



# First Lutheran Church

We are believers seeking to invite all into the caring, sharing and growing ways of Christ.

## September 2022 Parish Visitor

### From the Pastor...

**“In the morning, as soon as you get out of bed, you are to make the sign of the holy cross and say: God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit watch over me. Amen”  
- Morning Blessing from Luther’s Small Catechism**

Many people are surprised that in *Luther’s Small Catechism*, a booklet written by Martin Luther, the man considered to be the spark that set the Protestant Reformation on fire, would include in one of his main manuals (to teach the Christian faith) the practice of making the sign of the cross. This is because in the United States, making the sign of the cross tends to be considered a practice of Roman Catholics (or Episcopalians and Eastern Orthodox as well). Martin Luther advises us to make the sign of the cross during morning and evening prayers. In addition, Dr. Luther recommends using the sign of the cross when one is faced with spiritual warfare. The ELCA (the Lutheran body we belong to) typically uses it as a reminder that we are baptized and claimed by Christ, and saved by his death on the cross.

There is no biblical command to make the sign of the cross, so it is by no means mandatory; or, to be made a work to earn salvation. Salvation comes to us by what Christ alone did for us: by giving of his flesh and blood on the cross for our sins. I would look at making the sign of the cross more like wearing a wedding ring. There is no biblical mandate to wear a wedding ring. However, wearing a wedding ring reminds many of us that we no longer just belong to ourselves. The ring reminds us, and others, that we belong to another person who we have become one flesh with (Genesis 2:24). This is also true when we make the sign of the cross; we don’t have to do it, but it is a reminder to myself and my community that through baptism and my faith in Christ, I no longer belong only to myself, but I belong to God in God’s fullness: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I have heard some people say that making the sign of the cross, “looks too Catholic.” There are many things we share with many other Christian traditions, but would it be fair to ourselves, to eradicate them, just so we don’t, “look like them”? That would mean getting rid of the church calendar, celebrating Christmas, candles, crosses and hymnals (none of these are mandated by the Bible). Shouldn’t we define ourselves by “who we are” rather than “who we are not”? The truth be told, making the sign of the cross is as much our (Lutheran) tradition as our brothers and sisters in the Roman Catholic, Anglican or Orthodox Churches. In fact, while rare, I have known Methodist and Presbyterian Christians to include this practice in their worship and/or prayer life. Maybe they wish to remember that they were claimed by God in baptism and their faith in Christ too.

Looking at the Lutheran hymnals that we use, whether *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* or *Lutheran Book of Worship*, a red “+” sign is given in the liturgy when it is a logical time to make the sign of the cross in worship. I tend to make the sign of the cross anytime I need to remind myself that God, not I, am in control. So, at least for me, making the sign of the cross is not to show what a good Christian I am, but what a failed human being I am: so in need of God’s Grace! It is such a blessing when we have worship at Boulder Estates (usually the first Monday of the month) and Corlys Knudson leads us in Luther’s morning prayer, starting out by making the sign of the cross!

Another question I get is: “How do I make the sign of the cross?” Lutherans typically make the sign the same way Roman Catholics and Episcopalians (Western Christians) do: touch your forehead with your pointer finger, then trace a line to your sternum and then left shoulder to right. If, by chance, you go right shoulder to left.....no problem: that is the direction that the Eastern Orthodox take in making the same sign. Remember there is no right or wrong way, it is simply a kinesthetic prayer to remind you of the Great God you belong too!

Blessings to you, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
Pr. Mike

## Children, Families and Youth News

### September Kicks Off Many Youth and Family Events!!

Check out the Rock (youth newsletter) for details!  
Watch for emails! Stay in the loop!



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| Sept 11 | <b>RALLY DAY</b> at First Lutheran and Blessing of the Backpacks   |
| Sept 14 | <b>Kick-Off Event for Confirmation</b> (grades 7-8)  |
| Sept 14 | <b>TLC Wednesdays, Worship, Suppers, and SHA all start!</b>  |
| Sept 18 | Senior High FLY Montana Re-Cap Worship (both 8:30 & 10:45am)   |
| Sept 21 | <b>High School Bible Studies Game Changers and Grace Gang starts up!</b>                                   |
| Sept 21 | <b>Little League Kick Off!</b>   |
| Sept 25 | <b>7<sup>th</sup> Grade</b> Fall Confirmation Retreat at First Lutheran                                    |
| Sept 28 | <b>Adopt a Highway</b> (8 <sup>th</sup> grade) <b>Confirmation Service Project</b> (7 <sup>th</sup> Grade) |
| Oct 5   | <b>Parent Forum</b>  |
| Nov 11  | <b>Grub Club</b> starts at Hy-Vee (after marching band season)   |

### MILESTONE MINISTRY AT FIRST LUTHERAN!!

..... What is a Milestone?



A faith milestone is a marker along life's journey that says, "This is something important and God is here, too." Marking a milestone is a biblically-based spiritual practice for both home and congregation. It helps all generations recognize God IS the central core of their lives every day!

### September Milestones

**Rally Day, September 11:** We are inviting all **7<sup>th</sup> Grade** students and their parents to celebrate the milestone of Entering Confirmation. During worship at 9:30am, we will mark this Milestone with a stone marked with a symbol as well as receiving their Teen Bible. This Milestone Celebration is a time for the 7th grade youth to be reminded that they are baptized children of God, created in God’s own image, and to celebrate this next step of learning on their faith journey.... and a celebration for the parents to walk with them and learn with them on this journey.

### Sunday September 18:

**9<sup>th</sup> Grade** students and their parents will celebrate the start of high school. The freshman year is a time to be reminded that they are baptized children of God, created in God’s own image, and how knowing that will help them when facing the trials and tribulations of High School.

**10<sup>th</sup> Grade** ... getting your driver’s license! When you get your driver’s license, it is an exciting time for both youth and parents. The preparing for and receiving of the license brings many new rights and responsibilities. The license requires new stewardship of time and resources, challenges and opportunities for communication, and occasions for service. It is a time to celebrate also, what it can mean for you in your faith life. Even if you may not

have gotten your official license yet because of when your birthday is, please join us at one of the services so that we can celebrate YOU and your families in worship.

**11<sup>th</sup> grade** will celebrate their quest milestone. A "QUEST" is the act or an instance of seeking or pursuing something; a search. When you become juniors, it seems like college, careers, interests, etc. all start becoming a part of people's conversations with you. It may seem like a time with unknowns or a lot of questions. But at First Lutheran, we want to celebrate this time with you as an opportunity to listen to where God is calling you in your life and how the cross is the central part of this compass.

### Kindergarten Milestone Celebration

**Sunday, September 25 at both the 8:30am & the 10:45am Worship Services**, Kindergarten students will be presented with a Milestone Bowl that represents all the meaningful moments that make up our lives and with the following Stones...

- Baptism Stone: Symbolizing their Holy Baptism
- Learning Stone: Symbolizing receiving knowledge about the word of God and the love of God from your family and the congregation
- TLC Stone: Symbolizing that they are being welcomed to Teaching the Love of Christ (TLC)



### Rally Day is Sunday, September 11!

Coffee will be served beginning at 9am. Worship is at 9:30am followed by an ALL CHURCH meal! Everyone is WELCOME! Come to Rally Day and experience meaningful worship, great music, friendly fellowship, good food, and games, as we kick off our Program year at First Lutheran!



Christian Education



### **First Lutheran Teacher Installation:**

During Rally Sunday Worship on **Sunday, September 11 at 9:30am**, all those involved in Christian education at First Lutheran - TLC Teachers, TLC Helpers, TLC Volunteers, Confirmation Team Captains, Bible Study Leaders, Convo Leaders, and Substitute Teachers will be called forward to participate in the First Lutheran Teacher Installation for 2022-23. Thank you so much for giving of your time and talents and for passing on your faith!

Students and educators have returned to the classroom and other fall schedules have resumed. First Lutheran Church will be having a **Blessing of the Backpacks Milestone celebration** on **Sunday, September 11 at 9:30am**. We are inviting all students & educators to bring their backpacks, briefcases, or computer bags to be blessed. During our Children's Time we will invite you to come forward with these items so that the Pastor can bless you and your backpacks, etc. for the upcoming school year.



### **New Wednesday Schedule!!**

- 5:15-6:00pm TLC
- 6:00-6:30pm Wednesday Worship
- 6:30-6:55pm Light Meal - \$2/person
- 6:30-7:45pm Confirmation
- 7:00-8:00pm Game Changers & Grace Gang
- 8:00-9:00pm Senior High Alive



- **TLC Wednesday Begins September 14**
- **Confirmation Begins September 14**
- **TLC Sunday Begins September 18**

Hey 7th graders and confirmation captains!! We are excited to invite you to the annual 7<sup>th</sup> grade Confirmation Retreat!!

**~Sunday September 25 from 4:00 -6:00pm~**

More details will be coming to you soon ... But mark it on your calendars now! It's going to be a great afternoon to get to know your teams and captains and find out more about confirmation.



## Women's Ministry

### Women's Ministry Bible Study Opportunities: ALL ARE WELCOME!

Wednesdays at 6:30am in the Movie Room - contact Corlys Knudson at 828-6106

2nd Wed of the month at 10am in the Fellowship Hall - contact Dawn Planting 828-8157

2nd Monday of the month at 7pm in the Movie Rm - contact Kim Christianson at 530-2301

## Other Important Items



**The Coloring for Christ (C4C) Ministry** will have its organizational meeting in the Fellowship Hall on Monday, October 3 at 2:00pm. If you enjoy adult coloring and reaching out to people who are shut-in, recently home from the hospital, or undergoing cancer treatments, please come join us. C4C would meet for 2 hours a month to color plus send out coloring cards or get them ready to deliver them in person. Your ideas would be welcome at this meeting as well. Questions-call Paulette Hanson at 507-530-0284.

### The Social Ministries Committee would like to say Thank You

to everyone that contributed to the Southwest Minnesota United Way Stuff the Bus project. A total of over 56,000 items were donated, 22 schools participated and over 3000 children are able to start school with the supplies they need. If you were not able to contribute during July but would still like to drop off supplies, there is a box located inside the office entrance.



### **Come ring with the First Lutheran Handbell Choir!**

Handbell Choir rehearsals will begin on Wednesday September 14 at 6:30pm.

If you are new to the church and are looking for a fun way to be involved in the music experience at First Lutheran Church, please contact Steve Meyer at 507 - 530 - 3256.

## Worship Schedule

Wednesdays (starting September 14) – 6:00pm - NOTE NEW TIME

Saturdays – 5:30pm

Sundays - 9:30am (through September 11)

Sundays - 8:30am & 10:45am (beginning September 18)

Services available on YouTube – [www.youtube.com/c/FirstLutheranChurchMarshall](http://www.youtube.com/c/FirstLutheranChurchMarshall)

Radio – Sundays at 11am on 1400AM or 101.7FM

Local Cable TV – Wednesdays at 10am and Thursdays at 5pm

Spectrum 180 & Bluepeak 17

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[www.1stlutheran.org](http://www.1stlutheran.org)

You can view our Facebook page from this site too!