

From Pastor Doug Larson

I said in my sermon on February 1st, that I believe in the “communion of saints” as we confess in the Apostle’s Creed. There is a power in this community of forgiven sinners that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and strengthens to continue and increase the Kingdom of God. About a year ago, there were fourteen family members gathered to celebrate my sister’s 70th Birthday. One brother noted as we shared memories of growing up, we may have had our disagreements and argued at times, but when we left the house to do chores or the fieldwork, “We were a team.” I had never thought of our family in that way, but he was right. There was a job to be done, and we put ourselves into that as “a team”.

Feelings! Yes, we have feelings about what has happened through the last months. The feelings range from east to west, some stronger and some less. It’s all right to have feelings and own them. It’s also helpful to share our feelings and listen to others, as we care for one another. There are hurts and there are joys, part of the range of feelings that exist in this community of saints. And reassuring, is something I have heard from a number of people, “We move forward.” We continue to take the mission of our Lord Jesus seriously and creatively.

“Between the Times Minister” That’s what I called myself when I offered to take over the ministerial duties through Easter, on April 5th. Lent was coming fast and there needed to be someone in the office and in worship on a regular basis. So, I am back in this busy and interesting time of the Church year. I will be in the office Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from at least 10 am to 2 pm. Three weeks into this time, I am seeing people faithfully continuing their duties and roles and others stepping up to cover other areas. Thanks be to the Holy Spirit.

The Church Council, as I write this on February 17th, is in the process of interviewing two candidates for a longer Interim Pastor role. In the meantime, consider some things that will be happening:

--In Lenten Services you will see me portray five “Gritty Prophets of the Bible”. Amos, Elijah, Jeremiah will be three of them. Maybe Isaiah, maybe Obadiah.

(Maybe not Obadiah)

--On Good Friday evening, a long-time tradition here at First will resume with “The Stations of the Cross”. This is quite a moving and powerful experience.

--Third Grade students will be instructed in Holy Communion and receive that on Maundy Thursday. Fifth Grade students and families will take part in the Passover Meal, which is called Seder in the Jewish tradition.

--The Communion of saints will continue to gather for worship on Sundays, keeping a tradition going back almost 2,000 years. (Yes, isn’t that amazing?)

Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen

MARCH WORSHIP SCHEDULE

*Happy
St. Patrick's
Day*

**ALL SUNDAY'S IN MARCH
WORSHIP AT 9:00 & 10:30 AM
COFFEE FELLOWSHIP
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE
9:00 AM SERVICE**



WEDNESDAY EVENING LENT SERVICES

AMOS, A FARMER AND RANCHER WAS PORTRAYED BY PASTOR DOUG ON THE FIRST LENTEN SERVICE. ELIJAH ANOTHER OF THE "GRITTY PROPHETS" WILL BE PRESENT THIS WEDNESDAY, THE 4TH TO SHARE HIS DUEL WITH THE PROPHETS OF BAAL ON MOUNT CARMEL AS WE CONTINUE OUR LENTEN SERVICES, A TIME OF LEARNING, GROWTH AND MEDITATION. HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER, A MELODIC AND SCRIPTURE-BASED JOURNEY OF MUSIC WILL BE THE FORM OF WORSHIP. COME AND LEARN. THE SERVICE WILL BEGIN AT 6 PM.

MARCH WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

**5TH-6TH GRADE WNF: 4:30 - 5:30 PM:
7TH-8TH & 9TH GRADE AFFIRMATION: 6:30-8:00 PM**

MARCH 4: CLASS, YOUTH/MENTOR NIGHT

MARCH 11: CLASS, PEER MINISTRY

MARCH 18: CLASS, PEER MINISTRY

MARCH 25: CLASS, PEER MINISTRY



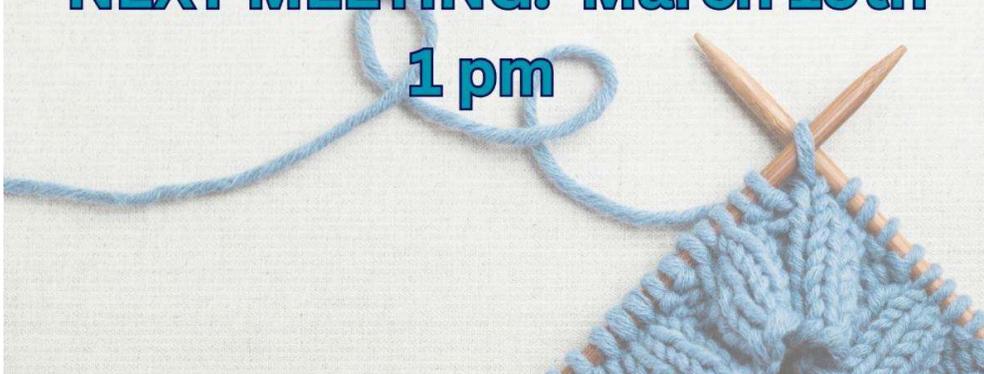
GIRLS MATTER. PERIOD

Next workshop will be:
Tuesday, March 17
9 am



PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

NEXT MEETING: March 19th
1 pm



Let's celebrate Easter with a Resurrection Garden!

EASTER RESURRECTION GARDEN FLOWERS

PLANTS

Purple Cyclamen\$15.00.....Qty. _____

12 total for the 12 tribes of Israel
Purple for the color of Lent and royalty (Jesus Christ is the King of Kings)

Red Tulips\$15.00.....Qty. _____

10 total for the Ten Commandments
Red for the blood of Christ

Yellow Begonia\$15.00.....Qty. _____

7 total for the "Seven Last Words" of Christ
Yellow for the sun of the breaking dawn on Easter morning

Easter Lilies\$15.00.....Qty. _____

12 total for the 12 apostles
White for the color of Easter and the Holiness of God

In Honor of _____

In Memory of _____

TOTAL MONEY ENCLOSED \$ _____

Orders must be received by Wednesday April 1st.

Name _____ Envelope # _____

First come, First served. Only amounts listed are ordered.

Holy Week Schedule 2026

First Lutheran Church



Palm/Passion Sunday,

Worship—Sunday March 29th, 9:00 am only

(Also available via livestream on YouTube at 9am
and Radio broadcast on KKIN 94.3FM **at 10am**)

Wednesday April 1st — No Worship or evening activities

Maundy Thursday,

Worship—Thursday April 2nd, 12:00 noon & 7:00 pm

3rd grade+ — First Holy Communion 7:00 pm

5th & 6th grade, families & guests—Seder Meal 5:00 pm

Good Friday

Office closed

Good Friday Service—Friday April 3rd, 12:00 pm

Stations of the Cross—8:00 pm

Easter Sunday

Sunday April 5th

8:00 am—Easter Celebration

No Coffee Fellowship

10:00am—Easter Celebration

(Also available via livestream on YouTube
and Radio broadcast on KKIN 94.3FM)



Community Meals



All meals are take-out only

Mondays at 5:00 pm

Tuesdays at 12:00 noon

Thursdays at 5:00 pm

Community Food Shelf



Open 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

March 12 & 26

Stewardship Report for February 2026

Ahh! That sense of relief, release, rest, renewal, inspiration, comfort that comes from being in the presence of the Lord. How is that working as we have moved into the new year? On the “Estimate” cards we turned in or considered, the first possibility was **“I will try to find moments for “Ahh” with Jesus this year.”** Finding that time can be tricky. Life is busy and maybe we say, it will happen when I crawl into bed. And then we fall asleep instead. Or maybe it will be when we get up before the rest of the household and have a few minutes to ourselves. Perhaps that works or doesn’t depending on “things”. Whether you have been successful or not, the intent is to “try” and that means it can be an ongoing goal. If you have been successful, that is wonderful and more power to you. “Come away to a quiet place, said Jesus.” Your quiet place can be any place that works for you; some people find it even in the moments before church starts. Some people place the *Christ in Our Home* booklet on the toilet tank and find the daily verse enough to think about as we take time for Jesus. Maybe reading the message enhances the time of “Ahh”. At any rate, let us continue to find moments with our Lord.

Time and Talents—On Friday mornings, a number of women get together to make quilts to be sent mainly overseas, but some locally. They enjoy the work and they enjoy the fellowship or time of being with others. Reverend David Preus was President of the American Lutheran Church in the 1970’s and 80’s. He would often come to Synod or District Assemblies and report of the state of the church. On one occasion, Pastor Preus told about a visit to Israel where he spent some time in a Palestinian area. His guide took him shopping and they entered a shop where the guide introduced him as President of the ALC. The owner said, “Wait right here!” She ran to the back of the store and quickly came back with a quilt. “Your church gave us this quilt, we need it. Thank you and your church for caring about us.”

We don’t always know where the results of our time and talent go. But our Lord Jesus blesses what we do, even without our knowledge and lives are touched.

Douglas Larson, Stewardship Ministry Chair



Sacred Refuge: From Light to Light

Join the National Lutheran Choir under Artistic Director Jennaya Robison for *Sacred Refuge: From Light to Light* at Gichi-ziibi Center for the Arts in Brainerd on March 20. Presented in partnership with the Legacy Chorale, this moving winter-to-spring concert traces the arc from winter's stillness to spring's awakening.

Date & Location:

7:30pm, Friday, March 20 - Gichi-ziibi Center for the Arts, 602 S 5th Street, Brainerd, MN



Tickets:

Youth 18 and younger, FREE | Adults/Senior, \$20-\$35 |
Students pay what you will with valid ID

Tickets may be purchased online at NLCA.com or at the door on the day of the concert.

MARCH 80 PLUS BIRTHDAYS

BARBARA BREZINSKY - 3/03

CARLA HAKES,

JERRY ERLANSON - 3/05

MARCIA HYYTINEN - 3/08

GLEN SMELTZER - 3/09

KAREN LUECK - 3/11

DAVID PEARSON - 3/15

CARL SCHULTZ - 3/20

Happy
Birthday

KEN LEBENS,

STEVE SPICARELLI,

LEEVAE HAKES,

MILAN KLITZKE - 3/26



WANNA QUILT?
Fridays/ September - May
9-Noon in the Fellowship Hall

Ways we help:
Lutheran World Relief
Community Food Shelf
HOPE
Quilt Auctions
Local
Call Linda Delaney with questions or suggestions at 218-820-6777

No Sewing Experience Required For Many Projects

Enjoy coffee & treats with your quilting buddies

Quilters:
Shop for fabric
Wash & iron used fabric
Cut squares
Sort & design squares for quilt kits
Choose quilt kits in the narthex to take home & sew and sew much more!
Join any time of the year!





The First Lutheran Church "Men in Mission" group helped serve the Community Meal on Monday Feb. 2nd. Community Meals are served on Monday & Thursday from 5-5:30pm and Tuesdays from 12-12:30pm at First Lutheran Church.

L to R: Ken Johnson, Tom Plagman, Ed Anderson, Doyle Jelsing, David Pearson and Al Gray.

FAMILY PHOTOS NEEDED!

Walt & Nanci
Sauerbrei are willing
to take your family
photo too!

We'd like to keep our
photo wall updated -
please submit an updated
photo of your family as
soon as you can.

Please submit your family/individual photo as a jpg in
landscape orientation. Email to office@flc-aitkin.com

MARCH EXTRA MILE MISSION COMMUNITY FOOD SHELF

***If you would like to
donate, please go to
our website at
www.flc-aitkin.com or
send a check to the
church***



***Matching
funds
based on a
formula,
plus grant
funds***



Nourishing the Body, Renewing the Spirit: A Lenten Journey of Health

March invites us into two meaningful observances: National Nutrition Month, sponsored by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and the sacred season of Lent. Both call us to reflection, renewal, and intentional care of the gifts God has given us—especially our bodies.

Scripture reminds us, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you?” (1 Corinthians 6:19). Nutrition is one way we honor that temple.

Lent is traditionally a time of fasting, simplicity, and prayer. While some may give up certain foods, Lent can also be a time to add nourishing habits, such as:

- Eating more fruits and vegetables—enjoying God’s colorful creation
- Choosing whole grains and lean proteins
- Drinking enough water
- Practicing mindful eating with gratitude

Simple meals can remind us of our dependence on God while strengthening our bodies for service.

A Time for Reflection—and Prevention

March is also an important time to remember colorectal cancer screening awareness. According to the American Cancer Society, colorectal cancer is one of the most preventable cancers with regular screening, yet many adults delay this important test.

Screening is recommended for most adults beginning at age 45, or earlier for those with risk factors. These screenings can detect problems early—often before symptoms appear—when treatment is most effective.

Lenten Invitation: Caring for the Whole Self

This Lent, consider these questions:

- How can I nourish my body as an act of gratitude to God?
- Is there a health screening I have been postponing?
- How can caring for my health help me better serve others?

Lent reminds us that renewal is possible. Just as the earth prepares for new life in spring, we too can take steps toward healthier living.

May this season of Lent be a time of renewal for your body, mind, and spirit.

“I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you.” – 3 John 1:2

Grace and peace,

Traci Moreland, RN

FINANCIAL REPORT

Finance Committee

Financial Summary through January 2026

	2025	2026
General Operating Income - YTD	29,446	25,865
January Budget Expectations-YTD (Historical Average)	NA	NA
Variance to Budget Expectations - YTD	NA	NA
Actual Expenditures - YTD	30,338	32,587
Percentage of dollars received for period to dollars pledged	88%	60%
Unpledged Dollars Rec'd – YTD (Regular Offering)	10,935	11,020
Building Fund Income - YTD	2,625	1,970
Building Fund Expenditure - YTD	2,927	2,927
Campership Balance	10,337	9,997

In comparing General Fund income with actual expenses, you will see a shortfall of \$6,722.

In using the straight-line method of calculating the budget, general fund was about \$11,128 under budget.

Regular offering was \$6,299 under budget expectations through January, and less than 2025 by \$3,715.

ATTENDANCE

<i>Week of</i>	<i>2/1</i>	<i>2/8</i>	<i>2/15</i>	<i>2/22</i>
Sunday 9:00 am (In-person)	72	112	68	82
Sunday 10:30 am (In-person)	7	N/A	11	11
Wednesday 6:00 pm (In-person)	31	32	30	Ash Weds.
YouTube	121	91	46	44
Ash Wednesday	12:00pm	19	6:00 pm	82

All YouTube attendance is based on YouTube views as of February 25.
A view may be more than one person per view. Wednesday night is all in person attendance

STAFF

Jill Jameson, Office Manager
office@flc-aitkin.com

Nicole Cook, Ministry & Media Coordinator
MMC@flc-aitkin.com

Barb Bendson, Accountant
barb@flc-aitkin.com

Justine Nordick, Sunday School Coordinator
justinenordick@gmail.com

Mike Purdy, Custodian

Rebecca May, Organist

Sarah Grovogel, Nursery Facilitator

Mission Statement

With God's love we embrace one another, our neighbors, and all creation.

Vision Statement

Doing God's Work with Our Hands by Providing:
Spiritual Growth for All
Opportunities for Living Out Our Christian Faith
Support of our Mission and Ministries

Church Values

TRUST and LOVE in Jesus Christ

COMMIT to living God's Word

PRACTICE hospitality with welcoming and kindness

RESPECT and CARE for all people

SERVE our community

LIVE as generous stewards

Support Groups

1. Rides for Health (927-4077)

2. Memory Loss/Caregivers (927-1383)
Aitkin County CARE – 1st Wed. 12:45pm

3. Donuts with Dawn (previously memory lane cafe)
Maryhill Manor 11am on 2nd Tues.

4. HOPE (healing & opportunity provided equally)
(formally AADA) - domestic violence - Wed 8-9 am for women, Thurs. 4-5 pm for teens
(927-2327 or 888-276-1720)

5. Sexual Violence Resource Center (927-6226)

6. Aitkin County Child Abuse Prevention Council (927-6226)

7. Diabetes Resources (927-5152)

8. Suicide Prevention - Aitkin Co Public Health - (927-7272)

9. Crisis Line (1-800-462-5525)

9:00 a.m. Worship Service is livestreamed on YouTube at First Lutheran Church of Aitkin and broadcast at 10:00 a.m. on KKIN 94.3 FM Aitkin

Live Stream/Recording of every 9:00 a.m. Sunday Service

Can't make it to church? Watch it live.

Missed last week? Catch up by watching the recording.

Want to see it again? Or pass it on....

Go to YouTube – enter First Lutheran Church in Aitkin

Scroll thru and search for the date you are looking for.

Click on play. It's that simple.

How do I turn on subtitles/closed captioning on YouTube?

1. Open a YouTube video.

2. Click the gear icon in the bottom-right corner of the video player to display the video player settings.

3. Expand the combo box next to Subtitles/CC.

4. Click the desired subtitle language to begin displaying subtitles.

You will have to do this each time with any video.

Ministry opportunities at First Lutheran:

If you would like to participate in worship services, call any of the following people and volunteer. Training provided.

Prayer Leader/Lector, Usher, Sound, Video or PowerPoint Technician: Contact the office (927-2028)

Children's sermon: Contact the office (927-2028)

Worship Committee: Rebecca May (927-3481)

Contemporary/Praise song leaders/musicians:

Jill Sadlowsky (952-250-3245) or Pat Perrine (218-428-1884)

Altar Guild/Communion Assistant: Mary Peterson (927-6820)

WELCA: Mary Peterson (927-6820)

Dinner at your Door: Carla Hakes (927-4780)

Choir: Aaron Perrine (651-428-9005)

New Option: We have a new scheduling program – Ministry Scheduling Pro. Very easy to use and to volunteer for many positions. Contact the office to get signed up.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES ARE DUE BY THE 15TH OF EVERY MONTH

Submit to Nicole Cook at
MMC@flc-aitkin.com





First Lutheran Church
 107 Second Street SE
 Aitkin MN 56431



Office: 218-927-2028
 E-mail: office@flc-aitkin.com
<http://www.flc-aitkin.com>



THE MESSENGER

First Lutheran Church
 Office Hours:
 Monday–Thursday
 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
 Fridays
 7:30 a.m. to 12 Noon

 Like us on
Facebook
facebook.com/flcaitkin

WORSHIP TIMES
 Sundays
 9:00 am
 Brief Worship service
 10:30 am
 Wednesday
 6:00 pm