

The *First* Word

Volume 27, Issue 5

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL — HELENA, MONTANA

March 2026

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

Special March Dates

Second Sunday in Lent.....	Mar. 1
Dorcas Circle Quilters.....	Mar. 4
First Edition Book Club.....	Mar. 7
Home of Margaret Bowles	
Third Sunday in Lent.....	Mar. 8
Daylight Saving Time Begins	
WOW! Bible Study.....	Mar. 10
Fourth Sunday in Lent.....	Mar. 15
St. Patrick's Day.....	Mar. 17
Dorcas Circle Quilters.....	Mar. 18
Fifth Sunday in Lent.....	Mar. 22
WOW! Bible Study.....	Mar. 24
Prayer Vigil.....	Mar. 28
Palm Sunday	Mar. 29
Holy Week.....	Mar. 29-Apr. 5
FLS Easter Break	Mar. 30-April 6

Present your requests to God

First Lutheran's Board of Elders has scheduled a prayer vigil for Saturday, March 28 (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 March 28.



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

In preparation for the annual Voters' Assembly meeting, generally held in late May or early June, 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 date and time, agenda, and slate of candidates is published prior to the meeting.

Nominations are now open for the office of President (2-year term); Vice President (2-year term); and three MMC at-large members (each for 2-year terms). All terms will begin on July 1, 2026, and end on June 30, 2028.

Basic duties of the President include: presiding at all meeting of the Voters' Assembly and the Mission & Ministry Council; enforcing the Constitution and Bylaws; and performing the general duties as are common for the office, including such additional duties as may be directed by the Voters' Assembly from time to time.

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

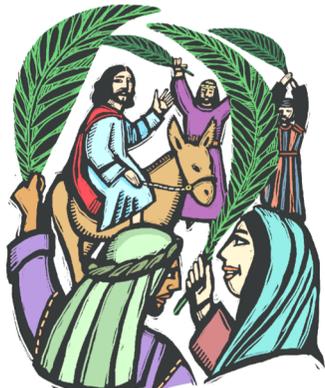
The Vice President does not automatically move into the office of President after finishing the 2-year term as Vice President.

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 MMC President Jason Mercer. He may be reached by phone at (406) 438-1182, or by email to: jmercer@m-m.net.

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



"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"
Luke 19:38, NIV

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Women of the Word

The W.O.W. (Women of the Word) Bible study group is continuing our study of Lighthouse: *John*, Part 1. We begin Lighthouse: *John*, Part 2 soon. We meet every **second and fourth Tuesday** at 9:30 a.m. at the church and we'd love to have you join us!

Following are the dates.
Please flag your calendar:

March 10 and 24
April 14 and 28
May 12 and 26



Spread some Easter joy!

Easter card packages will be available for sale in Ziegler Hall beginning on Sunday, March 15. Packages of eight cards are \$5. Send some Easter blessings to your long distance friends, people in nursing facilities, homebound, grandkids, etc. Let's spread the Gospel and also cheer people up who need some TLC. Money from this ministry goes to our Youth program here at the church.

Many thanks to those who have donated recycled holiday cards, envelopes, and stickers!

~Janice Larison
CARDS 4 KIDS



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



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.

2026 Summer Camp Dates

- 1st/2nd Grade Day Camp.....June 22-24
(Base Camp)
- PreK-2nd Grade w/Parent Camp.....June 24-26
(Kinder Camp)
- 3rd/4th Grade Overnight Camp....June 28-July 3
(Adventure Camp)
- High School Camp.....July 5-10
For those entering 9th-12th Grade
(Summit Camp)
- 5th/6th Grade Camp.....July 12-17
(Pathfinder's Camp)
- 7th/8th Grade Camp.....July 19-24
(Expedition Camp)

Register at:

www.trinitykalispell.org/camp-registration

EARLY BIRD SPECIAL!

\$60 off registration until March 22!

Base Camp, Kinder Camp, and Adventure Camp are new this year!

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. 18.
Place articles in the *First Word* box in the church office or email to:
lindafromm@mac.com



Those "Do - Gooders!"

*"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.*

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for good works,**
which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."* (Ephesians 2:8-10 ESV)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the faith,

Have YOU ever been accused of being a do-gooder? Are you? Are you one of those people who just love to do things that are good for other people? If so, I say, "keep up the good work!!!" and "Good for you!!!"

Those do-gooders are **responsible for so many blessings** for so many people (including each one of us)! Those do-gooders of the past worked hard and made great sacrifices so that we could be citizens of a **great nation!** Some of those do-gooders are serving us and making sacrifices for us, at home and abroad! May God bless them!

Some of those do-gooders of the past also have blessed us with by building a **strong church** which is founded on God's true Word and bound together by the Holy Spirit as we learn about and worship and tell the Good News about Jesus Christ! There are many of those do-gooders even today who stand up for and **teach the truths of God's Word** and who **reach out** to children and adults with the saving message of God's love for us in Jesus Christ! More (of the Spirit's) power to them!



This month, throughout this Lenten season as we consider all the good that Jesus has done for us and for our salvation, and in fact, always ~ but especially this month I would like to **challenge us** to all **be do-gooders!** After all we have been saved and created to do good, we are God's workmanship and He has prepared good things for us to do and what a blessing we can share when we do good things for others!

So . . . motivated by God's love (just think of the good He has done for us) **let's be do-gooders** for Christ and for the good of our fellowman this month (and always)! Would you please **let me know the opportunities for doing good** that arise for you? I would love to share our experiences as examples for the other "do-gooders" in our church!

And, as always, **blessings to you** from our good and very gracious God!

Pas+or Miller

Chili Cook-off THANKS to ...

Team Trivia Announcers
Brian and Susan Buhr

Line Dancing Instructor & Leader
Lauren McGrane



L to R: Sue Taylor, Deb Knudsen, Bridget Michel, and Joyce Burgett start the sampling process.



CHILI COOK-OFF WINNERS

L to R: Cindy Mitchell (2nd); Matt Elvbakken (1st); Leighanna Miner (3rd)



Loretta and Roger Schultz fill chili sample cups to be evaluated.

Chili Chefs

Shannon Champagne	Cindy Mitchell
Matt Elvbakken	Loretta Schultz
Goodson Family	Roger Schultz
Aries Hindman	Laurie Stelter
Tim Johnson	Sue Taylor
Leighanna Miner	Becky White

Dessert Makers and Bakers

Unfortunately, we didn't get ALL your names, but your culinary skills were abundant, apparent, AND amazingly SCRUMPTIOUS!



MORE CHILI SAMPLING

L to R: Melissa Miner, Laura Laposky, Larry Laposky



Becky White (L), John and Shannon Champagne, and John's parents ladle chili samples.



Chili samplers await their chance to evaluate the 12 choices!

And ... THANKS TO the 70 people who attended! The "word" is that all enjoyed the food and fellowship at this event, and First's Human Care Ministry extends its heartfelt appreciation for ALL who participated!

Together, YOU MADE IT SUCCESSFUL, and raised \$1,020 for LCMS World Relief and Human Care!

The Theology and Philosophy of Lutheran Education

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in 2023, tasked the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) with articulating the “theology and philosophy of Lutheran Education.” The CTCR produced a theological report to clearly produce and articulate how the Lutheran doctrines should govern education within our Lutheran institutions. This article is a summary of the report that was produced and distributed in May 2025.

The overarching principle that guides Lutheran Education is the truth of Holy Scripture. We believe in the truth of the inerrant Word of God and follow God’s command to make disciples of all nations. The truth of Holy Scripture is the guiding principle in the education that First Lutheran school provides. At the center of the Word of God is Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the reason for the work that is done at First Lutheran School and He is the focus of our education. On a practical level, and in keeping Christ as the center of God’s Word in our education, we consider three different spheres. These spheres or domains correspond to our Christian creeds. Therefore, the teaching of First Lutheran School focuses on the gifts of creation, the redemption from sin, and our Christian life or sanctification.

Lutheran Education and Creation:

First Lutheran School teaches that God has created every person and given us the gift of human reason. Our teaching reflects the clear biblical teachings of Scripture related to faith and morality. Related to arts, literature, music, and other fine arts, we teach using our God-given “eyes, ears, and all our members” to create and appreciate these gifts of God’s creation. Thereby, our teaching is rooted in God’s Word. Through “speaking the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15), our educators remain faithful to God’s Word and bring it to our students.

The Redemption from sin:

The understanding of sin impacts our education. We believe that Jesus alone offers the forgiveness of sins to those who believe His Gospel. Therefore, we are obligated to correct mistaken theories and views that deny God’s creation. Secondly, we must instruct our students about the nature of sin and the need for repentance of those sins. As such, we must offer our students forgiveness for their sins by sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This also means that we do not withhold disciplinary action as a consequence and use these valuable opportunities to teach repentance and offer forgiveness. Providing instruction in the Christian faith is the central part of our education.

The Gospel, the promise of the forgiveness of sins on account of Jesus’ suffering, death and resurrection, which we receive by faith alone is unreservedly proclaimed. Only the teaching of the Gospel, by the power of the Holy Spirit, will lead to changed hearts, renewed lives, and eternal salvation. A central part of our education in the Christian faith is ensuring that our students hear the Gospel of what Christ has done for them, thus helping them to grow to have the “mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16).

Christian Life: What is the relation between Lutheran Schools and the state?

Our Lutheran schools seek to abide by all civil laws and regulations, including those that govern education. At the same time, our school ultimately serves the ministry of God’s Word. We are called to proclaim the Gospel and teach the Scripture. Thereby, in the case of civil government trespassing on faith, morality, and the like, our school will maintain our right to the constitutional right to religious

freedom and will obey God, not man. (Acts 5:29)

What is the vocation of a Lutheran teacher?

Lutheran teachers function as an extension of parental authority in the lives of the children they teach; They work alongside parents. Our teachers are considered “ministers” of the church. As servants of the church’s school ministry, teachers assist in teaching the Word to the students in their care. Everything the teacher does brings the Word of God to bear upon the life of the school and the students. All teachers in our school serve the Lutheran Church and teach in accordance with the faith of the Lutheran Church.

The theology and philosophy of Lutheran Education as it is derived from Holy Scripture and the doctrines that we believe, teach, and confess impacts the education we offer as we daily follow God’s Word.

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2).

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod supports our school as we undertake the work of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

~ Submitted by Sue Taylor
First Lutheran School Director

LCMS schools (early childhood, elementary and high schools) are the second largest parochial educational system in the United States. This includes 1,150 early childhood centers and preschools, 793 elementary schools, 86 domestic, and 3 international high schools.

— LCMS.org

The King no one expected

Sometimes we speak — or even shout — the truth without realizing just how right we are. That’s exactly what happened on the first Palm Sunday.

Jesus entered Jerusalem not on a prize-worthy stallion, but on a young, humble donkey. The crowd erupted in joy, shouting, “*Hosanna! Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!*” They waved palm branches, symbols of peace, and hailed Jesus as their king.

Was He a king? Jesus didn’t deny it. When the Pharisees told him to silence the crowd, he replied, “*I tell you, if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.*”

Later, Pilate — the Roman governor — mocked the religious leaders by saying, “*Here is your king.*” The chief priests bristled with anger, shouting, “*We have no king but Caesar!*”

When Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified, he made one last jab at the furious crowd. John 19:19 tells us he ordered a sign to be placed above the cross. Written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, it declared:

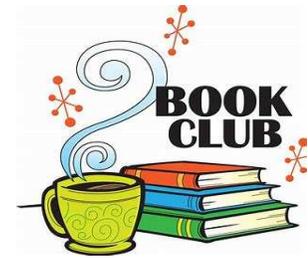
“Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”

The chief priests demanded the sign be changed, but Pilate refused. “*What I have written, I have written,*” he said.

Was Jesus a king? The witnesses to His resurrection knew the answer. In Acts 17:7, the early believers were accused of “saying there is another king, Jesus.” And the Book of Revelation looks ahead to the day when all creation will know the truth.

“The Lamb will triumph ... for He is Lord of lords and King of kings.” — Revelation 17:1

— The Newsletter Newsletter



First Edition Book Club members will meet for luncheon and discussion at **9:30 a.m.** on Saturday, March 7, at the home of Margaret Bowles. Members are reading *A Fever in the Heartland* by Timothy Egan.

Please RSVP to Margaret by Wednesday, March 4, by phone or text to 406-459-0454, and watch for information to come from Linda Fromm about carpooling.

The April luncheon and discussion is scheduled for **12 noon** on Saturday, **April 11**, at Touchmark. For the April meeting, the group will read *Pioneer Doctor* by Maria Grana.

Please RSVP to Joyce Nachtsheim by Wednesday, April 8, by phone or text to 406-459-9002.

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
Dean Wollan

March 7

Kendra Houtari
Calvin Sobek

March 8

Adam Bartels
Rebecca Baumann
Brian Johnson

March 9

Reagan Freeman

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

Jason Hedges
Eve Sieber

March 18

Rylan Edlin
Liam McIntosh

March 19

Allen Keim
RyeLee Moxley

March 20

Margaret Bowles

March 21

Karen Antonick
Sean Frank

March 22

Lisa Tullis

March 23

Victoria Tiberi

March 25

Martin Baumann
Cassandra Cable
Tanner Hyyppa
Bridget Michel

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 Provider
Emily DuPre

Lunch Assistant
Jeannie Hubbard

Pastor
Larry A. Miller

Me and My Shadow

Get Set and Pre K have had a great time learning about shadows. On February 2, we watched Punxsutawney Phil see his shadow and predict six more weeks of winter. Most of the kids were excited about this because they are hoping for snow to go sledding and build snowmen.

We have “played” with our shadows inside and outside ever since, watching them grow and shrink depending on where the light is, occasionally noticing we have no shadow because the clouds are covering the sun.

The kids were having so much fun “playing” with their shadows that we decided to make pictures of them playing with those shadows. Some are dancing, some are playing ball, others are reading books to their silent and mysterious friend.

Speaking of reading books, from March 2 through March 6 the school will be celebrating Dr. Seuss Week. We are looking for folks to take a few minutes of their day to read to our students at any time on any of those days between 8:30 and 10:30 a.m., or 1:30 and 2:30 p.m. You can bring a favorite children’s book from home, or borrow one from our school library (which is in a bit of a shambles while the process of organizing it continues), or you may borrow a book from Miss Lori or Miss Shannon.

Please contact Lori (loriradke@firstlutheranhelena.org) or Shannon (schampagne@firstlutheranhelena.org) if you would like to read to the kids.



**Dr. Seuss
Week**



In Bible times, shepherds spent most of their days with their sheep — guiding them to food and water and guarding them from danger. When a sheep was injured, the shepherd treated the wound with a special liquid. What was it?

- A. Water
- B. Honey
- C. A salt solution
- D. Olive oil

Answer: D (See Psalm 23:5)

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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

Lutherans For Life exists to equip Lutherans and their neighbors
to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life.



**LUTHERANS
FOR LIFE**

HERE WE STAND FOR LIFE

- Here We Stand to declare and defend the precious value of every human being.
- Here We Stand to celebrate the many blessings of abundant and everlasting life.
- Here We Stand for every human life, at each stage, in any state — no matter what she’s done, no matter what he can’t do.
- Here We Stand from the invisible miracle of conception to the moment of natural death — because of God’s purpose, not our own plans.
- Here We Stand behind Jesus Christ’s passion, not our own pride.
- Here We Stand bearing His Holy Spirit’s presence, not our own capacities.

February 22 (Lent 1) – Satan tempts us to turn away from God by appealing to the desires of our flesh and our egos. The devil twists God’s Word to make us think that things like abortion, sex without marriage, suicide, and assisted suicide will give us pleasure, self-fulfillment, and an end to our suffering. But, like our first parents did, those who give in quickly find that the devil’s words are nothing but empty promises which end in pain and suffering. Thankfully, by withstanding the devil’s temptations, Jesus both defeats that old satanic foe for all sinners and reminds us that the way to true joy and happiness is found in trusting the unfailing promises of our heavenly Father. *Lutherans for Life: Life Thoughts*

**“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly”
(John 10:10).**

If you would like to make a difference by joining Lutherans For Life, please contact Sue Taylor.