice is very grateful for the support she has received for this ministry, which helps our youth group here at church.



Cards shown are for illustrative purposes only. They are not actual card designs.



First Edition Book Club members will meet for luncheon and discussion at 12:15 p.m. on Saturday, March 2, at the home of Lori Northrup. Members are reading *The Liar's Dictionary* by Eley Williams.

If you have not already done so, **please RSVP to Lori immediately** at 406-461-5378.

The April luncheon and discussion is scheduled for 12:15 p.m. on Saturday, April 6, at the home of Linda Fromm. For the April meeting, the group will read *Dead Sea Conspiracy* by Jerry Jenkins.

Please RSVP to Linda by Wednesday, April 3, at 406-459-3584.

March Birthdays

March 1

Lee Anderson
Jennifer Rickman
Rick Sparks

March 2

Ivy Brott
Laura Laposky

March 6

Jan Davis
Walli Johnson
Dean Wollan

March 7

Kendra Houtari

February 8

Adam Bartels
Rebecca Baumann
Brian Johnson

March 10

Chris Matthews

March 11

Becky Bacon
Ron Stefanik

March 12

David Torgerson

March 13

Heather McIntosh

March 14

Kim Stueve

March 15

Anita Elvbakken
Trudy Sullivan

March 16

Nolan Carson

March 17

Eve Sieber

March 18

Liam McIntosh

March 19

Allen Keim

March 21

Karen Antonick
Sean Frank

March 22

Lisa Tullis

March 25

Martin Baumann
Cassandra Cable
Bridget Michel

March 27

Theresa Heggset

March 29

Mike Hoxie

March 31

Karen Bjornson
Connie Onstad



“Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime.”

— Martin Luther



Happenings at First Lutheran School



Director
Sue Taylor

Get Set Teacher
Shannon Champagne

Pre-Kindergarten Teacher
Lori Radtke

After Care Providers
Pam Worthy/Emily DuPre'

Pastor
Larry A. Miller

Why send your child to a Lutheran school?

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's School Ministry assists, equips and uplifts school educators, district staff, and especially education executives and congregational leaders so that through them children may be equipped as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Here is why you should send your child to a Lutheran school. Lutheran schools:

- Are **driven by a commitment to the Gospel** and focused on a mission of bringing hope and healing to students and families.
- Are **governed by board members who clearly understand their roles** and focus on the vision and board policies that effectively govern the operation of the school.
- **Meet or exceed state and national academic standards** at all grade levels.
- Have **educators who model visionary leadership**. They practice stewardship of resources, build up others and empathize with others.
- Have **educators who model servant leadership**.
- Have **educators who model spiritual leadership**. They study God's Word, share their personal faith story, apply Law and Gospel appropriately, exhibit a passion for ministry, act courageously, equip God's people for service, care for others, demonstrate integrity, and pray.

Lutheran Early Childhood Centers and Elementary Schools

More than 1,200 early childhood centers and preschools are operated by congregations and Christian day schools within the LCMS. More than 87,000 children, ranging in age from infant/toddler to 5 years of age, are involved in these programs. Additionally, our congregations operate 880 elementary schools which serve approximately 113,000 students. More than 650 early childhood centers and elementary schools are accredited under the National Lutheran School Accreditation program.

Source: <https://www.lcms.org/school-ministry>

First Lutheran School Summer Camps

Summer camp registration is open. We will have 10 weeks of camp available for children between the ages of 5-10. Please see Sue Taylor for more information and/or a registration form.

First Lutheran School Registration

Registration for the 2024-2025 school year is open. We provide classroom opportunities for children between the ages of 3-5. If you would like to register your child for school, please go to the church website: www.firstlutheranhelena.org for more information, or talk with Sue Taylor.

First Lutheran School Opportunities

First Lutheran School would like to hire a teacher for the 2024-2025 school year. Perhaps you are the right person for the job. Thank you for prayerfully considering this opportunity. Please contact the school director, Sue Taylor, at 406-442-6913 if you are interested.

First Lutheran Church & School
2231 Broadway
Helena, MT 59601

Phone: (406)442-5367
Fax: (406)442-5285
School Phone: (406)442-6913
Website: www.firstlutheranhelena.org
Email: churchoffice@firstlutheranhelena.org

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH is a Congregation of
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

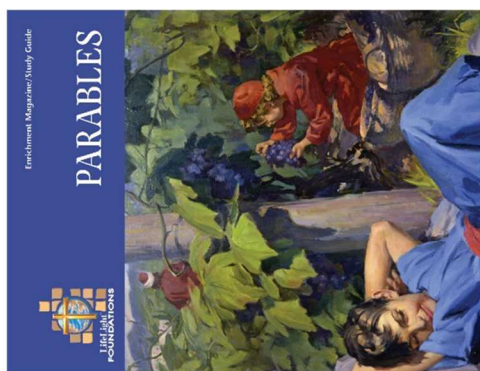
THE MISSION of First Lutheran Church is
“Sharing God’s Word with Everyone, Everywhere!”

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Tune in to “*The Lutheran Hour*”—Sundays at 8 a.m. on the Christian Satellite Network 91.1-FM
or listen on “*Family Talk*” on Sirius XM 131
“*Woman to Woman*”—Sundays at 9:30 p.m. on KMTX 105.3-FM

Women of the Word

This *Lifelight* Bible study will explore the Parables of Jesus. The nine-session study is outlined below.

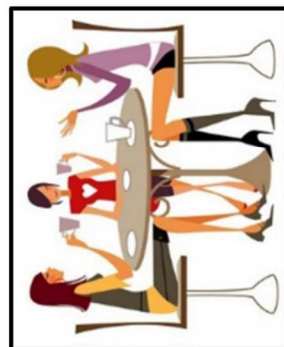


- Session 1: Why Parables?
(Matthew 13:34-35)
- Session 2: Something Old, Something New
(Matthew 9:15-17)
- Session 3: A Most Radical Grace
(John 10:11)
- Session 4: Lost and Found (Luke 15:7)
- Session 5: Keeping Faith (John 15:5)
- Session 6: Living Mercy (Luke 10:36-37)
- Session 7: The Coming Judgment
(Matthew 21:21-32)
- Session 8: Looking for Judgment Day
(Matthew 25:21)
- Session 9: Watching for Eternity
(Matthew 24:45-47)

Our **Women Of the Word (WOW)** group meets every second and fourth Tuesday at 7 p.m. We’ve completed Session 1, but it’s not too late to join us. We meet at the church and we’d love to see you there!

February 13 and 27
March 12 and 26
April 9 and 23
May 14 and 28

WOW! Bible Study,
Parables of Jesus
next study, March 12, 2024
at 7 p.m.



Mark these dates on your planners, tablets, phones, calendars, and **join us!** Talk to Shari Miller for more details.