



THE MESSENGER

March 2025



First Lutheran Church

Office Hours:
Monday—Thursday
7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Friday
7:30 a.m. to 12 noon

107 2nd Street Southeast
Aitkin, MN 56431

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[facebook.com/flcaitkin](https://www.facebook.com/flcaitkin)
[facebook.com/fleyouthaitkin](https://www.facebook.com/fleyouthaitkin)



Ash Wednesday is March 5th. We will spend the next 40 days in the season of Lent. This is a season of self-reflection, fasting and repentance. We return to the Lord, knowing that our God receives with open arms. We don't need to hide ourselves from God. We can lay it all before God. We can be honest with ourselves and our God, because already knows it all, and loves us anyway. We don't need to hide from the realities of sin and death either. This season, we are free to call a thing what it really is.

I share with you a reflection by former bishop Ann Svennungsen.

Theologian Douglas John Hall writes, "I wouldn't have become a theologian (perhaps I wouldn't have remained a Christian) had I not been introduced to Martin Luther." I might say I wouldn't have remained a Christian had it not been for Luther's Theology of the Cross.

Martin Luther said that the theology of the cross is about "calling a thing what it really is." The theology of the cross is an honest theology, a humble theology – unwilling to speak for God or claim more than one knows; unwilling to gloss over sin, doubt, evil, or despair; unwilling to explain suffering away with sayings like "everything happens for a reason" or "it's all part of God's plan."

We don't deny suffering, but we do believe that God bears our suffering. When God says to Moses, "I know their suffering," it means that "God so enters into their suffering ... that God takes that suffering into the divine self and bears it there," according to the late Luther Seminary faculty member Terry Fretheim.

And, that "taking suffering into the divine self" is most profoundly revealed in Jesus. It is most profoundly revealed in his passion and death, the focus of the days ahead, the center of the Christian faith.

Yes, I'm probably A Christian because of the theology of the cross. We are free to call a thing what it is, because we are tethered in a relationship that will never let us go.

And, dear friends of Christ, of all the things named for us in the theology of the cross, this is one of the most important. Pay close attention:

- *This is your name: Beloved child of God. This is God calling a thing what it is – calling you what you are.*
- *You are a beloved child.*
- *In your fullest, authentic, beautiful, and broken self, you are loved, embraced, forgiven; you are set free from all the self-talk and other-talk that binds you with names that are not beloved child of God.*
- *God knows you. God calls you beloved.*

May the Spirit move among us this Lent that we might experience anew the depth of God's love and our belovedness.

See you in church!
Pastor Reggie

Parish Nurse Ministry

Parish Nurses
Rebecca May
Marcy Mateyka
Traci Moreland

Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month

March is also Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Awareness Month, a time to support and uplift those affected by this chronic illness. MS is a disease that affects the nervous system, causing challenges in mobility, vision, and overall health. While the journey with MS can be difficult, we are reminded that God is our refuge and strength in times of trouble.

As a church family, let us take time this month to pray for those living with MS, their caregivers, and the medical professionals working toward better treatments. If you know someone affected by MS, reach out with a word of encouragement, a prayer, or an offer of support.

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.” — Galatians 6:2

As we step into March, we are reminded of the changing seasons—winter’s cold begins to fade, and signs of spring emerge. This transition reflects the renewal God offers us in our spiritual lives. Just as new life begins to bloom, we, too, can seek renewal in our faith.

March is also a time of reflection, as many Christians observe Lent, a season of prayer, fasting, and drawing closer to God. It is a time to let go of distractions and focus on His grace and mercy. The Apostle Paul reminds us:

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



Aitkin Churches Together

NIGHT OF worship

Sunday | March 2nd | 6pm
@ Northwoods Community Church



MARCH IS FOOD SHELF MONTH



The March Campaign will be going on all over the state of Minnesota. It will be the focus of our own Extra Mile Giving here at First Lutheran. Please consider a donation to our Community Food Shelf. We are the only food shelf in Aitkin which purchases most of its food from Second Harvest with large discounts off of retail prices. We are staffed by numerous local people as well as church members who are all volunteers. Our directors are Judy and Pat Perrine. We have a board made up of people from our church plus others from our community. Matching funds provided state wide are based on a formula (not necessarily dollar for dollar) plus several grants which are added to our funds. We give out tons of food each month and serve many, many people in need. We are inspected and certified as a Super Shelf by MN Dept. of Children, Youth and Families, and by Second Harvest, which helps us get added grants. Your help is appreciated. Thank you."



THANK YOU FOOD SHELF VOLUNTEERS!

Pat Perrine, Judy Perrine, Blain Graphenteen, Sheri Graphenteen, Dave Benson, Hazel Johnson, Judy Nelson, Karen VanHatten, Laura Smith, Lael Vaith, Patti Lawson, Tim Jones, Annetta Willers, Denise Willers, Ashley Gustafson, Kelly Fitzgerald, Barbara Larson, Chris Hendrickson, Cindy Weimer, Dan Newman, Carol Newman, Ann Schwartz, Eunice Weslander, Mary Vinje and Carey Gallagher and all the helpers from the DAC.

GLOBAL MISSIONS

“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”

—Hebrews 13:16

The **Extra Mile Mission** during January was **HOPE** (Aitkin Advocates Against Domestic Abuse). We raised \$600. Thank you.

QUILTS FOR LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

Our dedicated quilters and kit makers help to make it possible for 689,814 handmade gifts of love to reach neighbors in 16 countries in 2024. From North Carolina to Niger, your love provides comfort, dignity and hope. Thank you for loving your neighbor!

ELCA WORLD HUNGER partners with agencies in Sudan to save lives where staffers at a half dozen U.S.-funded medical facilities in Sudan who care for severely malnourished children had a choice to make: Defy the U S president’s order to immediately stop their operations or let up to 100 babies and toddlers die. They chose the children.

What about cuts to Lutheran Social Services?

On December 12, 2002, the U.S. government created the **White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives**. The government partnered with eleven Federal agencies to lead a determined attack on need by strengthening and expanding the role of FBCOs in providing social services. This move was hailed as a giant step in making it possible for faith-based organizations to be actively involved in providing these services. Lutheran Social Services is one of those agencies.

Federal and state governments rely on non-profits to administer social services efficiently. These contracts allow organizations with expertise and community trust to carry out federally mandated programs without requiring the government to directly manage every aspect of service delivery .

LSS and similar organizations exist precisely because communities need them. Cutting off their funding wouldn’t eliminate the need for food, housing, or resettlement services—it would simply make it harder for people to get help. Last week LSS of Minnesota announced it has cut 27 staff members.

Ashes to Renewal

From ashes rise, new life
begins,

In Lent's embrace, reflection
wins,

A journey of the soul, within,
In ashes, our stories spin.

With each sacrifice, a lesson
learned,

In humble acts, grace earned,

From ashes to growth, life
turned,

In Lent, our faith affirmed.

As spring blooms from winter's
end,

So from ashes, spirits mend,

In Lent's days, to God we bend,

From ashes, towards heaven we
ascend. (Author Unknown)



80-Plus Birthdays in March

Barbara Brezinsky	March 3
Carla Hakes	March 5
Marcia Hyytinen	March 8
David Pearson	March 15
LeeVae Hakes	March 26
Milan Klitzke	March 26
Ken Lebens	March 26
Steve Spigarelli	March 26

90-Plus Birthdays in March

Jerry Erlandson	March 5
Glen Smeltzer	March 9
Bob Munneke	March 11
Carl Schultz	March 20



*Ash
wednesday*

*First Lutheran Church
March 5
Worship Services at
12:00 Noon & 6:00 PM*

WEDNESDAY EVENING LENT SERVICES

All services begin at 6 pm

- March 12
- March 19
- March 26
- April 2
- April 9

All services will feature the Holden Evening Prayer Service and Pastor Reggie will be leading the service each week. Come and join in our special prayer stations.

Service is open for all members and visitors. Please join us in our lenten journey.

*Service
of
Healing*

*Sunday,
March 16
9 am*



God's Word Comes Near
 Explore with us this summer how God's Word is ALIVE in God's great Northwoods. ULM offers a variety of summer camp experiences for all generations. Gather a group of confirmation students to explore their faith along the lakeshore of Camp Vermilion, bring intergenerational groups together around the campfire for a week at our new Flex-Family Camp at Camp Hiawatha, or introduce camp to a young camper for the first time through our Discoverers Day Camp and two-night Venturers Camp.

**REGISTER NOW
 FOR SUMMER
 CAMP AT ULM!**



**ULM HIRING
 SUMMER STAFF**

JOIN OUR SUMMER TEAM
NOW HIRING

GROW WORKING AT CAMP

- LEADERSHIP SKILLS
- VOCATIONAL CLARITY
- LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS
- WILDERNESS SKILLS

Learn more at vlmcamps.org

Ulm is hiring summer staff eager to grow in confidence, learn in community, and build lasting friendships. There are a variety of positions that are suitable for young adults with diverse skills and interests. Apply today or encourage a young adult you know to apply!



2025 CHURCH COUNCIL



President:
 Tom Plagman
Vice President:
 Aaron Perrine
Treasurer:
 Tom Kabus
Secretary:
 Sarah Grovogel

Members: Dan Newman
 Tom Sanbeck
 Nick Wenzel
 Brian Holmgren

MARCH SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Sunday Mornings - 10:15 - 11:00 am

March 2: Sunday School

March 9: Sunday School
(Pre-K & 4th Grade Prayer
Milestones)

March 16: Sunday School

March 23: NO Sunday School
(School Break)

March 30: Sunday School
(Camp Sunday)

Happy
St. Patrick's
Day



MARCH WEDNESDAY NIGHT

FAITH SCHEDULE

COFFEEHOUSE 3:30 PM

WNF Class (5th & 6th Grades) 4:30-5:30 PM

March 5: Class

March 12: Class

March 19: Class

March 26: Class



7th & 8th GRADE MARCH SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 8:00 PM

March 5: Class

March 12: Class

March 19: Class

March 26: Class

Lucky



9TH GRADE MARCH SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 8:00 PM

HAPPY
St. Patrick's
DAY

MARCH 5: YOUTH/MENTOR NIGHT
(MAKE SURE TO INVITE YOUR MENTOR!)

HAPPY
St. Patrick's
DAY



MARCH 12: PEER MINISTRY
MARCH 19: PEER MINISTRY
MARCH 26: PEER MINISTRY



PRE-K PRAYER MILESTONE



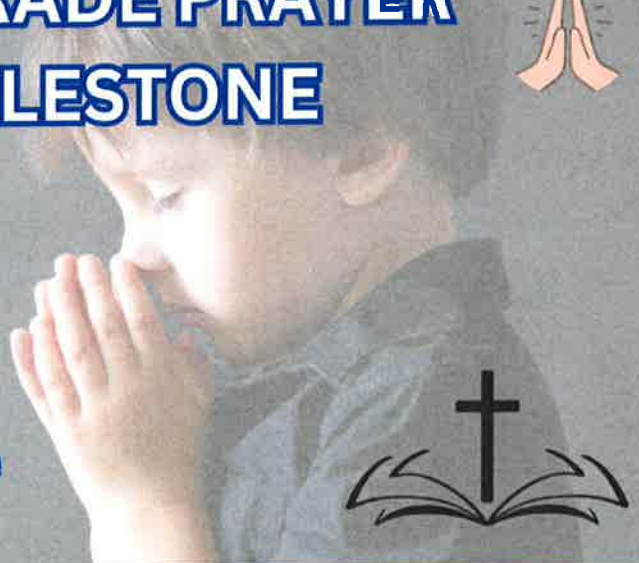
Sunday
March 9th
during the
Sunday School
Opening



4th GRADE PRAYER MILESTONE



Sunday
March 9th
during the
9:00 am
Worship Service



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



SPECIAL QUILT OFFERING MARCH 23 - ALL SERVICES



This special offering is to help provide the necessary funds to ship our quilts overseas. Our quilters have been working tirelessly all year to make many quilts for needy families. Please help generously support their efforts and spread the warmth.



LUTHERAN
WORLD RELIEF



CAMP SUNDAY

March 30
9 am

VLMCAMP.S.ORG

FIFTH GRADERS ARE AWARDED FULL CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS AT NO COST! PARTIAL SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE FOR ALL OTHERS. (FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE SEE PASTOR REGGIE.)



Financial Summary through January 31, 2025

	2024	2025
General Operating Income - YTD	24,056	29,446
Actual Expenditures - YTD	33,225	30,338
Percentage of dollars received for period to dollars pledged	64%	88%
Unpledged Dollars Rec'd – YTD (Regular Offering)	7,600	10,935
Building Fund Income - YTD	2,450	2,625
Building Fund Expenditure - YTD	2,927	2,927
Campership Balance	9,704	10,337

In comparing General Fund income with actual expenses, you will see a shortfall of \$892.

In using the straight line method of calculating the budget, general fund income was about \$5,082 under budget.

Regular offering was \$4,251 under budget expectations through January, and greater than 2024 by \$4,996.

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**



ATTENDANCE

Week of	2/2	2/9	2/16	2/23
Sunday	90	83	95	95
9:00 a.m.	(In-person)			
	NA	10	8	11
10:30 a.m.	(In-person)			
Wednesday	40	40	40	40
9:00 a.m.	(YouTube)			
	66	62	77	63



ALL YOUTUBE ATTENDANCE IS BASED ON YOU TUBE VIEWS AS OF February 26. A VIEW MAY BE MORE THAN ONE PERSON PER VIEW. WEDNESDAY NIGHT IS ALL IN PERSON ATTENDANCE.



In Memory

Our sympathy and prayers go out to the
friends & family of:

Ron Sadlowsky, who passed away
January 23, 2025, especially to his son &
daughter-in-law Dave & Jill Sadlowsky
and grandsons Sam & Bennett.

And also to:
the friends & family of Phyllis Kirkhorn, who
passed away January 22, 2025.

BAPTISM ANNIVERSARIES

First Lutheran is going to remember and celebrate your Baptism with a special event in worship . You and others will be invited to gather around the Baptismal font and hear what God did and continues to do for you through your Holy Baptism. You can affirm your desire to continue living as God's new creation.

Please remember and celebrate your Baptism on Sunday the 23rd of March at 9 am.

Even if you don't know when you were baptized, a good rough estimate is to pick a date 6 weeks after your birthday. You can join the Baptism Anniversary that month!



First Lutheran Church Worship and Music Committee

March Baptism Anniversaries

Backstrom, Michael

Kellerman, Lynne

Schletty, Hazel

Bruss, Cheryl

Klee, Kenzie

Smeltzer, Dorothy

Carlson, Alvin

Lebens, Catherine

Smeltzer, Glen

Doucette, Halle

Martin, Madilyn

Unzeitig, Barry

Doucette, Ty

Meyer, David

Visnovec, Camden

Drewelow, Anika

Moen, Luke

Wernli, Barb

Erlandson, Jerry

Monse, Abigail

Gardner, Janet

Panchyshyn, Kimberly

Grund, Ellory

Pearson, Elaine

Hakes, William

Person, Rebecca

Herbranson, Hunter

Petrenko, Natalja

Jacobson, Michael

Raushel, Zac

Jones, Barbara

Roth, Amber

Kabus, Zachary

Royer, Darilyn



CREATION CARE



**REDUCE
REUSE
RECYCLE**

Green Tips (factual information about environmental problems and causes) can now be viewed at the Synod's EcoFaith Network website, under the "Green Blades Rising Newsletters" or "Green Tips" links. (www.nemnsynod.org/ecofaith.html).

PLEASE AVOID USING STYROFOAM WHEN WORKING IN THE CHURCH KITCHEN. THANKS!



**EARTH'S
CRIES,
EARTH'S
CALL**

**BECOMING MIDWIVES OF HOPE
FOR THE HEALING OF CREATION**

**ECOFAITH SUMMIT
OF THE UPPER MIDWEST**

**LEAD SPEAKER:
DR. CYNTHIA MOE-LOBEDA**

**FEATURED PRESENTER:
DR. KELLY SHERMAN-CONROY**

**APRIL 5, 2025
8:30 AM - 5:00 PM**

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, DULUTH, MN

FOR MORE INFO OR
TO REGISTER:



Ministry opportunities at First Lutheran:

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

Lector: Reading scriptures & the prayers of the Church):

Contact the office (218-927-2028)

Communion assistant: Contact the office (218-927-2028)

Usher: Contact the office (218-927-2028)

Children's sermon: Pastor Reggie (218-927-2028)

Sound Technician: Contact the office (218-927-2028)

Power Point Technician: Contact the office (218-927-2028)

Video Technician: Dave Sadlowsky (952-221-3861)

Worship Committee: Rebecca May (927-3481)

Contemporary worship song leaders/musicians: Pat Perrine (218-428-1884) Pete Lowe (218-831-4210)

Hymn selections: Linda Delaney (927-6237)

Altar Guild: Mary Peterson (927-6820)

WELCA: Mary Peterson (927-6820)

Dinner at your Door: Carla Hakes (320-333-1876)

Choir: Aaron Perrine ((651)428-9005)

Please call me back I'm one of those people who regularly calls for lectors, communion assistants, kitchen help, worship assistants, Sunday coffee hour help, etc. If you're not home, I leave a message on your answering machine. It would be most helpful if you would return my phone call with a yes or no—then I'll know you received my message and it will save me more phone calls. Thank you for making my volunteer job much easier!

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.

Support Groups

1. **Rides for Health** (Aitkin Co CARE) 927-4077
2. **Memory Loss/Caregivers** (Aitkin Co CARE)- 1st Wed 1230 pm 927-1383
3. **Doughnuts with Dawn** (previously memory lane cafe) – Maryhill Manor every Wed 1000-1200 pm
4. **HOPE** (healing, opportunity, provided equally) (previously AADA)- domestic violence- Wed 800-900 am for women, Thurs 400-500 pm for teens
5. **Sexual Violence Resource Center/Support Within Reach**- 927-6226- Mon and Wed 800 am-500 pm
6. **Aitkin Co Child Abuse Prevention Council** 927-6226
7. **Diabetes Resources**- Riverwood Health Care Center 927-5152
8. **Suicide Prevention**- Aitkin Co Public Health – 927-7272
9. **Crisis Line** 1-800-462-5525

STAFF

Pastor Reggie Denton

(Senior Pastor)

reggie@flc-aitkin.com

Jill Jameson

(Office Manager)

office@flc-aitkin.com

Colleen Kent Chute

(Ministry & Media Coordinator)

colleen@flc-aitkin.com

Barb Bendson (Accountant)

barb@flc-aitkin.com

Justine Nordick

(Sunday School Coordinator)

justinenordick@gmail.com

Mike Purdy (Custodian)

Rebecca May (Organist)

Michele Plagman (web site)

mplagman@usa.net

Sarah Grovogel

(Nursery Facilitator)

Aaron Perrine (Choir Director)

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 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?

Steps

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.

WORSHIP TIMES

**All Sundays
In March**

9:00 am & 10:30 am

Ash Wednesday

March 5

12 Noon & 6:00 pm

**All other Wednesdays in
March at 6:00 pm**

**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**

**NEWSLETTER
ARTICLES**

**DUE ON THE 15TH OF
EVERY MONTH**

PLEASE NOTE: The church is charged 75 cents for undeliverable mailings. If you do not want to continue receiving this mailing, please request that your name be removed from our list by returning the attached label to First Lutheran Church, 107 2nd St., SE, Aitkin MN 56431, or by emailing the church at office@flc-aitkin.com March 2025



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

AITKIN MN 56431

107 2ND ST SE

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

