



April 2024

# Focus

on life at First

## Our Mission

To experience and celebrate God's amazing grace together.

## Our Vision

First Evangelical Lutheran Church will share God's amazing grace by welcoming, growing and serving in Christ's name, enriching the well-being of all.

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## Upcoming Events

### Rummage Sale

April 11th-13th

### One Worship at 9am

April 14th

### Parish Nurse

April 21st

### Pasta Dinner & Talent Show

April 21st

### Confirmation Sunday

May 19th

### Graduation Sunday

June 9th

Dear Friends of First,

Did you know that First Lutheran has a mission statement and a vision statement? Are you able to recite them from memory? Do you know where you could find them posted in the church building? A lot of churches have these statements. You see them on bulletin boards or newsletters. But just having these statements posted around the church or on newsletters makes little difference if the congregation isn't living up to them. By that I mean allowing the statement to guide all the decisions every step of the way. For example, take Jesus' commanding words, "Go make disciples." Someone whose primary mission in life is to transform people and/or society will interpret the words to mean, "Go make as many new converts as possible." Living into your mission statement means that you allow it to drive everything you do.

This is equally important with a vision statement. A vision statement gets a congregation to seek God's program and redirects a congregation from their own program. God already has a plan for the congregation that gathers in the name of Jesus. God is not confused about where the church should go in the next 3-5 years. The problem comes when you don't take time to seek God and discover God's plan. Most churches are too busy maintaining daily congregational life and church work. Prayer often goes out the window first. Yet, it is a vital component in discovering God's vision for the Lord's church. In Jeremiah 33:3, the Lord said, "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."

Prayer alone is not enough, though. It also takes work on our part. As followers of Jesus, we are always in constant tension between: "Is it our responsibility to let God reveal God's future to us and to see the future as God sees it?" A church that fails to listen for God's vision will not experience all that God has planned for it. We have a tendency to let the budget confine us, or a crisis or a pastoral change drive our plans when, in fact, God wants to reveal a future that will excite and challenge us. But this takes prayerful listening and work.

We have invited Marie Leafblad, Associate to the Bishop, to join us on Sunday, April 14th for worship and brunch where Marie will facilitate a discussion on this very topic. The topic question is: does our mission and vision statement still speak and point to the direction of God's plan for today and for the future? Please plan to attend worship on **Sunday, April 14th at 9am** followed by a congregational brunch, and a discussion led by Marie Leafblad.

In Christ,  
Pastor Jim

# Faith Formation

## Sunday School

We will be entering our last unit of the school year all about Following Jesus. We all deal with tough stuff sometimes. But there's good news: Jesus is with us, and He'll give us the strength we need. No matter what's going on in our lives, Jesus shows us how to live. So that we don't have to face tough stuff alone, we have God's Word and our friend Jesus to help us.

Our Bible Memory Buddy is Sal the Salamander and our memory verse is from Philippians 4:13:

"For I can do everything (spread arms out) through Christ, (point up) who gives me strength." (make muscles)

Our Bible Point is Jesus shows us how to live. Each week there's a new tagline:  
Jesus shows us how to live and believe God's Word.  
Jesus shows us how to live and lead others.  
Jesus shows us how to live and talk with God.  
Jesus shows us how to live and love others.



## Confirmation

We will be entering the last few classes on Wednesdays from 6:30-7:30pm: 4/10, 4/24, and 5/8.

**Confirmation Sunday will be celebrated on Pentecost Sunday, May 19th at the 10am service.**

If you have any questions about Confirmation, please reach out to Pastor Jim ([pastor@firstluthbd.org](mailto:pastor@firstluthbd.org)).

## Parents Supporting Parents

Mark your calendars! We're gathering on **Saturday, April 6th** from 8:30-10:30am in the Upper Room. All parents and caregivers are welcome.

We will be meeting through August. Save the dates and join us at an upcoming meeting: 4/6, 5/4, 6/1, 6/29, 7/27, and 8/24. We meet from 8:30-10:30am.

*We are welcoming Marie Leafblad, Associate to the Bishop of the South Central Synod of Wisconsin, on **Sunday, April 14th.***

*We will have only **one worship service that day at 9am.***

*There will be a brunch that will follow the service with a presentation and discussion for us to engage in where we are as a church and if our mission and vision statements are still relevant to us today.*



# College Care Packages

If you have a college student in your life, please share their name and address with the Church Office by **Sunday, April 7th**. The Social Concerns Committee is also accepting monetary donations to help pay for postage.  
Thank you!

## Church Directory Updates

The church directories arrived in February, and we have some extra directories that can be purchased for \$15. If you didn't get a directory and would like to purchase one, please contact the office at 885-4497.

The Online Church Directory App is now available for First Lutheran! Here are the beginning steps for setting up the directory App.



1. Using your smart phone, you can search for the app through the App Store or Google Play. Please type in "Universal Church Directory" in the search area, and the app is called myUCD. Install the app.
2. If you had your email shared in the printed directory, an email was sent to the head of household from Universal Church Directories with the next set of directions once the app is downloaded. If you chose not to have your email shared in the printed directory and would like access to the online directory, please contact the office ([churchoffice@firstluthbd.org](mailto:churchoffice@firstluthbd.org) or 920-885-4497) and we will give you the next set of directions.
3. If you didn't receive the directory email with the next set of directions, please contact Dawn ([dawn@firstluthbd.org](mailto:dawn@firstluthbd.org) or 885-4497, ext 1) for further assistance or with any questions.

We are also available to help anyone needing further assistance setting up the online directory app during our office hours: Monday-Thursday from 9am-12:30pm.

The online Directory can also be accessed through a desktop computer by going to [directory.ucdir.com](http://directory.ucdir.com). You will need to follow the directions that were sent in an email by the Universal Church Directory to set up your account here as well.

If you need to update contact information throughout the year, or would like to include a family photo in the online directory, please reach out to the office as we are happy to help make sure the most up to date information is shared online!

## Finances at First

*Jim Feil, Treasurer*

February ended with a net operating loss of \$3,653.83, which is better than the budget projected loss of \$10,985 for the month. Compared to February 2023, general contributions are up 18.7% due in part to an increase in average weekly attendance of 69 people. I would encourage people to get set up with automatic contributions through Simply Giving and the Vanco Mobile App.

An engagement letter has been signed to have Wegner CPAs perform an external Advisory Audit for the year ending 2023. This audit will cover Church Council compliance with bylaws, annual budget process, financial controls, offering/contribution reconciliation, cash account reconciliation, liabilities, income and expenses, credit cards, payroll, internal controls, related party transactions, contracts, and unrelated business income.



# Quilters

The quilters have been busy!  
We have 53 completed quilts.

We meet every Wednesday morning from  
9am-11am in the basement.

Hope you can join us!



## Rummage Sale

Our annual rummage sale is coming on **April 11th-13th**. There will also be a food stand and bake sale!

Volunteers are needed Thursday, April 4th at 6pm when we plan to set up tables; Saturday, April 6th at 9am when we bring up merchandise; and Sunday, April 7th after worship when we start setting up. We will also be working Monday, April 8th through Wednesday, April 10th.

We will continue to take donations through Wednesday, April 10th.

Rummage Sale hours will be: Thursday, April 11th from 8am-6pm; Friday, April 12th from 8am-5pm; and Saturday, April 13th from 8am-12pm

Pat Marthaler will be there again selling her items. There will again be potholders, dish cloths and corner bookmarks. Book sleeves, soup size bowl cozies, and bottle and jar openers. And CD card holders for playing card games!

It's not too early to buy Mother's Day gifts, graduation presents or for other special occasions.

## Attention Bakers!

The church's April rummage sale is fast approaching! We will, again, be including baked goods as part of the sale and will need people to contribute homemade treats.

Not a baker? No problem! We will also need volunteers to help package goodies and promote the sale.  
Please contact Leanne Gensch at 920-210-9851 if you have any questions.

## Thrivent

As of the time of this Focus printing, the Thrivent group has not yet determined the date of the April meeting. Please stay tuned to e-announcements and other information to find out when and where we will meet.

We will be selling cookies at the food booth at the rummage sale on April 11th and 12th, and on Sunday, April 14th, before and after worship.

Thank you to all that directed your Thrivent Choice dollars to First Lutheran!  
Please call Sheree Voigt with any questions at 920-296-3285.

# Loaves & Fishes

John Smedema – (920) 382-1518

## Advisory Board

Now that Beaver Dam Loaves & Fishes is its own nonprofit organization, we recently established an Advisory Board for advice, counsel, accountability, and to ensure good communications between our supportive Church/Community groups.

### The Representatives on our Advisory Board are:

Grace Presbyterian – Ruth Poehlman

Trinity Methodist – Sue Steiner

Harvest Church – Barb Thomson

St. Katharine Drexel – Kathy Vanden Boogart

First Lutheran – Cindy Vogel

At Large Community – Sandie Evaerts

### Officers of Beaver Dam Loaves & Fishes are:

Executive Director – John Smedema

Co-Executive Director – Linda Smedema

Treasurer – Sarah Pfister

Secretary – Adam Pfister

**Vision:** We must go live to feed the hungry, stand beside the broken, move us into action. (Paraphrased from the song, “God of Justice”)

**Mission:** Our mission is to serve a weekly, healthy, hot meal to anyone who wants one. There will be no income requirements, we care about serving the physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual needs of all people in our community. We want to create an environment where everyone feels welcomed and loved and a part of our community. We look to follow Jesus’ command from John 13:34 – “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.”

We recently conducted a survey asking the age of our guests’ receiving meals. We served 649 meals on a meal date in February, we received 508 responses:

Age Categories	Number of Guests	Per Cent of Total
80+	53	10%
60-79	202	40%
40-59	115	23%
19-39	77	15%
0-18	61	12%
Totals	508	100%

We believe this survey shows that while Loaves & Fishes is impacting the elderly population, it also shows that we are impacting all age groups!

By the time you read this, we will have served over 40,000 meals to our community in our 20 months in existence. God is working through all of us to follow Jesus’ command to love one another as he has first loved us!

Thank you for your support!

John Smedema

Executive Director

# Graduates

We're entering the last few months of school, so we're gearing up to celebrate our 2024 graduates! If you have a graduate in your life, please share a photo, their future plans, and any other fun facts you'd like to share. We will be honoring our graduates on **Sunday, June 9th at the 10am service.**

## Health Ministry

*Bob Gionet, RN, Parish Nurse (920) 319-1961*

*I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you.*  
Philippians 1:3,4

August 4th will be my last Sunday between services at First. I am retiring from Church Health Services on August 8th. I want to thank the congregation for making me feel welcome since day one when I started in 2013. I treasure all the friendships gained at First Lutheran.

First Lutheran has had a Parish Nurse since Linda Joeckel in 1994. I'm hoping that the congregation continues having a Parish Nurse and Health Ministry. I would talk with anyone who might be interested in being the Parish Nurse and keeping this thirty-year tradition alive at First Lutheran. Please call or text me at 920-319-1961, this is my Church Health Services work phone number, if you do call, please leave a message and I will call you back. Or email [bobg@churchclinic.org](mailto:bobg@churchclinic.org).

I will be live, in person at First between services on **Sunday, April 21st**. I am also available to you by phone, text message, email or appointment.

Wishing you and your family health and happiness, Bob Gionet, RN, Parish Nurse, First Evangelical Lutheran Church



### *A Prayer for April*

Lord, we are so grateful for this time of cleansing and refreshment as we enter into this month of April.

Help us to have a heart like David who prayed,

“Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.”

We lay the sin and iniquity at your feet and thank you for cleansing our hearts and soul!

In Jesus name, Amen.

## Remember In Prayer

God of sinners and saints, while facing sadness and death, we grieve. As Jesus provided generously in a moment of need, provide generous gifts of healing for those in need this day especially for Linda, Jackie, Toby, Sherry, Lillie, Kristine, Dan, Bev, Pat, Donna, Roger, Lee, Andy, Sandra, Nicole, Val, Stacey, Phil. Gather us into the joy of your glory. Amen.

# Council Highlights

## Greetings to the congregation of First Lutheran!

The March council meeting was held on March 17th. A devotion on keeping in touch was given by Jim Feil. Leanne Gensch will give the devotion in April. The council approved the amended agenda and meeting minutes from last month.

The letter from Mark Killingsworth, Rick Marthaler, and Jim Feil regarding the internal audit has been posted on the bulletin board with the February minutes. Council is looking forward to receiving recommendations from Wegner CPAs so that we can continue to improve upon our church operations.

We welcomed Pastor Jim back from vacation, and he shared information on Holy Week and the time after Easter.

Lynn Seibel reported that Evangelism received a grant from the hospital for helmets for the city's summer kickoff; Sam Herringa discussed steps being taken to support staff through Mutual Ministry; Stacy Drews informed Council that the job fair Heidi and she attended at Luther provided connections and ideas that may help us fill our Youth Director position; John Smedema reported that a group from NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, will be participating at Loaves & Fishes on May 7th. This reinforces the importance of relationships in our community.

Council members were reminded that the church is in need of donations for April's rummage/bake sale. Social Concerns continues to collect names for college care packages, and the recipients do not need to be members.

Beaver Dam Loaves & Fishes has finally received its own 501c3 status; however, Loaves & Fishes will continue to be a ministry of First Lutheran. We will be working toward transferring finances in

a way which will not put a burden on the congregation. Though Loaves & Fishes has a succession plan, the finance committee will also be asked to work with the group to develop an agreement for disbursement of equipment should Loaves & Fishes ever move to a different location.

Per Personnel and Finance Committee recommendations, a motion was made and passed to award a bonus to our AV Specialist for his extra work and flexibility while we navigated through changes in the office and with the radio broadcast. Motions were also made and passed to sell the old convection oven from the kitchen and for Loaves & Fishes to start the process to purchase an Alto-Shaam cook and hold oven to replace the bread proofer in the kitchen. Loaves & Fishes will also pay for the necessary electrical upgrades.

Council had started to meet in Friendship Hall to make meetings more accessible for members who would like to attend, but we needed a smaller area to ensure those with hearing issues are able to participate. After discussing our options, we decided the conference room in the lower level best meets our needs. The congregation is reminded that guests are always welcome at Council meetings, and the elevator is available for those who would rather not use the stairs.

A motion was made and passed to have one service on Sunday, April 14th, at 9am. This will be a traditional service. It will be followed by a brunch and discussion time with Marie Leafblad, Associate to the Bishop. We hope this change will allow for greater participation as we review our church's mission and vision statements.

The next Church Council meeting will be **Sunday, April 21st at 11:15am**. Members are always welcome to attend!

God's Blessings,  
Your Church Council

## 2024 Church Council

Leanne Gensch  
*President (Faith Formation  
& Finance)*

Lynn Seibel  
*Vice-President  
(Evangelism & Finance)*

Bev Yunto  
*Secretary  
(Social Concerns)*

Jim Feil  
*Treasurer*

Stacy Drews  
*(Personnel)*

Sam Herringa  
*(Mutual Ministry)*

Scott Jacquart  
*(Worship)*

Marian Krueger  
*(Sunday School)*

Phyllis Marthaler  
*(Rummage Sale  
& Christmas Bazaar)*

Charlie McDonald  
*(Endowment)*

John Smedema  
*(Stewardship)*

## Worship Schedule

### In Person Services

Sunday 8am - Traditional  
Sunday 10am - Contemporary  
Thursday 1pm - Traditional w/Communion

### Online Services

Facebook Live, Church Website & YouTube Live  
Sunday 8am - Traditional  
Sunday 10am - Contemporary

### Radio Broadcast Service

Sunday 8am on FM 95.3 WBEV

### Drive-Thru Holy Communion

April 28th | 9am - 9:45am

### Contact Us

Phone: 920-885-4497  
E-mail: [churchoffice@firstluthbd.org](mailto:churchoffice@firstluthbd.org)  
Website: [www.firstluthbd.org](http://www.firstluthbd.org)

Rev. Jim Wendt  
[pastor@firstluthbd.org](mailto:pastor@firstluthbd.org)

First Lutheran Church  
311 W. Mackie Street  
Beaver Dam, WI 53916

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Beaver Dam, WI

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

## NOTES FROM THE OFFICE

### Office Staff Hours

Monday thru Thursday 9:00am-12:30pm

### Church Mailbox & Office Mailbox

There is a secure church mailbox installed outside of the Friendship Hall doors by the doorbell. There is also a secure church office mailbox installed on the wall to the left of the office window. Members can use either mailbox as a dropbox if you need to drop off items for staff after hours.

### Due Date Reminders - Email to [breanna@firstluthbd.org](mailto:breanna@firstluthbd.org)

Focus Articles: Due on the 3rd Friday of the month

Sponsors, Bulletin, Welcome Slides, or E-Announcements: Due on Tuesdays by noon

### Prayers of the Church

If you would like to be included in the prayers of the church, please contact the church office. If you have prayer requests for the Prayer Chain, please contact Lois Bennett at (920) 887-2698 or [benn1741@gmail.com](mailto:benn1741@gmail.com).





FIRST LUTHERAN YOUTH PRESENT

**PASTA DINNER**  
**&**  
**VARIETY**  
**SHOW**

SUNDAY, APRIL 21st  
Dinner starts at 5pm  
Show starts at 6pm

TICKETS ARE \$8/PERSON

Come join us for this fun, congregation event as we support the youth, young adults, and adult leaders that are attending the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans this July!

If you have a special talent, dance, skit, or sketch you'd like to share, we welcome you to share it with us!

# First Lutheran's Talent Show Sign Up

On **Sunday, April 21<sup>st</sup>** at **6pm**, Youth who will be attending the ELCA National Youth Gathering in New Orleans and their parents will be hosting a Pasta Dinner and Talent Show. Tickets are \$8 and will be available starting two weeks prior to the show.

**We are looking for acts of all kinds** – music, magic, yo-yo, dance, skits, poems, storyteller and singers – whatever you've got! Solo or group acts are welcome. This is an all-ages opportunity – family acts are highly encouraged!

Please [contact Pastor Jim \(pastor@firstluthbd.org\)](mailto:pastor@firstluthbd.org) with questions. He is happy to brainstorm with folks who need ideas!

Have an Act? Contact Pastor Jim or sign up on the board outside the office. **Sign-ups are due by the Tuesday before the show (April 16<sup>th</sup>).**

Need inspiration? The theme for the Talent Show is **Created to Be.**

*We are created to be brave*, to show up with an open mind and heart, willing to be challenged.

*We are created to be authentic*, to bring our whole selves and know that we are loved by our Creator.

*We are created to be free*, to be transformed by the gospel.

*We are created to be disruptive*, to work for justice for all our siblings.

*We are created to be disciples*, to be sent out into the world to love our neighbor just as we are loved by God.