



March 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

Adult Forum

March 10th

Parish Nurse

March 10th

Focus Deadline - For April

March 15th

Blood Drive

March 18th & 19th

First Communion - Maundy

Thursday

March 28th

Good Friday

March 29th

Easter Sunday

March 31st

Dear Friends of First,

During the season of Lent, we traditionally gather for a mid-week soup supper and worship. We'll continue with that tradition in Friendship Hall, as we reflect on the sometimes-mercurial discipleship of Peter and the words of a favorite hymn, "Come, thou Fount of Every Blessing."

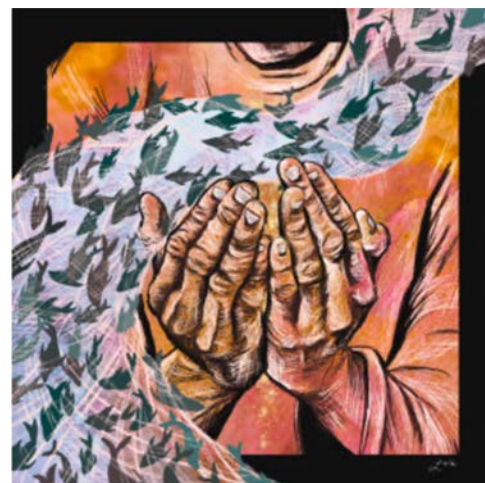
Jesus' first disciples were everyday people: minding their own business, mending their nets, supporting their families, worrying about expenses, paying their taxes, fretting about the future. First and foremost, among them was Peter. He's a compelling guy, often impulsive, leaping before he looks, getting it wrong at least as much as he gets it right, making promises he can't keep. Much like you, me and lots of people we know.

And Jesus loved him. And despite, or perhaps because of Peter's "perfect imperfections," Jesus trusted him. He called Peter "the rock" on which he would build his church, the early Jesus' movement.

This Lent, we are inviting Peter to journey with us, as we notice the similarities of his life and impulses as they match our own. We'll notice where our story meets his. And through it all, we'll interweave the old hymn "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing," as we consider our own wandering hearts and what it means to bring them more in tune with God this season.

I encourage you to attend our mid-week service and to stoke your imagination as to how Jesus is seeking you out of everyday life to be disciples in this day and age, much like how Jesus first called Peter and his brother Andrew to follow him and to begin fishing for people rather than fish.

In peace,
Pastor Jim



Faith Formation

Sunday School

Our next unit is focusing on the theme of a Road to a King. Our Bible Buddy is Amanda the red panda and our Memory Verse is Philippians 4:6.

“Don’t worry about anything; (touch temples and shake head “no”)
Instead, pray about everything. (press palms together)
Tell God what you need, (point up)
And thank him for all he has done.” (touch chin, then extend hand out)

Our Bible Point for this month is that God Know what we need.

March 3rd: God Provides for Ruth – God knows what we need when we feel alone. (Ruth 1-4)

March 10th: God Answers Hannah’s Prayer – God knows what we need when we’re hurting. (1 Samuel 1:1-2:11)

March 17th: God speaks to Samuel – God knows what we need and speaks to us. (1 Samuel 3:1-4:1)

March 24th: God Gives His People a King – God knows what we need even when we try to solve our own problems. (1 Samuel 8-10:25)

March 31st: No Sunday School – Happy Easter!



First Communion

Is your child interested and ready to receive Holy Communion?
We will be having a class in March in preparation for receiving their First Communion on
Maundy Thursday (3/28) at 6pm.

We will be reaching out to families. For all those interested in attending, we will solidify a date and time.
To sign up for the class, please contact Heidi (heidi@firstluthbd.org).

Confirmation

Confirmation students will continue to meet with their mentors throughout Wednesday evening worship.

If your child is unable to attend a particular Wednesday, please reach out to Heidi and/or their mentor. Discussion sheets will be available every week.

Parents Supporting Parents

Our Parents Group will be meeting **Saturday, March 9th at 8:30am in the Upper Room.** We will have a presentation from Healing Relationships in Juneau about Childhood Trauma and How it Affects Adult Relationships.

Adult Forum

On **Sunday, March 10th from 9:10-9:50am**, Koepsell Funeral Home will be sharing about funeral pre-planning and will answer any questions you may have. Come down to the Lower Level Commons; there will be treats and coffee!

Faith Formation Team

Heidi Muenchow will be gathering together with the Faith Formation Team to continue our discussion on what Faith Formation looks like at First Lutheran and things we would like to see.

As a part of this, we have included a little survey to learn more about our members and how we can be connected intergenerationally. Our goal is to put together “Family Groups” that consist of 5-6 people of varying ages and have some time to get to know each other.

If you are interested in being a part of this Faith Formation Team, please reach out to Heidi (heidi@firstluthbd.org).

Lent Soup Suppers

Lent Soup Suppers have begun! There are opportunities to donate items, help make the soup, serve, and clean up. There is a sign up sheet on the Friendship Hall bulletin board as well as a sign up genius for ease of checking what we still need for a particular day.

Heidi is reaching out to groups to help prepare and serve the soup. If your group is interested, please contact Heidi. The menu will be shared each week in the E-Announcements.

We hope you'll join us for a simple meal and fellowship before diving into scripture and reflection together.



Lent at First

Embark on a transformative Lenten journey with us
Wednesdays, February 21st to March 20th.

5pm - Soup Supper
6pm - Worship in Fellowship Hall

Worship Committee

The Worship Committee met Monday, February 5th. We are working on making sure the pre-recorded radio service is consistent and airing on time. The sound on the north side of the sanctuary is working properly now. We will be meeting again on **Monday, March 4th, at 6pm**. Anyone who wants to join us is most welcome.

Applause, Applause

Mary Kahler, Worship Committee Chair

A question that our church has been dealing with for some time is whether applause is appropriate or inappropriate during worship. As a committee, we have struggled with this and from listening to our fellow church members the dilemma is real.

As a congregation, we need to ponder why we applaud. Applause for new church members, incoming/outgoing council members, and baptisms generally is accepted. We want to acknowledge an achievement and congratulate those involved.

However, there is a split when applause follows a choir anthem, a musical solo, etc. Those who support applause in this situation feel that when we applaud singers/instrumentalists, we are showing appreciation to the people performing. We are showing appreciation for their performance. Some people feel this is appropriate, others do not. As Americans we tend to applaud after all performances, regardless of quality—as a courtesy.

There are those who do not like the applause because they feel that it is out of place in the worship service. In some ways it is disruptive to the flow of the service. We are applauding the entertainment factor of the performance and not recognizing the praise of God.

Yet, there are those who consider the applause that follows a choir anthem, etc., as not directed to the performers but directed to God. It is gratitude in the form of applause that He blessed us with these people who are musically talented.

And now we go back to the question posed before—why do you applaud/not applaud?

We need to be reminded that worship is not entertainment. Music is used to proclaim and praise God as well as to enhance worship. We must also be reminded that not everyone is on the same page when it comes to this subject. As worshipers we need to learn to live, work and worship together, we must become more aware of and sensitive to one another's means of expression.

If you want to praise the performance, it might be nice to stop the musician after the service and thank them. You may want to offer a silent prayer of gratitude to God for the music you just heard. And you may want to applaud in gratitude to God for these musicians. In addition, you may not want to stop there. Other people play a critical role in the worship service such as tech support, readers, worship assistants, usher, altar guild, etc.

So, on Sunday, do not question the motives of the person sitting on your left and applauding after a choir anthem or the person on your right not applauding. Understand why or why not you are applauding.



Thrivent

Next Thrivent meeting is **Thursday, March 21st at 12:30am** at Sixth Gear in Beaver Dam.

We will be **selling cookies between services on Sunday, March 24th.**

The phone number to call to direct your choice dollars by March 31st is 1-800-847-4836.

You may go online to do this as well.

Retirees

Lucy Viola – (920) 887-7137

We had such a great lunch and bible study at our February meeting. It was good to see everyone. All are welcome. Just call and let us know you would like to come and we will order a meal for you. It's a great time to get together and share stories.

Retirees will meet again on **Thursday, March 14th at 11:30am** for lunch. I will be on vacation but Judy Bergeson and Deb Vis will be checking with everyone about lunch. You may chose chicken or a salad, which includes garden salad, chef salad, taco salad and fiesta chicken salad, your choice of dressings. Cost is \$8. **It was decided to have our Bible Study on Isaiah every two weeks.**

Retirees received a very nice thank you from the Toy Bank thanking us for our gifts to the bank. *They were able to help well over 650 needy children this year.* The monetary contribution we sent will be used to purchase toys for 2024.

Rummage Sale

There will be a meeting Sunday, March 10th at 9:15am in Friendship Hall.
for anyone interested in helping with the rummage sale in any way. Please join us!

The next rummage sale will be April 11th-13th. Setup will be April 7th-10th, with table set up on April 4th and merchandise will be brought up on April 6th.

Donations may be placed on the table in Friendship Hall at any time or can be dropped off on Tuesday mornings.
If a donation needs to be picked up, you can contact Dawn (920-296-8454)
or Jeff (920-296-4694) to make arrangements.

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.

Loaves & Fishes

John Smedema – (920) 382-1518

Report to Council & Congregation

One of the parts of the agreement between First Lutheran and Beaver Dam Loaves & Fishes pertains to communication between the two organizations and making sure that the Congregation is informed in a formal way of what is happening. Beaver Dam Loaves & Fishes welcomes more formal communication to help with transparency. As the quote goes, “In the absence of information, people will make it up!” My phone number is displayed in multiple places and I’m always available to answer questions.

Loaves & Fishes has agreed to provide quarterly updates (likely we will do it more often) on our financials, anticipated equipment purchases, kitchen space needs, staffing, or any changes to our current mission.

Financials

First Lutheran L&F Account: End of January Balance - \$28,068.07

Beaver Dam L&F Account: End of January Balance - \$44,979.14

The goal is to spend down the contributions in the First Lutheran - Loaves & Fishes account until it reaches \$0. This will allow the Church to continue to draw interest on this money and not have to draw a large amount of money out of the account to close it out. Both accounts represent individual and business donations as well as grants and fundraisers’ money. All money is dedicated to Beaver Dam Loaves & Fishes, none of this is Church funds. Beaver Dam L&F Account is our nonprofit bank account.

- Food Costs: August thru January - \$7,874.39
- Meals served: August thru January - 12,536
- Costs per meal: August thru January - \$0.63

Food costs include all costs except major equipment purchases. Items such as containers, parchment paper, spices, aluminum foil, food, garbage bags, etc., are included in food costs.

Approved/Anticipated Purchase	Equipment	Cost	Paid by
Approved	Double Convection Gas Oven	\$11,550	Beaver Dam Loaves & Fishes
Approved	New Anti-fatigue Kitchen Mats	\$230	Beaver Dam Loaves & Fishes
Anticipated	Heat & Hold Oven	\$10,000 – \$20,000 Approximate	Beaver Dam Loaves & Fishes

A grant from Beaver Dam Hospital Foundation (\$5,775) and a grant from Beaver Dam Area Community Foundation (\$2,500), covered much of the cost of the double convection ovens. New ovens have been installed. The old oven is in storage in the basement. The Church Council will decide whether to keep or sell the old oven.

We currently use the kitchen bread proofer as a place to hold cooked food. This oven is not designed for heating and holding food. We will seek Church Council approval to purchase the needed heat and hold oven. The bread proofing oven will be kept for other Church groups that use the bread proofer.

Kitchen Space Needs

If we are allowed to purchase the heat and hold oven, the bread proofer oven will be stored in the back kitchen storage room (next to the new ovens) for easy access.

Staffing

Of the 39 meal dates left in 2024, all but 12 are filled by outside volunteer groups and the first opening to sign up is in July. There is no shortage of volunteer groups serving on Tuesday. The core group numbers remain strong with natural

absences from volunteering or leaving volunteering which is offset by new volunteers coming on board, which allows us to have enough core volunteers to complete Monday prep and Tuesday core positions.

Mission Changes

There are no changes to our mission, it remains the same.

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

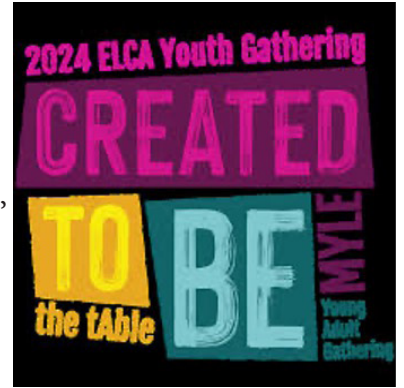
Mission: Our mission is to serve a weekly, healthy, hot meal to anyone who wants one. There will be no income requirements, we care about serving the physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual needs of all people in our community. We want to create an environment where everyone feels welcomed and 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."

Exciting Youth Gathering

Planned for High School Youth & Young Adults

You are invited and encouraged to come along with us as we travel to New Orleans to attend the ELCA National Youth Gathering with Lutheran teens, young adults, chaperons, and pastors such as myself from around the country for a week of service, learning, worship, and lots of fun! New Orleans, also known as The Big Easy, is filled with rich history, friendly people, amazing food and music!

We leave church on Saturday, July 13th and will return on Sunday, July 21st, 2024, from a transformational faith formation event. We currently have 16 people registered and am hoping to gain 4-5 more folks to join us. Please contact Pastor Jim (pastor@firstluthbd.org) for future information and registration.



Youth Gathering Fundraiser

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

We will have a Lasagna Dinner on **Sunday, April 21st starting at 5pm** with a Variety Show to start at 6pm. If you have a special talent, dance, skit, or sketch you'd like to share, we welcome you to share it with us!

Tickets are \$8/person. Watch for more details to come. We are currently looking for talent!

Youth Global Missions Collection

Once again, we are one of the locations to collect items for the Youth Global Missions Day! This year, we will be collecting Ketchup and Mustard. You can drop off your donations in the bin under the church office mailbox. **Our goal is to collect 125 bottles of each!**

Thank you for your support as we come together as a community. You can follow along to where other donation sites are located on the Playground Movement Facebook page: www.facebook.com/PlayMoveBD.

Health Ministry

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

Church Health Services is a **Drug Repository**. That means we have and distribute prescription medications at no charge. We do not check financial need for medications requested. To get your medication from CHS, you need to provide a valid prescription from your health care provider. Keep in mind that a Repository is different from a pharmacy; the inventory is extensive but not unlimited. Bottom line is you have nothing to lose by having your prescription sent here. You will receive a call from CHS to let you know if we have your medication or not. **Have prescriptions FAXED to 920-887-2322**. Being a Repository also means we can accept medications that have not expired. Please bring the medication in the bottle or box you received it in from the pharmacy.

The reception area at Church Health Services is open Monday to Thursday from 8:00am to 4:30pm. We cannot accept narcotic medications. You can dispose of those and expired medications in the drop box at your local police department.

I will be at First on Sunday, March 10th from 9-10am. I am also available to you by phone or appointment. Please call or text me at 920-319-1961, or email at bobg@churchclinic.org. If you do call, please leave a message and I will call you back.

Wishing you and your family health and happiness, Parish Nurse, Bob Gionet

Finances at First

Jim Feil, Treasurer

We started the month of January a little slow with a net operating loss of \$10,765, which is actually better than the budget projected loss of \$12,665. Contributions were down slightly to budgeted which is to be expected after the large increases by some for end of year in December. I would encourage people to get set up with automatic contributions through Simply Giving and the Vanco Mobile App.

Property/Maintenance expenses with the gutters and downspouts replacement, snow removal and typically higher gas and electric usage in January were contributing factors.

Submitted by: Judy Bergeson

pray

God be in my head, and in my understanding;
God be in mine eyes, and in my looking;
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;
God be at mine end, and at my departing.

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 Tim, Dan, Paul, Gwen, Bev, Roger, Abigail, Lee, Terry, Andy, Sandra, Nicole, Stacey, Val, Paulette, Jack, Viola, Donna, Robert, Janna, Lydia, Danielle, Kristine, Pat, and Phil. Gather us into the joy of your glory. Amen.

Council Highlights

Greetings to the congregation of First Lutheran!

The February council meeting was held on February 18th, and we welcomed new council members. A devotion about working together was given by Stacy Drews. Jim Feil will give the devotion in March. The council approved the agenda and meeting minutes from last month.

Leanne Gensch reported that the internal audit was completed and no issues were found; Jim Feil will be scheduling the external audit.

Pastor Jim continues his day-to-day activities; he is also working with youth as they prepare for Youth Gathering and looks forward to helping with the rummage sale brat fry.

Pastor Jim then reported on the LEAD conference which enabled participants to engage with people with common interests. Marian Krueger attended a session on social injustice and suggested we include this as part of adult forum. Bev Yunto was involved in a group discussing council leadership and shared ideas on how to expedite discussions and energize meetings.

John Smedema presented information on Holy Currencies. Council was introduced to mutual invitation and respectful communication techniques, and council members were asked to share the information with their respective committees/teams. John also explained gracious leadership and the importance of building relationships both within our church and in the community.

This year we had 73 people attend the annual meeting in person and 2 by zoom, just meeting our requirement of 75 for a quorum. Worship Committee is discussing the possibility of having one service that day, followed by the meeting and meal, to allow for easier

participation.

Though the radio broadcast has been more consistent since going from live to recorded broadcasts, we continue to work with the radio station to avoid dead air time.

Postcards were mailed to households near church to invite residents to Lenten and Holy Week services. An updated ad with the church's logo and regular worship times will also be included in the Dodge County Visitor Guide.

Council will decide at a later date what will be done with the old convection oven from the kitchen.

A council liaison for the rummage sale/ Christmas bazaar was added to provide that team with a voice on church council. Parish Ed was also changed to Faith Formation to speak more to how we equip members throughout their lives.

A motion was made and passed to donate \$2500 from our disaster relief fund to LUAD, a group that provides assistance to communities within our Synod after disasters such as tornados and floods. Council also gave their blessing to Pastor Jim to attend the Festival of Homiletics in May as part of his continuing education.

We continue to search for a youth director; Stacy Drews and Heidi Muenchow will be attending a job fair at Luther College in an effort to make some connections.

The next Church Council meeting will be Sunday, March 17th 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)

Holy Currencies - Relationships

We all worry about the Church and the apparent decline of the Church today. Many can feel that it is the end of the Church and despair can set in on how to stop the decline. First Lutheran is not immune to the decline. Do we just despair and accept the decline? Are there ways to stop the decline and grow and thrive in these uncertain times?

A group of us are learning from a book and training materials called Holy Currencies. Erich H. F. Law studied Churches that are thriving to find the reasons they are growing and thriving while others are declining. He found significant principles these Churches had in common.

This article focuses on the **Currency of Relationships in our Congregation.**

We should all reflect on our relationships within the Church. Many of us have a circle of friends within the Church, in many cases, they are relationships we have had for years and years. How many of us think that's enough, no need to make relationships with people I don't know? Or maybe you're the person that doesn't really have many relationships with others in the Congregation, how can you build relationships? Relationships are a two-way street!

This is a recent true story. A person came to our Church a few times to see if she wanted to join our Church. During her visits no one approached her or welcomed her in any way. She ended up joining a different Church. All of you are thinking, I would have talked with her if I had known! The problem is we don't know, it's not like the new person is walking around with a sign saying "I'm auditioning your Church to see if I want to join you."

Holy currencies training can help us evaluate our currency of relationships within the Church and outside the Church. Why is that important? The story above is one reason but there are many other reasons to build strong relationships within the Church and outside the Church in our community. If we want the Church to survive and thrive, relationships are a key ingredient in making that happen!

Examine the following questions/statements. The purpose is to ensure that we are sustaining our Church community. Reflect on your internal Church relationships. Ask yourself, are there ways to expand my internal relationships? Can I strengthen the internal relationships I already have?

Reflect on your (our) external relationships. The purpose is to ensure we are sustaining/helping our external community. In what ways are our external relationships helpful to understand the needs of our community? How can we as a Church community use the strength of external relationships to be relevant/helpful to our community?

Much more to come on our currency of relationships and how we can use our currency to flow in our Church and our community.

Holy Currencies Team:

Pr. Jim, Heidi Muenchow, Leanne Gensch, Corey Bradley, Lynn Seibel, Lois Knaack, Bev Yunto and John Smedema





SHARE YOUR LUCKY CHARM.

Give blood for those in need.



Beaver Dam Community Blood Drive **First Evangelical Lutheran Church**

311 W. Mackie Street

Monday, March 18, 2024
11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday, March 19, 2024
12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

For an appointment call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter Sponsor Code: BeaverDam

Sponsored by First Lutheran Evangelism Committee, Culver's, Kwik Trip, Kohl's, Countryside GM Auto Group and Lidtke Motors in Beaver Dam

Come to give March 1-24 for a \$10 e-gift card to a pet supply merchant of choice! Give blood, treat your pet & make a paw-sitive impact this spring. PLUS automatically be entered for a chance to win a \$3K gift card (5 winners!)! Terms: rcblood.org/Pets.



Scan to schedule an appointment.

1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767 | RedCrossBlood.org | Download the Blood Donor App

© 2023 The American National Red Cross | 418001-05-Field-RW

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

March 10th & 24th | 9am - 9:45am

Contact Us

Phone: 920-885-4497
E-mail: churchoffice@firstluthbd.org
Website: www.firstluthbd.org

Rev. Jim Wendt
pastor@firstluthbd.org

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

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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

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.

