

# The *First* Word

Volume 25, Issue 6

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL — HELENA, MONTANA

April 2024

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

## Special April Dates

Dorcas Quilters meet.....	April 3
First Edition Book Club.....	April 6
Home of Linda Fromm	
Second Sunday of Easter.....	April 7
W.O.W. Bible Study.....	April 9
<i>Lifelight: The Parables of Jesus</i>	
Third Sunday of Easter.....	April 14
Dorcas Quilters meet.....	April 17
O.W.L.S. ....	April 18
Fourth Sunday of Easter.....	April 21
W.O.W. Bible Study.....	April 23
<i>Lifelight: The Parables of Jesus</i>	
LWML MT District Convention.....	April 26-28
Fifth Sunday of Easter.....	April 28

## Call for nominations for open positions on First's Mission & Ministry Council

In preparation for the annual Voters' Assembly meeting, which will be held in June 2024, MMC President Jason Mercer has issued a call for nominations for officers and MMC at-large members to be elected at that meeting. The list of nominees will be closed at the time the meeting agenda and slate of candidates is published prior to the June meeting.

Nominations are now open for the office of Vice President (for a 2-year term); Treasurer (for a 2-year term); and two at-large members (each for 2-year terms). All terms will begin on July 1, 2024.

The office of Vice President may be occupied only by a male voting member of the congregation (a voting member is a confirmed member, 18 years of age or older). Basic duties of the Vice President include presiding at all meetings of the MMC and/or the congregation when the President is absent, or when requested by the President to do so; initiating counsel

with the President should a violation of policy occur; and leading the nominating committee for the election of officers and members of the MMC.

Basic duties of the Treasurer are overseeing the financial records of the church; suggesting solutions for financial decisions regarding the church budget; preparing and presenting an annual church budget (spending plan) to be presented to the congregation at the annual voters' meeting; and being familiar with the Constitution and Bylaws.

Members of the MMC may not serve on other boards or committees of the church.

The MMC generally meets one evening each month, for approximately two hours.

If you are interested in sharing your God-given time and skills in one of these positions, please contact Jason. He may be reached by phone at (406)438-1182 or by email to: [jmercer@m-m.net](mailto:jmercer@m-m.net).

*(Please see Page 2 for a description of powers and duties of the MMC.)*



# He Is RISEN INDEED!



## In This Issue

First Edition Book Club news.....	2
Powers and duties of the MMC	
Following the 'Perfect Fool'	
The Pastor's Page.....	3
YOU and HUMAN CARE Puzzle.....	4
Living discipleship	
Just for KIDS!.....	5
Let's celebrate April Birthdays at First!.....	6
Coming Attraction: Lunch and a Movie!	
Thoughts on Easter Monday	
Happenings at Our School.....	7

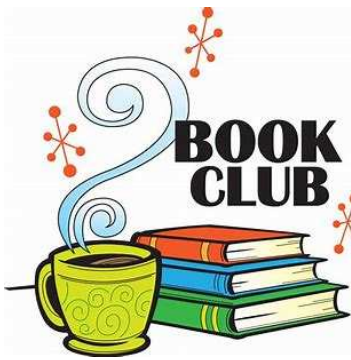


Tell everyone what **HE** has done  
PSALM 26:7

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](http://www.montanadistrictlwml.org)!

*"We ourselves are not masters of our own ability and knowledge. They, like our talents and health, are a loan presented for our use. We must live as people who know that such temporary possessions are not true belongings and that we must give account for our management of them."*

—Albert Schweitzer  
from *The Newsletter Newsletter*



First Edition Book Club members will meet at 12:15 p.m. on Saturday, April 6, at the home of Linda Fromm for lunch and a stimulating discussion. Members are currently Reading — and will Discuss — *The Only Woman in the Room* by Marie Benedict.

**Please RSVP to Linda by Wednesday, April 3, by calling or texting 406-459-3584.**

The May luncheon and discussion will be held at 12:15 p.m. on Saturday, May 4, at the home of Pam Tudor. For the May meeting, members will read—and discuss—the book they have chosen to read from the *Maisie Dobbs* series, by Jacqueline Winspear.

Please RSVP to Pam by Wednesday, May 1, by calling or texting 406-439-9719.

*Maisie Dobbs* author Jacqueline Winspear is scheduled to speak at the Helena Civic Center at 7 p.m. on Monday, May 13, which provides an excellent opportunity for book club members to get to know her a bit better.

## Powers and duties of the Mission & Ministry Council

For those who wish to consider serving as an officer or at-large member of the MMC, following is a brief description of the way our governing body operates.

The MMC has the power to develop policies as required to execute the goals approved by the Voters’ Assembly, and has no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon it by the Constitution, the Bylaws, and by the Voters’ Assembly.

It is the chief governing body of the congregation, and acts in all matters pertaining to the legal and general welfare of the congregation, except those reserved for the Voters’ Assembly (in Article VI.B. of the Constitution).

The MMC sees to it that all activities of the church reflect the purpose (Article II) and faith (Article III) of the congregation. It concerns itself with establishing all policies governing the activities of the congregation and with the implementation of the mission, vision, budget, goals and plans adopted by the Voters’ Assembly.

The MMC may appoint any group or individual needed, and oversees and has authority over all other boards, committees, task forces, action teams, or other groups of individuals appointed by the MMC.

## Following the ‘Perfect Fool’

Theologian Frederick Buechner, who died at age 96 in 2022, explored how the “foolishness of God” (see 1 Corinthians 1:25) compares to human wisdom. He pondered the safety stickers that warn, “The life you save may be your own.”

“That is the wisdom of [humans] in a nutshell,” wrote Buechner. “What God says, on the other hand, is ‘The life you save is the life you lose.’ In other words, the life you clutch, hoard, guard and play safe with is in the end a life worth little to anybody, including yourself, and only a life given away for love’s sake is a life worth living.”

Buechner continued, “To bring His point home, God shows us a man who gave His life away to the extent of dying a national disgrace without a penny in the bank or a friend to His name. In terms of [human] wisdom, He was a Perfect Fool, and anybody who thinks [they] can follow Him without [being] something like the same kind of a fool ... is laboring under not a cross but a delusion.”


— *The Newsletter Newsletter*



**The First Word**

*Published monthly by:*

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Helena, MT 59601  
(406)442-5367



**APRIL**

Rev. Larry A. Miller.....	Pastor
Linda Fromm.....	Editor
Shari Miller.....	Calendar/Servant Schedule
Volunteer Staff.....	Printing/Collation

**Deadline for the May First Word is Wednesday, April 17. Place articles in the First Word box in the church office or email them to:**  
[lindafromm@mac.com](mailto:lindafromm@mac.com)

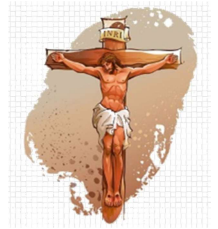
# "He is not here, for He is risen, as He said!" Alleluia!

(Matthew 28)



Aside from Jesus' cry "It is finished!" there exist no words quite equal to these: "He is risen!" From death, from hell, from the tomb, indeed, to life and its everlasting. Alleluia!

Think of it. **Since His ministry began, Jesus knew that Calvary awaited Him.** Calvary was why He had come to Bethlehem's manger in the first place. Calvary was the goal of His earthly journey. Calvary's cross was preordained. So He "set His face toward Jerusalem." There, He knew, the greatest miscarriage of justice in human history would take place. There, He knew, the only Perfect Man ever born to a woman would be sacrificed. There, He knew God would die! His presence in Jerusalem would lead to the Cross on the Day of Preparation, just before that most solemn and celebrated of Jewish feasts: the Passover.



Three times on that journey to the cross, Jesus had told Peter and Andrew, James and John, and the other disciples that this would happen: He would be slain. Yet, they were completely unprepared for the reality, for the horror, for the awful bloodthirsty and bloody truth of it all.



Yes, and three times **He also told them that the ultimate, unbelievable, rectifying Resurrection would follow.** But they failed to understand what He was talking about: that He would rise again!

Peter finally got it at Pentecost. In his sermons following that auspicious event and recorded in chapters 2,3,4, and 5 of Acts, the Spirit-transformed fisherman, the Christian church's first evangelist, boldly attests to the "foolishness" of the resurrected Christ.

Paul, the missionary without equal, wrote to the church at Corinth that these are of "**first importance**": Jesus died for our sins; He was raised; and, He appeared to others (1 Corinthians 15). To emphasize the reality of Jesus' rising and subsequent appearances, Paul lists the witnesses: first Peter, then the twelve, then more than five hundred at one time, James who was Jesus' earthly half-brother and the first bishop of Jerusalem; all the apostles at once, and, lastly, Paul himself.

Why are these post-Easter appearances of "first importance?" Well, Paul tells us in the last verses of Romans, chapter 4. Here he writes of "... Jesus, our Lord. Who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our **justification.**" There it is: **our justification!**

The Lutheran Study Bible states that Justification is the "... dominant theological truth in Paul's letters and the Scriptures" (p.1903). It means that the believer (the "justified" person) raised up with Christ in baptism, is declared righteous! That, dear friends, is the verdict, the final legal act completed by God for us in Christ's Resurrection! Not only are your sins and mine paid for by Jesus' death, we are declared righteous by His Resurrection. **Justified: "just like we had never sinned."** Alleluia!



**Happy Resurrection Day ... now ... every day!**  
**God bless you ... you righteous one!**

*Pastor Miller*



## First's Human Care outreach ministry active year 'round

With the help of many of the congregation's members, the Human Care Committee coordinates activities that help meet the physical needs of people in Helena and beyond.

Human beings require food, so we cook and serve dinner at **God's Love Shelter** the fourth Sunday of every other month. Dates remaining for 2024: April 28, June 30, August 25, October 27, and December 29.

With generous donations of meat from Matt and Anita Elvbakken at Tizer Meats, and those of you who contribute ingredients needed for the remainder of the menu, we usually serve about 50 people, who are always appreciative and enjoy whatever we prepare. We do not do the clean up; the staff at God's Love does that! At least six people are needed each month from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. to prepare the food and serve.

Another of our community outreach projects is collecting non-perishable food each month for **Helena Food Share**. There are containers located beneath the mailboxes in Ziegler Hall in which you deposit your donated foodstuffs. The Sunday Announcements contain information on what items are being collected for a particular month.

Helena Food Share provides food for individuals and families, and you can learn more about the organization's

Pantry, located at 1616 Lewis Street here in Helena, by going to [helenafoodshare.org](http://helenafoodshare.org). Again, your support helps us to help members of our community!

The **Annual Garage Sale** held in September is our primary fundraiser and helps us support:

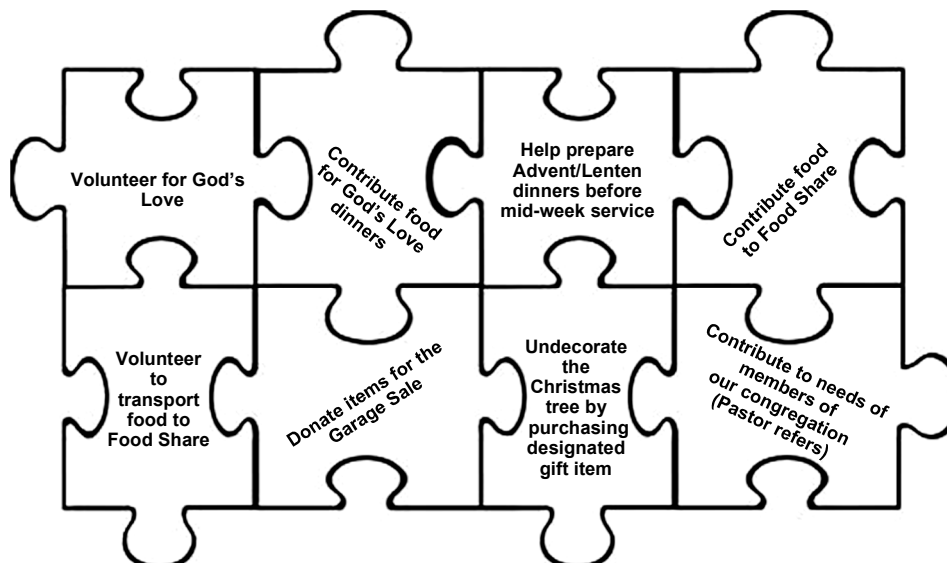
- LIFE — through the programs at **Options Clinic**
- Children and families through the **Florence Crittenton Home**
- Ministry to the developmentally disabled (**UNdecorating the Christmas Tree**, on which the Ornaments — whether purchased or handmade — have a cost)

Without the congregation's generous contributions of no-longer-needed/used items for the Garage Sale, we couldn't contribute to these organizations/individuals.

If you have suggestions of activities we could add to our list and/or community organizations you'd like us to support, please contact the church office and give Administrative Assistant Shari Miller the information, or leave a note in the Human Care box located to the left of Pastor Miller's office.

— *Your Human Care Committee*

## The YOU and HUMAN CARE Puzzle



## Living discipleship

Christian theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was hanged by the Nazis in April 1945, taught that Christianity and discipleship are intertwined. "Discipleship means adherence to Christ," he wrote in *The Cost of Discipleship*. "An abstract Christology, a doctrinal system, a general religious knowledge ... render discipleship superfluous ...."

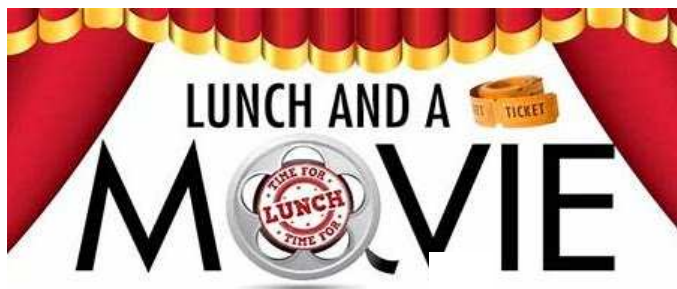
Bonhoeffer continued, "With an abstract idea, it is

possible to enter into a relation of formal knowledge, to become enthusiastic about it, and perhaps even to put it into practice; but it can never be followed in personal obedience. Christianity without the living Christ is inevitably Christianity without discipleship, and Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ."

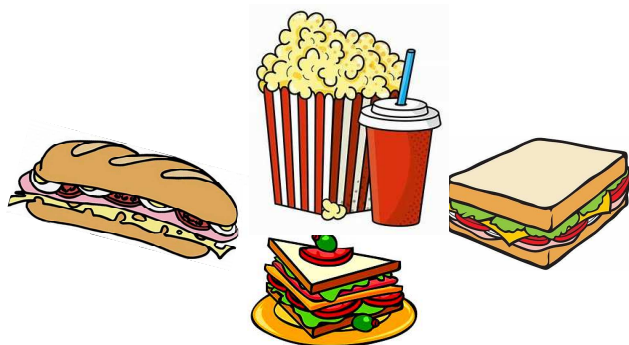
— *The Newsletter Newsletter*



# Mark your calendar!



Spring is in the air! The Fellowship Committee has scheduled Sunday, May 5, for a SANDWICH BAR LUNCHEON & MOVIE! We will make sign-up sheets available in Ziegler Hall by April 15 so you can sign up to bring breads and/or sandwich fillings. We will also provide a special cake for dessert. More information is coming, so mark your calendar NOW to save the date for this fun fellowship event!



# Thoughts on Easter Monday

In Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant countries, Easter Monday traditionally was observed by the faithful as “a day of joy and laughter” with parties and picnics to celebrate Jesus’ resurrection. It also has been called “Bright Monday,” “White Monday,” “Dyngus Day,” and “Emmaus Day” in various countries.

The faithful played practical jokes on each other, drenched each other with water, sang, and danced. It was a time for clergy and lay people to tell jokes and have fun.

The custom of Easter Monday and Bright Sunday celebrations may be rooted in the musings of early church theologians like Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom that God played a practical joke on the devil by raising Jesus from the dead. FMC member Rev. Donald B. Strobe, former pastor of the First United Methodist Church in Ann Arbor, MI, describes Easter as “God’s supreme joke played on the old impostor, death.”

“*Risus paschalis* — the Easter laugh,” the early theologians called it. And the theme has echoed down through the centuries. St. Francis of Assisi advised: “Leave sadness to the devil. The devil has reason to be sad.” Meister Eckhart, a 13th-century Christian mystic, wrote: “God laughed and begat the Son. Together they laughed and begat the Holy Spirit. And from the laughter of the three, the universe was born.”

Martin Luther wrote: “God is not a God of sadness, but the devil is. Christ is a God of joy. It is pleasing to the dear God whenever thou rejoices or laughest from the bottom of thy heart.” John Wesley said: “Sour godliness is the devil’s religion.”

— from *Holy Humor* by Cal & Rose Samra

# April Birthdays!

**April 1**

Kristin Basinger  
Arlena Deppmeier  
Sonja Elvbakken

**April 2**

Richard Ellwein

**April 3**

Darlene Staffelt

**April 4**

Quinn Hanson  
Ryan Rose

**April 5**

Eli Walker

**April 6**

Ian McGrane

**April 8**

Kim Ballard  
Lillian Buhr  
Jonathan Maxwell

**April 9**

Joseph Ellwein  
Heather Johnson

**April 10**

Tierney Beatty  
Zachary Everson  
Crystal Gozelanski

Larry Shields

**April 11**

Chuck Ballard

**April 13**

Jean Hanson

**April 14**

Liz Belcourt  
Rena Belcourt  
Henry Schmeltzer

**April 15**

Zachary Antonick  
Kristina Johnson

**April 16**

Betty Burton

**April 18**

Pippa Davis

**April 19**

Joe Jorgensen

**April 20**

Dale Young

**April 21**

Rob Lebahn  
Gibson McIntosh

**April 22**

Chris Brott  
Carla Smith

**April 25**

Emilie Glenn  
Sid Lebahn  
Daniel O’Malley  
Nicolaus Peterson

**April 27**

Danielle Malaski  
Mariah Mercer

**April 28**

Ruth Alling





# 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

## Our First Lutheran School students let the light of Christ SHINE in their lives!

*Pre-K students were asked what they knew about Easter and living for Jesus.*

**BECKHAM:** Jesus has power to rise from the dead. Jesus thinks about me being nice.

**EVERETT:** Jesus died on the cross for our sins. To live for Jesus, we do what He says.

**ISABELLA:** Jesus rose from the dead. He died on the cross. He had to go back. Now He washes our sins away.

**KADEN:** Jesus loves the children. The Easter bunny is not the important thing. God is the "importantest."

**PERCY:** Jesus rose so our sins will be gone and washed away. We live for Jesus with His power and strength.

**PRESLEY:** I know that Jesus made all the animals in the world. Also, Jesus created us people. We are in Jesus' army!

**RHYS:** God rose for Christmas, and He rose for Easter. We live for Jesus by loving Him.

**RORY:** The Roman soldiers put nails in Jesus to die for our sins. He is our Savior. He always watches over our sleeps.

**HOLLYN:** God rose from the dead. He died on the cross to give away our sins. You are raised by God.

**CHARLI:** Jesus rose! We love Him. We really love Him.

*Get Set students were asked how they can help spread Jesus' Light (show others you care, help spread God's love).*

**TITUS:** Helping construction workers build.

**RAIDEN:** I help with my brothers.

**JACIE:** I share with my brother and play with him.

**ISAAC:** I share toys and be friendly.

**AVRAM:** I love God!

**WYATT:** I share with my brothers and play with my mom and dad.

**ISLA:** I'm a big girl and I'm not going to hit or push people. I love my mom and dad and sister and brother.

**TREY:** I share with my sisters and help my family feed the dogs.

**COLTEN:** Love Daddy and Momma.

**MYLES:** I don't ever know what to say for these things, but I love my mom and dad, too.





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FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH is a Congregation of  
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**THE MISSION of First Lutheran Church is**  
**“Sharing God’s Word with Everyone, Everywhere!”**

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

## Whose is it, anyway?

If you have ever bought or sold a house, you are acquainted with the concept of a “title search.” Before you can sell your house, and before anyone else will feel comfortable putting down the money to buy it, you have to prove that you really own it. So a title company looks through the public records to ensure that you bought it from the person who really owned it, who bought it from the person who really owned it before that, all the way back to the earliest records of your state, including when your state was only a territory or colony of England.

Peek into a preschool classroom during playtime and you’ll see a simplified version of this. A child starts playing with a ball, but another child says, “That’s mine: I had it first.”

You can’t understand the Seventh Commandment without understanding this concept of ownership or title. As the Small Catechism puts it:

***You shall not steal. What does this mean?  
We should fear and love God so that we do  
not take our neighbor’s money or possessions,  
or get them in any dishonest way, but help  
him to improve and protect his possessions  
and income.***

### — from your Board of Stewardship

Your neighbor’s possessions are *his*; you don’t have a right to take them. And likewise, your possessions are yours. Ownership and property rights are foundational to any functioning society.

But there is something deeper to know about ownership, and that is the question of who has the title and ownership *to you*?

Paul says, “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price” (1 Cor. 6:19–20).

If you yourself are owned by God, then of course everything that you own you really only possess by God’s leave: all of it, at bottom, belongs to Him since *you* belong to Him. For you were bought with the blood of Christ.

This notion is the foundation of all Christian stewardship. It all belongs to God. It should all be used for things that bring honor to His name, blessings to our neighbors and the extension of His kingdom.



— LCMS.org