

The *First* Word

Volume 25, Issue 8

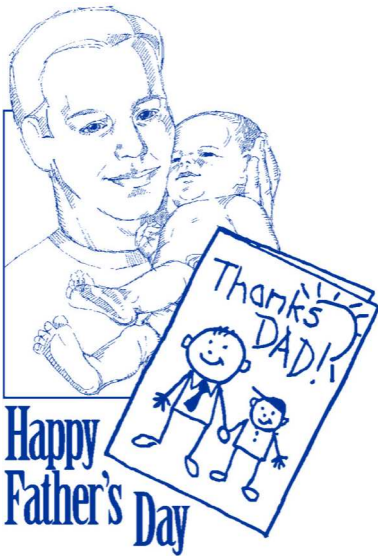
FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL — HELENA, MONTANA

June/July 2024

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

Special June—July Dates

First Edition Book Club.....	June 1
Fellowship Centre at the church	
Last day of FLS classes.....	June 7
Last day for FLS staff.....	June 14
Flag Day	
Father's Day.....	June 16
OWLS.....	June 20
First Day of Summer	
Presentation of The Augsburg.....	June 25
Confession	
Independence Day.....	July 4
OWLS.....	July 18
Vacation Bible School.....	July 22-26
Deadline for August <i>First Word</i>	July 24



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Full agenda for Annual Voters' Assembly meeting on Sunday, June 9



Please mark your calendar and plan now to attend the Annual Voters' meeting set for 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, June 9.

A light lunch will be served.

Agenda items include: The financial report for the year; presentation of the proposed Spending Plan for 2024-2025; an update on the Strategic Plan; and election of MMC members and members of the Board of Elders.

The nominees for MMC positions are as follows: For President (2-year term): Jason Mercer; for MMC at-large members (all for 2-year terms): Elly Schmeltzer, Randy Middlebrook, David Goodson, and Steven Johnson. (Secretary

Linda Fromm has one year remaining on her 2-year term.)

The nominees for the Board of Elders (all 2-year terms): Aaron Hollatz, Bill Spellman (seeking election, to assume duties when membership has reached one year in August 2024); Marty Baumann, Paul Taylor, and Walter Wareham.

Per Article 9 of the Bylaws, the list of nominees is closed at the time the meeting agenda and slate of candidates is distributed, which is being done by way of this article and in the Announcements in the Sunday bulletin beginning on Sunday, May 26. Because there are no nominees for the office of Vice President or Treasurer (both 2-year terms), those offices will remain vacant at this time.

Voting members are all confirmed members who have reached the age of 18.



Nine women from First Lutheran, along with District Pastoral Counselor Pastor Miller, attended the LWML Montana District Convention, held in Polson, Montana, April 26-28. Mites were collected, speakers were heard, and fun and fellowship was had by all, beginning with a worship service, designed by Pastor Miller, on Friday evening at Mount

Calvary Lutheran Church. Saturday and Sunday were spent at the Flathead Boys and Girls Club, one block from the church. Sunday services found the group back at Mount Calvary, where the women joined for worship with the congregation in Polson.

See DISTRICT LWML, Pg. 4



Pastor's Page - a Devotion from the pen of Pastor Miller

A Father like No Other!

Years ago, a president of the United States encouraged fathers to **"Take time to be a dad today."** I appreciate the encouragement, for it's true that a stable society stems from a stable home.

Not all homes are "stable". In fact, I would go so far as to say that no homes are entirely stable. Perhaps there are spells of "peace time," but how long is it before that golden silence is broken with the cries of sadness, suffering or loss?



The truth is, unfortunately, **that's the way it will always be this side of heaven.** The devil continually lurks and prowls to pull you away from God. Read the book of Job and you'll see him doing his best. The sinful world around us launches its best to distract us with earthquakes, fires, floods, famines... And then there's the old sinful nature which creeps up and convinces us we're doing just fine. "You don't have to take time to be a dad today (or mom or child). You can do whatever makes you feel best." Wham-o! Before you realize it—that peace is turned upside down.



At times like this, the best advice I, or anyone, could give is: **"Take time to be with your Heavenly Father."** He's a Father like no other. We can be with Him as we read and study and hear and share His Word, as we worship Him around His Word and Sacraments, and as we pray to Him and praise His Name.

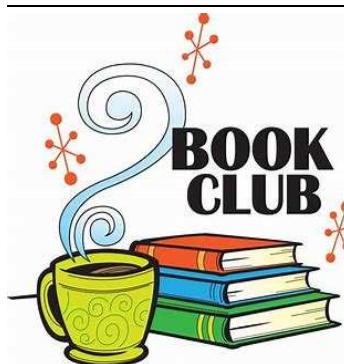
Not only did He create you but **He has also promised to provide for you and protect you** all your days. Read about His love and concern for the birds and the flowers and for you in Matthew 6:25-34. The birds and the flowers don't worry where their next meal comes from, yet the Father provides for them. How much more valuable are you than they!

When we take time with our Heavenly Father to seek his face in the Scriptures, **He settles our fears with His mercy and forgiveness and the great Good News of Jesus Christ** and our salvation in Him, because of all that He has done for us.

Now He quiets the storms of life. He restores your soul and creates that steadfast spirit within you. **Let's take time, not just this Father's Day, but every day, with our heavenly Father.** He's a father like no other!



Blessings to all fathers – and others, *Pastor Miller*



First Edition Book Club members will meet at 12:15 p.m. on Saturday, June 1, **in the Fellowship Centre at the church.** This is a change from the previous meeting location. Lisa Tullis and Susan Buhr will be the hostesses.

Members are reading — and will discuss — *Thunder and Rain* by Charles Martin.

This will be the last regular meeting for the year. Ladies are asked to be thinking about books they would like to suggest for consideration for next year's reading list, and to watch for further information to come regarding a fall potluck.

If you have not already done so, please RSVP immediately to SUSAN by calling 406-449-9961 (no texting, please, just call).



We Give Thanks to God
for our **Choir Members**
HIS Kids! | Chancel Choir

District LWML

Continued from Pg. 1

The business of the LWML was conducted and a mission goal of \$62,400 for the 2024–2026 Biennium of the LWML Montana District was adopted.

The following nine mission grants were approved by the convention body to be funded in the Biennium:

- Living Water Lutheran Church Remodel, Dillon, Montana: \$4,000
- Trinity Lutheran Camp “Camperships,” Bigfork, Montana: \$5,000
- Orphan Grain Train, Shipping Support: \$2,500
- Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch Nutritional Center in Fargo, North Dakota: \$3,000
- Concordia Theological Seminary Food Co-op, Fort Wayne, Indiana: \$2,500
- Concordia Seminary Re-Sell It Shop and Food Bank, St. Louis, Missouri: \$2,500
- Bible Storybooks for Ghana’s Children, Lutheran Heritage Foundation: \$2,000
- Rev. Bryan and Deaconess Payne, Support to Tanzania: \$1,200
- Shepherd’s Canyon Retreat, Wickenburg, Arizona: \$1,200

New officers for the biennium are:

- President Cheryl Stensrud, Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran, Ennis
- Vice President of Christian Life Amy Schultz, Trinity Lutheran, Great Falls
- Vice President of Gospel Outreach Sonja Reeves, First Lutheran, Missoula
- Nominating Committee Chairman Shari Miller, First Lutheran, Helena
- Junior Pastoral Counselor Rev. Jonathan Schultz, Trinity Lutheran, Great Falls



Tell everyone what HE has done
PSALM 26:7

The 2024 LWML Montana District Convention logo was designed by First Lutheran’s own David Goodson, a graphic designer from Helena and owner of Goodson Designs. He also laid out the cover for our manual and the masthead for the newspaper. The LWML thanks him for sharing his talent with us.

The convention logo was based upon the theme Bible verse from Psalm 26:7: *Proclaiming thanksgiving aloud, and telling all your wondrous deeds.*

The logo’s focus is the cross and the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ. The four arrows represent the four corners of the earth. We are Spirit-driven to tell everyone what God has done. All praise, thanks, and glory are HIS!

Celebrate the 4th and summer ... and support our youth programs

Our country needs your help! You can bring joy and also a touch of patriotism to friends and relatives by sending a special FOURTH OF JULY greeting card this year!

I have made some unique cards for you to purchase and support our youth programs here at First. Send one to a veteran, a grandchild, cousin, or homebound friend.

I have also put together “fun” SUMMER GREETING cards to bring joy to someone as the weather warms up and we can all get outside together!

These cards sell separately for a mere 50 cents apiece, starting on Sunday, June 16. I hope you — and those who will receive them — will enjoy them.

Janice Larison
CARDS 4 KIDS



Images shown are for illustrative purposes only; they are not actual cards.



On Sunday, May 19, 2024, after much preparation and study, Lillian Buhr, Ethan Elvbakken, Everett Hollatz, Elainah Veach, and Emma Veach were confirmed by Reverend Larry A. Miller.

We thank our gracious God for those who have served faithfully this year as Confirmation teachers: Bridget Michel, Shari Miller, Pastor Miller, Kathy Winslow (Pre-Confirmation teacher), and Sue Taylor (Youth Class leader).

Lillian Buhr

Psalm 50:11

*I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves
in the field is mine.*

Ethan Elvbakken

Revelation 2:10b

Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Everett Hollatz

Psalm 27:1

*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?*

Elainah Veach

John 3:16

*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that
whoever believes in Him should not perish
but have everlasting life.*

Emma Veach

Luke 23:43

*And [Jesus] said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will
be with Me in paradise.”*

*May our gracious God go with you,
Lillian, Ethan, Everett, Elainah, and Emma,
as you go forth in your journey of faith.*

A father's prayer for his son

Build me a son, O Lord, who will be strong enough to know when he is weak, and brave enough to face himself when he is afraid; one who will be proud and unbending in honest defeat, and humble and gentle in victory.

Build me a son whose wishbone will not be where his backbone should be; a son who will know Thee and that to know himself is the foundation stone of knowledge. Lead him, I pray, not in the path of ease and comfort, but under the stress and spur of difficulties and challenge. Here let him learn to stand up in the storm; here let him learn compassion for those who fail.

Build me a son whose heart will be clean, whose goal

will be high; a son who will master himself before he seeks to master other men; one who will learn to laugh, yet never forget how to weep; one who will reach into the future, yet never forget the past.

And after all these things are his, add, I pray, enough of a sense of humor, so that he may always be serious, yet never take himself too seriously. Give him humility, so that he may always remember the simplicity of greatness, the open mind of true wisdom, the meekness of true strength.

Then I, his father, will dare to whisper, "I have not lived in vain."

— General Douglas MacArthur



June 1

Aaron Hollatz

June 3

Pam Dye

June 4

Kelli Maxwell

June 5

Thomas Basinger

Nancy Westerbuhr

June 6

DeeDee Spellman

June 7

Camille Botteron

Dan O'Malley

June 8

Seth Brott

Randy Middlebrook

Elly Schmeltzer

Cliff Ulmer

June 10

Bill McIntosh III

June 11

Abbey Barnhart

Tammy Hicks

Nathan Nachtsheim

Randy Williams

June 13

Jayce Volpe

June 14

John Adair

Shirley Clearman

Melanie Maier

Skip Nicholls

June 15

Isabelle McIntosh

June 17

Wanda Person

Daniel Warsinski

June 19

Ezekiel Hollatz

Theodore LaForge

June 20

Michael Bridegroom

June 21

Mark Bartels

Rick Northrup

June 22

Ava Ellwein

Nora Keim

Jessie Pate

Kathy Rucker

Dale Wagner

June 23

Jenna Blair

June 24

Jim Talley

June 25

Louisa LaForge

June 26

Ela Shields

June 27

Pat Hartman

June 28

Bobbie McNeil

June 29

Vickie Stefanik

June 30

Mykel O'Malley

Alexander Rose

July 1

Duane Westerbuhr

July 4

Asher Hollatz

Nancy Jenkins

July 5

Crystal Nachtsheim

Kelley Shields

Susan Taylor

July 6

Sam Schmeltzer

July 7

CoraLee Kuehne

Samuel Yager

July 8

Robert Johnson

July 9

Garett Bacon

Spirit Hartford

July 10

Joleigh Mandera

July 11

Marge Bouldin

July 12

LeAnn Ferron

July 13

Lorrie Bridegroom

Ryan Clinch

Jim Hicks

July 14

Dorothy Goodson

Jon Spranget

July 15

Dean Belcourt

Traeton Duty

July 16

Betty Brewer

Elainah Veach

Emma Veach

July 18

Bryon Elvbakken

Laurie Hanson

July 19

Samantha Taylor

July 21

Lowell Bartels

Dagny Cannon

Elliott Cole

Dennis Giulio

Beatrice Johnson

Cheryl Summerer

July 22

Tiffani Eccleston

July 23

Jerry Michel

Emma Taylor

July 24

Dez Brown

Bruce Nachtsheim

July 26

Laurie Stelter

Debbie Sternberg

July 27

Robert Mohs

Pam Worthy

July 28

Thomas Leitzke

July 29

Amber Boucher

July 31

Joseph Warsinski



Class of 2024



AJ Buhr

AJ obtained his High School Equivalency Diploma in February 2024. He is hoping to spend the next year working and gaining life experiences. In the future, he has dreams of attending San Jose State to become a marine biologist (and the study of sharks), or of becoming a music engineer. AJ is the son of Brian and Susan Buhr.



Addelyn Leary

Addy graduated from Jefferson High School on May 26. She plans to attend Montana Tech with a major in biological sciences. Addy is the daughter of Leigh Ann Holmes.



Ben LaForge

Ben will graduate from Helena High School. This fall, he plans to attend Highlands College Lineman School in Butte. Ben is the son of Al and Louisa LaForge.



Ellie Mercer

Ellie will graduate from Capital High School as a valedictorian. This fall, she will be attending the Davidson Honors College at the University of Montana to pursue a double major in medical laboratory science and dance. Ellie is the daughter of Jason and Tara Mercer.

Go with God, graduates, as you begin a new chapter in your lives!

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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

The gift of contentment

— from your Board of Stewardship

As children grow up, they often feel cramped by their parents’ restrictions. Dad says to be home by 11. But why can’t I stay out ‘til midnight? Mom says to clean my room on Saturday morning. But I want to sleep in late, then roll out of bed, hop in the car and go to my friend’s house without delay. I want to do what I decide is best.

The older we get, and especially when we have kids of our own, we begin to see the truth. Mom and Dad were not cramping our style or trying to crush our personal freedom — they were looking out for us, providing for us and teaching us a better way of life.

If that’s how it is with fallible human parents, how much more so with our Heavenly Father! We sinners often feel cramped by the Law of God. Our sinful flesh wants to go its own way, do its own thing and be in charge. But in our heart of hearts, we know how foolish this is. We know that God loves us, and therefore all of His commands are

for our benefit. Each one of His commandments is meant to bless us. Consider the last two commandments: You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor’s inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it. (Small Catechism II)

You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor. What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not entice or force away our neighbor’s wife, workers, or animals, or turn them against him, but urge them to stay and do their duty. (Small Catechism II)

The commandments against coveting are warning us against losing one of the greatest gifts we can possess:

contentment. Being content and thankful with what God has provided for us is a necessary building block of living a happy life. Unthankful coveting of what we have not been given will only make us miserable, so God warns us against it.

God has proven His love for us in sending His only begotten Son to shed His blood for us, cleanse us of our sins and brings us back into His family. If He loves us this much, then what percentage of His commandments do you think are meant to harm us? Probably no more than one or two percent, right? Of course that’s absurd. God means to bless us with everything He says to us. The Law of God simply describes what a truly happy life, lived in thankfulness to Christ, looks like: It’s a generous, merciful, contented life that uses all of the resources God has given us for His purposes.

— LCMS.org
Stewardship Resources