

The *First* Word

Volume 26, Issue 5

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL — HELENA, MONTANA

March 2025

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. 1
Home of Joyce Nachtsheim
- Transfiguration of Our Lord.....Mar. 2
- Ash Wednesday.....Mar. 5
Dorcas Circle Quilters
- Joy Vibe.....Mar. 7
- First Sunday in Lent.....Mar. 9
Daylight Saving Time begins
- Following the Lord (FtL).....Mar. 10
- WOW! Hosea Bible Study.....Mar. 11
- Second Sunday in Lent.....Mar. 16
- St. Patrick's Day.....Mar. 17
- Dorcas Circle Quilters.....Mar. 19
- O.W.L.S.Mar. 20
- Joy Vibe.....Mar. 21
- Third Sunday in Lent.....Mar. 23
- Following the Lord (FtL).....Mar. 24
- WOW! Hosea Bible Study.....Mar. 25
- Fourth Sunday in Lent.....Mar. 30

Present your requests to God

First Lutheran's Board of Elders has scheduled a prayer vigil for Saturday, April 12 (the day before Palm Sunday), beginning at 7 a.m. and running through 7 p.m.

If you wish to participate in the vigil, please sign up for a time slot, even if you will be praying off site. A sign up sheet will be available in the Fellowship

Hall (or Ziegler Hall) all during the month of March.

Those who have prayer requests are encouraged to place them in the prayer request basket or prayer request box prior to April 12.



The Lenten desert



During the Lenten season, which begins on Ash Wednesday (March 5 this year), Christians figuratively follow Jesus into the desert. Just as our Savior spent 40 days fasting and facing temptation, we focus on self-reflection and contrition.

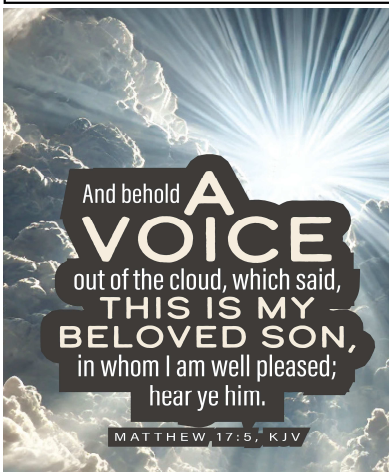
In an 1873 hymn, Claudia Hernaman wrote,

“O Lord, throughout these forty days, you prayed and kept the fast. Inspire

repentance for our sin, and free us from our past.”

The desert experience of Lent serves a clear purpose, filling us up rather than depleting us. “This is what Lent is meant to be,” writes theologian Ron Rolheiser. “Time in the desert to courageously face the chaos and the demons within us and to let God do battle with them through us. The result is that we are purified, made ready, so the intoxicating joy of Easter might then bind us more closely to God and each other.”

— The Newsletter Newsletter



Tell your story

In his *Confessio*, St. Patrick shares his fascinating biography, placing Jesus at the center. Believers should follow suit, especially in a culture that is “ignoring and forgetting the Christian story,” states Father Billy Swan. At WordOnFire.org, the Irish Catholic priest writes:

“Our calling is to retell the greatest story ever told and to help people find their place within the drama in which God has created them to participate. Like St. Patrick, we retell that story not as detached bystanders but as witnesses whose lives have been changed by being drawn deeper into the dynamics of the great love story of God and his people.”

Patty Breen, a lay minister in Michigan, also finds inspiration from the fifth-century saint. “The journey and life story of St. Patrick invite us to wrestle with and consider these questions,” she writes. “Who is God for me? How do I contribute to the coming of the kingdom of God? What is God’s plan for my life? Where am I invited to serve?”

Writing down our own *Confessio*, or faith story, is “a way to remember and see God’s presence with you at each step of your life,” adds Breen, “even at times when you weren’t necessarily following God.”

— The Newsletter Newsletter

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Women of the Word

The W.O.W. (Women of the Word) Bible study group is continuing our study of 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:

March 11 and 25
April 8 and 22
May 13



Fasting and feasting

During Lent, consider this practical — and biblical — advice from Arthur Lichtenberger, a former presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church:

- *Fast* from criticism, and *feast* on praise.
- *Fast* from self-pity, and *feast* on joy.
- *Fast* from ill-temper, and *feast* on peace.
- *Fast* from resentment, and *feast* on contentment.
- *Fast* from jealousy, and *feast* on love.
- *Fast* from pride, and *feast* on humility.
- *Fast* from selfishness, and *feast* on service.
- *Fast* from fear, and *feast* on faith.

— *The Newsletter Newsletter*



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.

2025 Summer Camp Dates

- 3rd/4th Grade Day Camp.....June 23-25
- 3rd/4th Grade Overnight Camp.....June 25-27
- 5th/6th Grade Camp.....June 29-July 4
- 7th/8th Grade Camp.....July 13-18
- Basketball Camp (5th-9th Grades)....July 20-25
- High School Week..... July 27-Aug. 1

For detailed information go to:

www.trinitylutherancamp.org

Select *Summer Camps 2025* in the menu

or contact:

Camp Director Rachel Doucette

rachel@trinitykalispell.org

NEW WEBSITE COMING SOON!



Reservations have been made at Cane Ridge West and planning continues for an exciting one-day **Fall Family Retreat** at this beautiful facility situated in the heart of the Rocky Mountains just east of Lincoln in central Montana, and nestled along the Rocky Mountain Range.

On **Saturday, September 6, 2025**, (the first Saturday after the Labor Day weekend) we will gather together to enjoy good food, fellowship,

and activities for the entire family: children, youth, young and older adults!

Save this date on your calendar now, watch for more details to come as planning progresses, and plan to be a part of this very special event for the First Lutheran congregation!

The First Word

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

Deadline for the April issue of the First Word is Wednesday, Mar. 19. Place articles in the First Word box in the church office or email to: lindafromm@mac.com



Lent is a time... of introspection, and even penance, as we look forward with humble awe and deep gratitude to the celebration of Jesus' resurrection. The term "Lent" comes from the Old English word *lencten*, which referred to the "lengthening" of the daylight hours during spring.

Lent is also known as a time to **"give things up"**. Chocolate, soft drinks, name your vice... But Lent should not be a time to simply diet. It is so much more. Lent is a time of self-reflection, remembering what God has done for us. So here is something to think about:

Do You Want to Fast This Lent?

- Fast from hurting things and say kind words.
- Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.
- Fast from anger and be filled with patience.
- Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.
- Fast from worry and have trust in God.
- Fast from pressures and be prayerful.
- Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
- Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.
- Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.
- Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.
- Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.



I am not suggesting that any of these things are easy. They are not. But God calls us to do hard things. In response to Jesus' passion and love for us, if we do any of these things, I believe we'll find that this Lent, our life will be richer, and we'll have a deeper understanding and appreciation of the sacrifices Jesus made for us.

Lenten blessings, in our Lenten Lord,

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 this month, we'll dwell upon a different aspect of our greatest Friend and what each characteristic means to us as His followers and friends.

Sunday, March 9 + Forgiver

**Jesus forgives us again and again,
even though we do not deserve it.**

Sunday, March 16 + Listener

**Jesus listens to us like no other
and answers our questions and concerns.**

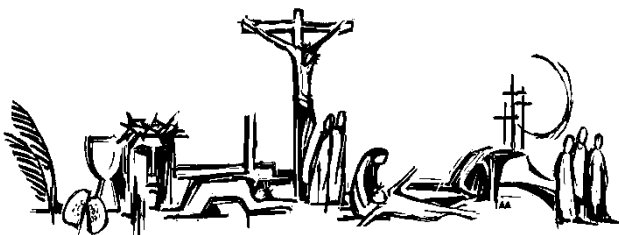
Sunday March 23 + Encourager

**Jesus encourages us in our faith
to live our life for Him.**

Sunday, March 30 + Protector

**Jesus protects us
from the devil and from danger
and keeps us safe in Him.**

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



Midweek Lenten Worship The Hand of the Lord!

The literal and figurative actions of mere human hands in the Bible are often the means of our own sin. After all, our own Lord was “delivered into the hands of men” (Luke 9:44). However, on a greater level, we know that it was the hand of the Lord at work all along, most especially in His crucifixion. Christ laid down His life of His own authority as He allowed Himself to be delivered into the hands of sinful men (John 10:18).

Our Lord has hands, real hands. Jesus has accomplished all that we need. 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, March 5

**The Hand of the Lord
Who Freely Gives!**

Wednesday, March 12

**The Hand of the Lord
Who Creates and Saves!**

Wednesday, March 19

**The Hand of the Lord
Who Casts Out Demons!**

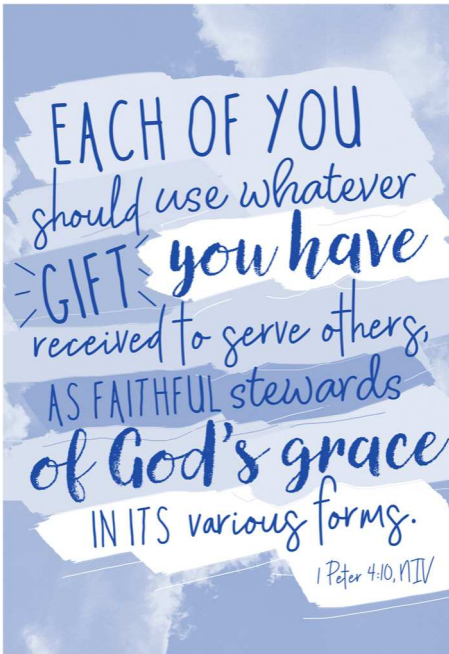
Wednesday, March 26

**The Hand of the Lord
Who Heals the Sick!**

Wednesday Worship
begins at 12:10 and 6:30

God's instruments, God's stewards

— from your Board of Stewardship



For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:10).

Some pastors refer to these words as “the most forgotten words in the Scriptures.” They are forgotten because they follow the familiar and critical words before them. The preceding two verses that overshadow Ephesians 2:10 are words of justification: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is

not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph. 2:8–9). These are words preached regularly. They are assigned as confirmation verses. They carry with them the very heart of what it means to be a redeemed child of God!

Precisely because the previous verses are so central to salvation, they often overpower our practice of stewardship! We have been saved by grace. This is certain and sure because of Jesus. Works play no role in our salvation. No credit taking for us! Grace is freely given. Faith is miraculously created by the Spirit and joyously received. This truth is so wonderful and so encompassing that we often miss out on WHY we are redeemed.

The grace of God revealed in Jesus calls us to faith. But St. Paul doesn’t stop with grace and faith. He continues to the logical conclusion. Just like the creation declares the handiwork of God, the redemption of sinners like you and me declares His greatest handiwork! Redeemed stewards are created to reflect the grace and mercy God showers on us to others.

As Lutherans, we understand that good works flow from faith in Jesus Christ. They are the fruit of the tree of salvation into which we have been grafted by grace. Sanctification and

stewardship are both on-going and active confessions of what the Lord has done in us. These works are not always spectacular. Many times, they are simply parents showing Jesus to their children. They are compassionate actions that live out the truth of the Gospel to co-workers and even complete strangers. While they can be grand endeavors, more likely they are simple, beautiful works which highlight what Jesus has done in us.

These works aren’t random, either. They have been planned by God. God planned to use you as a faithful steward as you walk the road that leads you through your daily life. There are no chance encounters or coincidences. They have been planned by the Lord of the universe for the benefit of His creation. Good works are what point to God’s greatest work: Jesus!

He calls you and me to walk in this faith, which flows from this grace, which has been poured out on us in Jesus. But even this is not to our credit. We are simply called to be faithful stewards of God’s grace so that we may share it with those who need it as much as we do. God’s Spirit carries us along in this. We are just the steward — the instrument in His hand to accomplish His plan and glorify Him!

— LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Two-way benefits

“When you do nothing, you feel overwhelmed and powerless,” observed Connecticut politician Pauline Keezer. “But when you get involved, you feel the sense of hope and accomplishment that comes from knowing you are working to make things better.” Indeed, it’s impossible to shine light in someone else’s life without lighting up your own.

We might think being generous toward another with our time or possessions leaves us with less. But as Jesus said, “Whoever loses their life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 10:39, NIV). How common it is that when we minister to others in Christ’s name, we find we have also — or perhaps even more so — received ministry. This is the miracle of God’s love at work.

— The Newsletter Newsletter

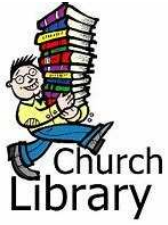
Jesus, the model of salt and light

In Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus tells His followers, “You are the salt of the earth. ... You are the light of the world.” Through His example, our Savior showed us what that means.

“The remarkable thing is that Jesus brought it all into reality in His own person,” writes Bible scholar N.T. Wright in *Matthew for Everyone*. “He was the salt of the earth. He was the light of the world: set up on a hilltop, crucified for all the world to see, becoming a beacon of hope and new life for everybody, drawing people to worship his [F]ather, embodying the way of self-giving love which is the deepest [fulfillment] of the law and the prophets.”

— The Newsletter Newsletter

Did you know First has two libraries?



First Lutheran has two libraries! The books for older readers are located in what is usually called the Music Room, just off the Fellowship Hall. Children's books are

in the basement and are frequently used by the preschool students. Both libraries have a large variety of holdings that may be checked out. Talk with Director of Education Sue Taylor about the children's books.

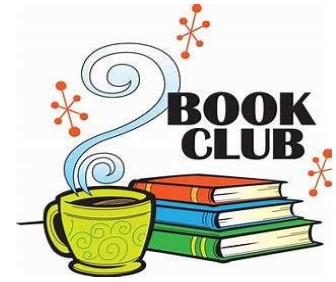
The main floor library has popular fiction authors like Jeanette Oke, Debbie Macomber, and Francine Rivers. Nonfiction books include biographies, devotions, Bible studies and reference books, a large collection of Max Lucado volumes, and much, much more. Browse the shelves and just sign out any books you borrow.

I recently finished a short biography titled *Years of Triumph, the Story of Alicia Gilewicz* by Doug Wead. The story begins in 1940, when six-year-old Alicia and her parents are removed from their home in Poland by Russian agents. The story follows their tribulations and how God protects them. They survive separation, army service, and flight to Africa before finally reuniting in 1948. Alicia's prayer becomes "We'll do the work, Lord; You provide the miracles."

This book is a sample of the many encouraging stories of Christian perseverance that abound in the first floor library.

It's still winter. Curl up with a good book from the church library, or find a good children's book to read to your youngster(s) ... or both!

— Bridget Michel



First Edition Book Club members will meet for luncheon and discussion at **12 noon** on Saturday, March 1, at the home of **Joyce Nachtsheim**. (This is a *change* to the original meeting schedule.) Members are reading *The Seed Keeper* by Diane Wilson.

If you have not already done so, **please RSVP to Joyce immediately** at 406-459-9002.

The April luncheon and discussion is scheduled for **12 noon** on Saturday, April 5, at the home of Lori Northrup. For the April meeting, the group will read *These is My Words: The Diary of Sarah Agnes Prine* by Nancy E. Turner. Please RSVP to Lori by Wednesday, April 2, at 406-461-5378.

March Birthdays

March 1

Leland Anderson
Jennifer Rickman
Rick Sparks

March 2

Ivy Brott
Laura Laposky

March 3

Grete Cannon

March 5

Sandra Isaak
Karlynn Miner

March 6

Jan Davis
Walli Johnson
Dean Wollan

March 7

Kendra Houtari
Calvin Sobek

March 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
Jacob Meek

March 17

Eve Sieber

March 18

Rylan Edlin
Liam McIntosh

March 19

Allen Keim

March 21

Karen Antonick
Sean Frank

March 22

Lisa Tullis

March 25

Martin Baumann
Cassandra Cable
Tanner Hyyppa
Bridget Michel

March 27

Theresa Heggset

March 29

Mike Hoxie

March 30

Julianne Jones

March 31

Karen Bjornson
Connie Onstad





Happenings at First Lutheran School



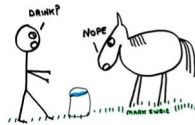
Director: Sue Taylor Get Set Teacher: Shannon Champagne Pre-Kindergarten Teacher: Lori Radtke After Care Providers: Melanie Middlebrook/Emily DuPre, Lillian Buhr Lunch Assistant: Jeannie Hubbard Pastor: Larry A. Miller

We all know that the world looks a bit different in the eyes of children. Our PreK students shared how they thought these phrases would end.

A PRESCHOOLER'S PERSPECTIVE

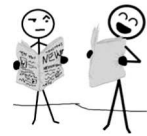
You can lead a horse to water, but ...

... you can't lead a horse farther.
 ... a tiger could eat them.
 ... you can dump a bucket in.



No news is ...

... everywhere.
 ... good news.
 ... not cutting your finger.



Don't bite the hand that ...

... can bite back.
 ... that "bited" you.
 ... is on the left side.



You can't teach an old dog ...

... because he can't talk.
 ... not to bite.
 ... what to do.



A penny saved is ...

... money!
 ... the bank keeping people's money safe.
 ... for a toy.



SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS

First Lutheran School Registration

Registration for the 2025-26 school year is currently open. The PreK classroom is nearly full and the Get Set class is growing in number.

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.

YOUTH

Youth Event

We are exploring options for our youth to attend a servant event within Montana. There is the possibility of attending an event at Trinity Camp during the weekend of April 12. Would your child (aged 10+) be interested in attending this 2-day event at Trinity Camp in Kalispell? If interested, please contact Sue Taylor.

First Lutheran Church & School
 2231 Broadway
 Helena, MT 59601

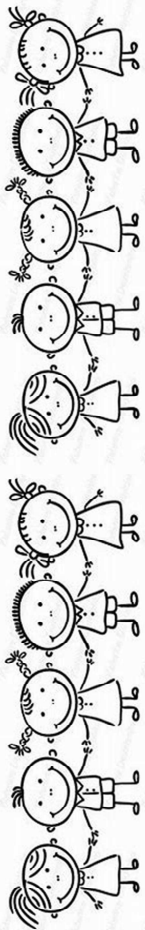
Phone: (406)442-5367
 Fax: (406)442-5285
 School Phone: (406)442-6913
 Website: www.firstlutheranelena.org
 Email: churchoffice@firstlutheranelena.org

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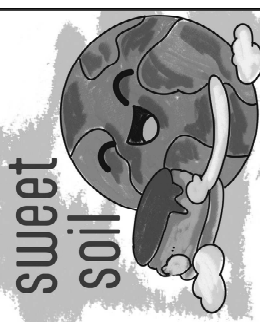
FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH is a Congregation of
 The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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



Just for KIDS!



This snack's layers mimic
 properties of our planet's crust.

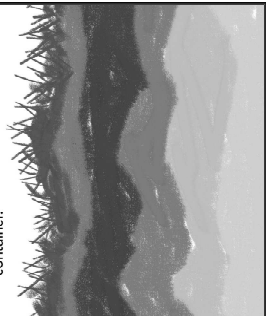


What you need:

- 1 cup rolled oats
- ½ cup nut butter (divided)
- ½ cup chocolate chips
- Microwave-safe bowl
- Silicone mini baking cups

What you do:

1. Combine the oats and ¼ cup of the nut butter. Mix until oats stick together.
2. Place 2 teaspoons of oat mixture in each baking cup. Press with a spoon. Freeze for 10 minutes.
3. Spread remaining nut butter atop the cups. Freeze for 10 more minutes.
4. Microwave the chocolate chips 30 seconds. Stir and keep heating for 30-second intervals until melted.
5. Spread melted chocolate atop the cups. Freeze until chocolate is firm.
6. Remove from the molds and enjoy! Refrigerate leftovers in an airtight container.



PUZZLE

FROM WORD TO WORLD

Words are important! God spoke and created all things.
 What does the psalmist declare about creation?

Directions: Using the word clues, unscramble the letters to complete Psalm 102:25, NIV.

A preposition	NI	_____
An article	HTE	_____
Genesis means this	NINBGE GN	_____
A second-person pronoun	OUY	_____
Past tense of to lay	IDAL	_____
An article	HET	_____
A plural noun meaning base	SODTAINFONU	_____
A preposition showing possession	FO	_____
An article	TEH	_____
A concrete noun meaning world	HRTEA	_____

Psalm 102:25, NIV

Answer: In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth. (Psalm 102:25, NIV)