

The *First* Word

Volume 26, Issue 6

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL — HELENA, MONTANA

April 2025

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 2
First Edition Book Club.....	April 5
Home of Lori Northrup	
WOW! Hosea Bible Study.....	April 8
Palm Sunday.....	April 13
FLS Easter Break.....	April 14-21
Dorcas Quilters meet.....	April 16
Maunder Thursday.....	April 17
Good Friday.....	April 18
Easter Celebration & Egg Hunt.....	April 19
Resurrection of Our Lord.....	April 20
FLS classes resume.....	April 22
WOW! Hosea Bible Study	
Second Sunday of Easter.....	April 27
Dorcas Quilters meet.....	April 30

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 2025, 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 1-year term); Secretary (for a 2-year term); Treasurer (for a 2-year term); and two MMC at-large members (each for 2-year terms). All terms will begin on July 1, 2025.

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.

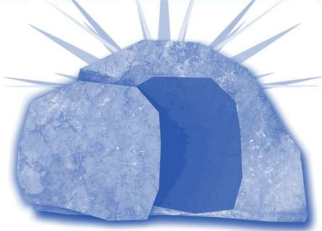
The MMC generally meets one evening each month, for approximately two hours.

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. *You do not need to have another member of the congregation nominate you; just ask Jason to add your name to the list of nominees for the position in which you are willing to serve.*



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

He Is RISEN INDEED!



Hope for Holy Week

As you travel with Jesus through Holy Week, don't lose heart. He is your Palm Sunday King. He will always come to you and give you the best of what He has to offer because of His humble attitude and His devotion to His mission.

When you see this Savior who personally cares for you, you can't help but join the believers of old to give to the Lord your best and most precious treasures of your heart and life, and then to join with all believers saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"



— Peter Sulzle
The Newsletter Newsletter

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Celebrating 95 years of a life well-lived

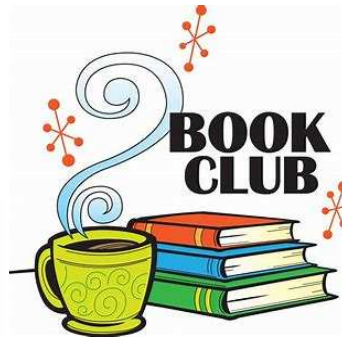


Our gracious God has blessed beloved First Lutheran member Walli Johnson with 95 years of a life well-lived, and on March 6, 2025, the exact date of that milestone birthday, a small group of friends celebrated with her at a special dinner at Touchmark.

Joining in the festivities were Susan and Lowell Bartels, Cheryl Brown, Bridget Michel, Sue Taylor, Shannon and Mark Walker, and Linda Fromm.

We at First Lutheran are Walli's earthly family, and she very much appreciates all the love we have shared with her over the years, and which we continue to show to her.

Walli is one of our oldest members, and, if God allows, she maintains that she is going to live to celebrate 100 years!



First Edition Book Club members will meet at **12 noon** on Saturday, April 5, at the home of Lori Northrup for lunch and a stimulating discussion of *These is My Words: The Diary of Sarah Agnes Prine* by Nancy E. Turner.

Please RSVP to Lori by Wednesday, April 2, by calling or texting (406) 461-5378.

Those wishing to carpool to Lori's house should plan to meet at the Jo-Ann Fabrics parking lot at 11:40 a.m.

The May luncheon and discussion will be held at **12 noon** on Saturday, May 3, at the home of Terry Wareham. For the May meeting, members will read *Long Way Home: Journeys of a Chinese Montanan* by Flora Wong.

Please RSVP to Terry by Wednesday, April 30, by calling or texting (406) 697-6612.

Ladies generally carpool to Terry's house, and should watch for more information to come from Linda Fromm regarding the time and place to meet for that carpool.

Christian symbol



PALM BRANCH — When Jesus entered Jerusalem days before His death, crowds welcomed Him by waving palm branches, common symbols of victory and rejoicing. Churches still use them to remember that occasion, knowing that Jesus' crucifixion was the ultimate triumph over sin and death. As early as Leviticus 23:40, God commanded Israel to use palms in a festival of rejoicing. In Revelation 7:9-10, Christian martyrs carry palm branches as they praise the Lamb before God's throne.

— The Newsletter Newsletter

Women of the Word



The W.O.W. (Women of the Word) Bible study group continues to study the Bible book of *Hosea*. We meet **every second and fourth Tuesday** at 7 p.m. at the church and we'd love to have you join us!

Following are the dates. Please flag your calendar:

**April 8 and 22
May 13**

The First Word

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(406) 442-5367



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 23. Place articles in the First Word box in the church office or email them to: lindafromm@mac.com

Pastor's Page... About Lent, Holy Week, and Easter!



It is no secret that **Jesus sent His first disciples out in teams** – two - by - two. I've often wondered who got to go with whom, but we're not told. As Jesus called the disciples in the first place, He likely decided who their traveling companions would be as well.

We still serve in teams in the church today. We depend on others for prayer and encouragement. In many of our servant ministries we work with people, side by side. Echoing through the church for all these centuries is the truth from Ecclesiastes 4:9, *"Two are better than one."*

There is a time, though, when one might be better than two. Jesus shows us that Himself, when all along His way to the cross, all through those three years of ministry, He took off alone for solitude and prayer. Check it out in Matthew 14:13, Mark 1:35, or Luke 4:42. When Jesus had a big decision to make (like choosing His disciples), when He needed special strength for a giant challenge (like His trial and Passion), or when He was just plain exhausted, Jesus got away, I mean away from everybody, and went it alone. Truth is, He wasn't alone - alone; He was alone with His Father.

Jesus even had a special place for prayer. When He was in Jerusalem He returned again and again to a lovely garden on the Mount of Olives, called Gethsemane. It reminds me of a verse from Alexander Pope's famous poem, "Ode on Solitude":

***How happy he, who free from care, The rage of courts, and noise of towns;
Contented breathes his native air, In his own grounds.***

I've never been to the Garden of Gethsemane. I can imagine, though, spending some time alone there praying and reading the Passion history of our Savior and growing.

The truth is, **you and I need solitude.** If Jesus needed it, how much more we! Maybe, as we journey through Lent and enter Holy Week, it's time for us to take a quiet walk and pray a prayer through our familiar territory.

Maybe it's a favorite chair or a quiet place where you can **open your Bible and really hear God speak to you in particular, to you with your needs, your weaknesses, your challenges.** It may even be a whole day dedicated to a silent retreat in God's presence. However you do it, you and God need to be alone together.

We live a crowded life, we disciples. We live and work and worship in masses of people. We work well in teams, but **we also need to be alone with God.** He clears the head and cleans the heart. He opens our eyes and strengthens our weak knees for the road that lies ahead.

After Jesus left the solitude of Gethsemane, He journeyed to the Cross and to the Open Tomb and eventually to His home in heaven! As we journey with Him this Lent and Easter, **may we also experience His amazing grace and love ... for us!**



**God will be with you and me in our times of quiet prayer
and in our Easter alleluias!**

Quiet Lent and LOUD Easter **blessings to you**
in the Name of our loving and victorious Lord and Savior Jesus
as together we celebrate His love,

Pastor Miller

Sunday Worship in Lent + Savior, Servant, Friend!

The Sundays in Lent, Holy Week, and Easter provide us with a unique opportunity to explore the extraordinary attributes of our Savior, Servant, and Friend, Jesus. It is a time to marvel at the many blessings we received when He laid down His life for us on the cross and then rose victorious from the grave. Each Sunday we'll dwell upon a different aspect of our greatest Friend and what each characteristic means to us as followers and friends.

Sunday, April 6 + Comforter

**Jesus comforts us
in struggles and sorrows,
that we might find rest in His promises.**

Sunday, April 13 + Palm Sunday
+ King +

**Jesus enters Jerusalem as our king,
to overthrow sin, death and the devil.**

Easter Sunday April 20 + SonRise
+ Risen + (6:30 a.m.)

**The risen Lord is always with us,
bringing us peace and joy.**

Easter Sunday, April 20 + Festival
+ Redeemer +

**Jesus is our Redeemer,
who frees us to live a new life.**

Midweek Lenten & Holy Week Worship + The Hand of the Lord!

Our Lord has hands, real hands. Jesus has accomplished all that we need, especially in His Passion and death on Calvary's Cross, not to mention (yet) His Easter Resurrection. Amazingly, He takes our manipulative, distorted, self-serving hands and restores them into useful hands for His purposes, both to literally use them in service and to make our whole lives into His instruments of witness, service, and praise.

Wednesday, April 2

**The Hand of the Lord
Who Raises the Dead!**

Wednesday, April 9

**The Hand of the Lord
Who Holds all Things!**

Holy Thursday, April 12
(12:10 and 7 p.m.)

**The Hand of the Lord
Who Serves and Feeds!**

Good Friday, April 13
(12:10 and 7 p.m.)

**The Hand of the Lord
Pierced for Us!**



Sunday Worship
begins at 8:15
and 11 a.m.



Wednesday Worship
begins at 12:10
and 6:30 p.m.

Share Easter joy with family and friends and support First's youth programs

Easter card packages are available this month starting on Sunday, April 6. Packages of eight cards include a variety of themes and are suitable for friends and family. Packages are \$5 each.

This is such a wonderful time of year to send greetings to people you hold dear, and proceeds from card sales go toward our youth programs and activities here at First Lutheran.

Thank you for your donations of holiday cards for this ministry!



— Janice Larison
CARDS 4 KIDS

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

Book may help to cope in difficult times

A recent acquisition to the church library is *My Two Elaines*, in which Martin J. Schreiber relates his walk with his wife through the various stages of Alzheimer's. The subtitle, *Learning, Coping, and Surviving as an Alzheimer Caregiver*, aptly describes the book.

Elaine was Schreiber's gracious first lady when he was governor of Wisconsin. The second Elaine is the person she became as the disease claimed her senses. Pages from her journals show her initial frustration at the diagnosis and her later perceptions of events in her life.

The author comments on situations he encountered and offers advice to others who may be journeying through life as a caregiver to his or her spouse. Because Alzheimer's disease touches many lives, learning how one caregiver coped may provide hope to others.

The book is shelved in the S section of the nonfiction books.

— Bridget Michel

Blessed shall you be

— from your Board of Stewardship

“Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out” (Deuteronomy 28:3-6).

This is God's promise to the Israelites as they stood beyond the Jordan outside of the Promised Land. He promises blessing to His people. He will make them prosper, whether they are in the city or the field. He will make the fruit of their work to prosper, whether from the ground, their wombs, their flocks, or their herds. He will make them to prosper in all things, whether upon their coming in or their going out.

But there's a catch. He would do this

for Israel only “if you obey the voice of the LORD your God” (Deut. 28:2b). If they did that, He would cause that “all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you” (Deut. 28:2a). If they didn't obey the voice of the Lord, if they didn't keep the commandments of the Lord and “walk in his ways” (Deut. 28:9), they would be met with curse and woe. The blessings would be replaced with curses. Everything that the Lord promised to prosper and bless would be cursed and fail.

Thanks be to God that our Lord Jesus Christ has come into our flesh and fulfilled the law for us – in our place and for our benefit. Our Lord Jesus Christ died for us – in our place and for our benefit. Our Lord Jesus Christ is risen from the dead for us – in our place and for our benefit. By this we have justification before God. We are forgiven, clean, holy, and

righteous. The blessing of God is promised to us in Christ Jesus. It depends upon His work, not ours.

All this is ours in Holy Baptism. For in Holy Baptism, God claims us as His own, makes us His children, His heirs, and His holy people. And so it is that the work of our hands and its fruit is holy because we are holy in Christ. It is pressed into His service, and it thereby becomes a blessing to us and to our neighbor.

For this great gift, our reception of the blessings of God because of Christ Jesus our Lord, it is our duty to thank and praise, serve, and obey Him. This is not in order to receive the blessings but because in Christ we already have. With this in mind, we sit down on the first day of the week and set aside as He has prospered us to give to His church for His work of blessing in our midst (1 Cor. 16:2).

— LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Human Care Ministry to add three areas of outreach

Thanks to the Talk Back responses submitted by First Lutheran members, our Human Care Ministry will add three areas of outreach!

- **Writing cards to shut-ins**
Kris Basinger, leader
(406) 422-8120 (text or call)



- **Telephone prayer chain**
Tammy Anderson, leader
(406) 459-8762 (text or call)
(If you have a prayer request to submit, please call the church office at (406) 442-5367 or email churchoffice@firstlutheranhelena.org and your request will be forwarded to Tammy.)



- **Food Train**
DeeDee Spellman, leader
(307) 631-9669 (text or call)
(This outreach is for providing a meal when members have a loved one in the hospital or one who has returned home from the hospital, or if there is a death in the family.)



If you have indicated interest in serving in any of these areas, you'll be hearing from the leader about the process for that ministry. If you expressed interest in the prayer chain, Tammy will contact you with additional steps in the prayer chain process.

If you need — or know of a First Lutheran member who would benefit from — help from the Food Train, please contact the church office at (406) 442-5367 or email churchoffice@firstlutheranhelena.org.

Thank you for keeping these ministries in your prayers!

— Human Care Ministry



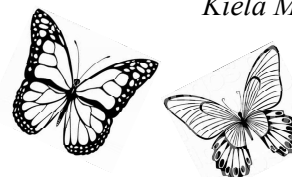
April 1
Kristin Basinger
Lena Deppmeier
Sonja Elvbakken
April 2
Richard Ellwein
April 3
Darlene Staffelt
April 4
Quinn Hanson
Dan McCarthy
Ryan Rose
April 5
Jacob Balcerzak
Eli Walker
April 6
Ian McGrane

April 7
Walter Wareham
April 8
Kim Ballard
Lillian Buhr
Jonathan Maxwell
April 9
Joseph Ellwein
Heather Johnson
April 10
Tierney Beatty
Zachary Everson
Cheyenne Frank
Crystal Gozelanski
Larry Shields
April 11
Chuck Ballard

April 13
Jean Hanson
April 14
Liz Belcourt
Rena Belcourt
Henry Schmeltzer
Amber Smith
April 15
Zachary Antonick
Kristina Johnson
April 16
Betty Burton
April 17
Danielle McCarthy
April 18
Pippa Davis
April 19
Joe Jorgensen

April 20
Dale Young
April 21
Meagan Kraft
Rob Lebahn
Gibson McIntosh
Nathan Mohs
April 22
Dallas Anderson
Briana Brott
Chris Brott
Carla Smith
April 24
Jana Nygaard

April 25
Emilie Glenn
Julianne Hill
Sid Lebahn
Daniel O'Malley
Cole Peterson
April 27
Danielle Malaski
Mariah Mercer
April 28
Ruth Alling
April 29
Sharyn Gunderson
April 30
Kiela McCarthy





Happenings at First Lutheran School



Director: Sue Taylor Get Set Teacher: Shannon Champagne Pre-Kindergarten Teacher: Lori Radtke After Care Providers: Melanie Middlebrook/Emily DuPre, Lillian Buhr Lunch Assistant: Jeannie Hubbard Pastor: Larry A. Miller

At First Lutheran School we love and appreciate our teachers!



Our daytime teachers, after-care teachers, lunch assistants, and everyone who assists with our students are a blessing to our school, students, and families. Our classroom teachers, Ms. Lori and Ms. Shannon, are led by the Holy Spirit as they share Christ's love with our students every day. From their smiles and encouragement to their fun, enriching activities and warm hugs, they make every day a special day for the little ones in their care.



In their own words, the kids tell us why they love these amazing teachers.

I love that Ms. Lori is my teacher because:

Daisy: She is a good teacher 'cause she helps us learn things really good.

Raiden: She's nice and does good stuff. I like the way she talks to me.

Wyatt: She chases me at recess, and it is fun. She doesn't catch me.

Isaac: She teaches me letters.

Lochlan: She makes fun crafts and gives us fun games.

Jacie: She's the best teacher!

Trey: She has the mystery bag, and it is fun.

Ainsley: She's sweet and nice. She's kind to everybody.

Titus: She's nice and she lets us play ketchup (football game).

Ryker: She sends us to stations, and we can play.

I love that Ms. Shannon is my teacher because:

Colter: She's great and because of the Holy Spirit.

Eli: She asks me funny questions and makes me laugh.

Isla: She gives us food and great jobs. Even she teaches us about God, and she loves us so much. She lets us use her markers and she does a great job of hugging.

Colten: Me love her because she is nice.

Avram: She brings us downstairs and she brings us outside.

Maelynn: She draws with me. We use paper and markers.

Lily: She teaches us all about God and I like playing with my friends.

Dean: She teaches me really fun.

Roland: She has earrings and I like her hugs.

Easton: Me love her so much. I miss her at my home and want her to come to my home every day.

First Lutheran School Registration

Registration for the 2025-26 school year is currently open. We still have room in our PreK and Get Set classes for your child. If your child turns three by September 3, 2025, and is fully potty trained, we would love to have him or her join us.

First Lutheran School Summer 2025

We are currently offering a summer program that will be available on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday for a period of 10 weeks during the summer. We welcome children between 5-8 years of age to join us. Registration for this program is currently open.

Sunday School

We will be holding an Easter Celebration and Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 19, starting at 10 a.m. We welcome everyone from the congregation, school, and community to join us. We will offer a short Easter devotion, crafts, cookie decorating, story time, and an egg hunt.

First Lutheran Church & School
 2231 Broadway
 Helena, MT 59601

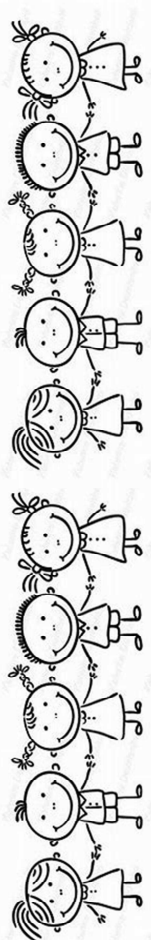
Phone: (406) 442-5367
 Fax: (406) 442-5285
 School Phone: (406) 442-6913
 Website: www.firstlutheranhelena.org
 Email: churchoffice@firstlutheranhelena.org

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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!”

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



Funst for KIDS!



Springing to LIFE


New life defines the season of spring. Make this Easter craft that symbolizes rebirth.

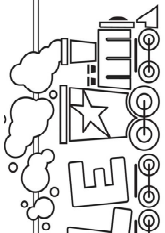
What you need:

- Brown paper lunch bag
- Scissors
- Pencil
- Glue stick
- Jellybeans

What you do:

1. From the bag's bottom, cut two 2-inch circles. Set aside.
2. From the sides, cut two 10-inch circles.
3. Draw a thin spiral on each large circle and cut along the lines. Crinkle spirals gently.
4. Starting at the center, wrap one spiral into a nest. Glue every few inches to hold it.
5. Glue one small circle to the bottom of the nest.
6. Repeat with the other spiral. Fill nests with jellybeans and give to a friend!





PUZZLE

OUR EASTER GIFT

Thanks to Easter, what wonderful gift does God give us?

Directions: Start at the given letter, move one space in the direction each arrow points. Write the last letter in each sequence in the spaces provided. Then write those answers in order on the blanks below to complete 1 Peter 1:3, NIV


A	B	C	D	E
F	G	H	I	J
K	L	M	N	O
P	Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X	Y

1. C → ↓ ↓
2. H → ↑ →
3. V ↑ → ↓
4. I ← ← ↑
5. T ↑ ← ↑
6. P ↑ → → ↓
7. D ↓ → ↓ ↓
8. T ↑ ← ↑ ←

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

In his great mercy he has given us _____ into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1 Peter 1:3, NIV



Answer: new birth