

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Building Faith and
Transforming Lives
in Christ.

www.firstlutheranofmandan.org
We're on the web!

ADDRESS LABEL

Happy
Valentine's Day
from the staff at
First Lutheran
Church!



First Lutheran Church
February Newsletter



February 2026

First Lutheran
Staff

Pastor
Rev. Phil Leer
663-3594
701-341-7784

Pastor
Rev. Adam Barden
663-3594

Parish Administrator
Jackie Klein
663-3594

Financial Administration
Curtis Peterson

Worship Accompanists
8:30
10:45
6:30 (Wed.) Kathy Brandvold

Bell Choir Director
Cathy Long

**First Lutheran Is A Mission
Partner with Camp of the
Cross Ministries**



Friends in Christ,

Two years ago, Ash Wednesday, the traditional beginning of the season of Lent, fell smack dab on a day that typically gets a lot more attention in February: Valentine's Day. It was a unique and fun challenge to write a sermon for the two Ash Wednesday services we held that evening. Ash Wednesday is four days later than Valentine's Day this month but given the relatively close proximity between the two days again this year, I pray that you won't mind me sharing again some of my reflections from my sermon from a couple years back.

Let's be really honest: it's pretty tough to compete with Valentine's Day, isn't it?

I loved Valentine's Day when I was an elementary school student at Roosevelt in Bismarck. Loved it. One of my favorite days of the school year--getting a shoe box from mom and dad, cutting a slot in the top, decorating it, and then having all my classmates put valentines in my box for me. And of course, vice versa—I made valentines for all of them and dropped them in their boxes, too.

Loved, loved, LOVED. Especially as I got older and I started realizing that there were a few girls I was particularly intrigued by—OK, had crushes on--and wondered if they might have a crush on me. And so, when I got a valentine card from them, my goodness, does life get any better than that???

Yes, it's pretty tough to compete with Valentine's Day. As important a day as Ash Wednesday is for people who confess a faith in Jesus Christ, when they land on the same day [like they did two years ago] or within a few days like they do this year, Valentine's Day is usually going to get most of the attention. And it certainly will win the contest for which "day" sells the most greeting cards, right? Have you ever sent one of your loved ones an Ash Wednesday card with any of the following gloomy phrases? I haven't. *Happy Ash Wednesday! Yay, we are sinners! We are dust! We are mortal! We have disobeyed God! And eventually, we will die!*

Some years ago, I facilitated a family service in a neighboring community at the local funeral home for a woman for who had passed away. Her pastor would preside at the funeral the next day, but he was unable to lead the family service. So, I stepped in. It ended up being one of the most raw, intense, and memorable family services I have ever been a part of. I knew no one, but an hour and a half later, I felt like I was part of their family. Their broken, bruised, beautiful, blessed family. Wow.

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If you are not using your offering envelopes please call the church office and let us know so we can save money on sending them out! The church office number is 663-3594. Thank you!



Ash Wednesday is on February 18th. (This service will be held at 4:00 & 6:30 P.M.) Worship will include the “Imposition of Ashes” & Holy Communion.



One of the deceased woman’s granddaughters, who, during sharing a very tear- filled litany of both the good and bad about her grandma, basically let it rip and said, *“It’s time to tell the truth—both about who grandma was, and who we are as her family. Let’s be honest and not sugar coat anything. I’m sick and tired of pretending things are better than they are!”*

Ash Wednesday is a bit like that family service, I believe--a raw, honest, stripped-down, distraction-free and card-less time to worship and tell the truth, both about *who* we are as messy, broken sinners, but then, thankfully, *whose* we are--as redeemed, restored and renewed members of the family we were born into in the waters of baptism, and as beloved children of a good and gracious God whose undying love will never EVER let us go.

Much of the year we maybe can run or hide from the truth of our human condition—dust, sin, brokenness--or at least pretend that it’s not there; but it’s pretty hard to do that on Ash Wednesday. And I for one am grateful. After all, we don’t just smudge an indiscernible blob of goopy dust on foreheads this night, **we trace the symbol of a cross.**

Yes, *we remember that we are dust and to dust we shall return* (this language comes from Genesis as God is sending Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden after their dreadful and disobedient disaster); but yes, we never forget that we will belong to Christ, and we will live with him, forever. And he, not our dreadful and disobedient disasters, always gets to have the last word with us: *You are mine.*

So, who knows? Maybe sending Ash Wednesday cards to one another on Ash Wednesday, four days after greeting card sections in stores sell out of their stock of Valentine’s Day cards wouldn’t be such a bad thing!

Dear Pastor Phil, thinking of you on this sacred and holy Ash Wednesday as you gather with friends and strangers to tell both the harsh, brutal, and honest truth about who you and who they are; but then to also tell them the healing, hopeful and beautiful truth about who God is as you trace again the ashes/water/death/resurrection cross on your own forehead. Hope you enjoy the chocolates.

Peace and prayers as you prepare to enter the holy and precious days of Lent, and as Jesus prepares to walk with all of us.

Pastor Phil



MORE THAN 20 YEARS AGO, the Souper Bowl of Caring began with a simple prayer from a single youth group:

“Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those without a bowl of soup to eat.”

Since that day, more than \$98 million has been raised for local charities across the country through Souper Bowl of Caring. It has become a powerful movement that is transforming the time around Super Bowl weekend into the nation’s largest celebration of giving and serving. Through this mission, young people learn what it’s like to make a positive difference in the world – as they collect food, raise money and volunteer to work in charities that provide shelter to the homeless, food to the hungry and compassion to those in need. Be part of this movement that is sharing God’s love with those in need. Please give generously on Super Bowl Sunday. **The money we collect from First Lutheran will go to Mandan’s Backpack for Kids program, our 2026 Souper Bowl of Caring charity of choice. We will take donations on February 8th.**

Mark Your
Calendar...



5th: LAF ~ Pulled Pork
12th: LAF ~ Nachos
19th: LAF ~ Hot Dogs
26th: LAF ~ Sloppy Joes



February Youth Page

All 5th graders are invited to come and learn about the Sacrament of Holy Communion!!

First Communion Class will be held on **Sunday, March 1st** at 2:00 P.M. First Communion will take place on Maundy Thursday, **April 2nd** at 7 P.M. with a group picture before hand.

The class will be held at First Lutheran Church in Mandan. **Parents or guardians should attend with their youth.**

There will be a No School Fun Day on Monday, February 16th from Noon to 5pm for youth in 6th through 12th grade. You can find the registration form at the following website: <https://form.jotform.com/260254645919060>, or you can scan the QR code:




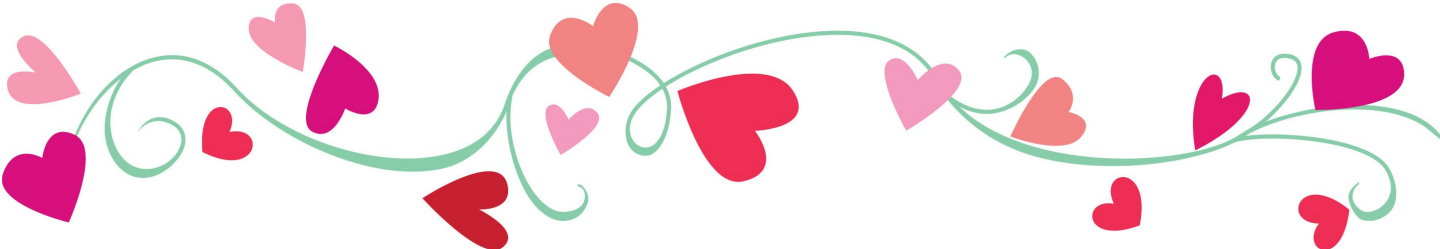


Mission Trip:

We will be selling Bunt Cakes and Kuchen throughout the month. Please stop by our table in the narthex to order some delicious desserts to support our youth in going to Knoxville, Tennessee.



We will be selling Carmel Rolls once again on Sunday February 22nd. Please come to worship hungry as there will be plenty of Rolls to go around!

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<p>Pastoral Acts</p> <p><u>Baptisms:</u> Sage Jude Teigen Quinn Elaine Christensen Aurora Rosalynn Kaye Brandner</p> <p><u>Funerals:</u> Tim Anderson Debra Will Joann Stork</p>		
<p>Memorial Fund</p>	<div> <p>Deadline for articles for the March Newsletter will be February 19th.</p> </div>	
<p>February ~ Mission of the Month</p> <p><u>Weekend Meals for Mandan Kids</u></p> <p>Items needed are Chap Stick, Peanut Butter, Jelly, Fruit Cups, Canned Fruit, Granola Bars, Cereal, Pudding Cups, Applesauce, Chef Boyardee', Mac & Cheese, Soups, Hamburger Helper, Spaghetti Noodles, Spaghetti Sauce, Pop Tarts, Instant Mashed Potatoes, Rice A Roni, Pasta Roni, Pork and Beans, Baked Beans, Pancake Mix-no eggs required such as Krusteaz Brand, Syrup, Canned Tuna, Chicken, Ham.</p> <p>NO GLASS JARS PLEASE!</p> <p>You may put your items in the boxes in the Narthex. Thank you!</p>	<p>Worship Schedule</p> <p>Sunday ~ 8:30 am ~ Traditional Worship 9:45 am ~ Church School 10:45 am ~ Contemporary Worship</p> <p>Wednesday ~ 5:45 pm ~ Church School 6:30 pm ~ Worship 7:30 pm ~ Confirmation</p>	
<p>Special Thanks</p> <p><i>Thank you to all the greeters, ushers, communion servers, readers, communion set-up, coffee hour workers, and to all who have supplied goodies for the last month. Your help is greatly appreciated!</i></p>		

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<p>Women of First Luncheon will be held at A & B on Wednesday, February 11th at 11:30 a.m. If you are planning on attending please call the church office at 663-3594 as soon as possible so we can have an accurate count for them. Please bring a food item for the food boxes outside.</p>		
		
	<p>The Endowment Committee is once again making two \$500 scholarships available to area seniors. As the committee works toward ensuring a vibrant financial future for the church, it is also working to ensure a vibrant future for the church by encouraging youth in their life of faith. Scholarship applications are available in the Church office or on our webpage and must be submitted by March 31, 2026.</p>	
		

Buffalo Chicken Sloppy Joes

- 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and chopped
- 3 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 1/2 tsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 1 tsp. ground black pepper
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 lb. ground chicken
- 1 8-ounce can tomato sauce
- 1/2 cup buffalo sauce
- 2 Tbsp. honey or brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 8 hamburger buns
- Crumbled blue cheese, for serving
- Ranch dressing, for serving
- Blue cheese dressing, for serving



Directions

1. In a large skillet or Dutch oven, melt the butter over medium-high heat. Add the onion, carrot, celery, salt, and pepper. Cook until the vegetables are softened but not browned, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, 30 seconds. Add the ground chicken and cook until the meat is crumbly and no longer pink.
2. Add the tomato sauce, buffalo sauce, honey, and Worcestershire, stirring well to combine. Simmer until heated through, tasting for salt.
3. Serve sloppy joe filling hot on hamburger buns with crumbled blue cheese and ranch or blue cheese dressing.
4. Slow cooker reheat instructions: Allow the filling to cool completely before transferring it to an airtight container and storing it in the refrigerator. At least 2 hours before it's time to eat, place the filling into the slow cooker and heat on low, stirring occasionally, until hot, 1 to 2 hours.

First Lutheran Church Council Minutes Date: January 15th, 2026

Members Present: President Brenda Allan, Vice President Kenton Holle, Veronica Barnick, Desiree Reile, Travis Schmidt, Tim Faller, Greg Grube, Pastor Phil, Pastor Adam

Members Absent: Kristy Mindt

Additional Present: Jackie Klein, Curtis Peterson

- Meeting was called to order by** President Brenda Allan
- Motion to approve the agenda was made by Tim. Veronica seconded. Approved.
 - Motion to approve the December minutes was made by Kenton and seconded by Tim. Approved.

- Correspondence:**
- Mandan Golden Age Club Thank You for home delivered meals
 - Thank you from Kyler Reile for the scholarship he received from the Endowment Fund.

Devotion: Pastor Phil – The uniqueness of Christianity is that Jesus is the Son of God. What do we think about this? Why do we make that claim? Other religions talk about Jesus, but they don't believe He is the Son of God. Words to ponder.

Pastor Phil's Report: 2 funerals, 1 prayer service and 2 baptisms. Sunset Nursing home worship service with Pastor Adam this past Monday. There has been daily hospital calls lately which are shared with Pastor Adam. Some care center/nursing home calls. Sr. Choir practices and Christmas Cantata performance. Practice has resumed. Lead Confirmation large group gatherings weekly. Exec Team meeting. Weekly LAF gatherings. Helped "undecorate" the Christmas decorations (my dad helped too). Weekly meeting with Pastor Adam to discuss the upcoming week. Discussed a plan for Lent with Pastor Adam as we move into the new year. Hosted staff and some of our music ministers and a few Church School folks at my house on Dec 21st. Attended a couple of funerals of friends. ML King Celebration event at Trinity in Bismarck on Monday the 19th at 6:00 pm. This is a free event open to the public.

Pastor Adam's Report: Sr. Choir cantata was well received. Purchased flowers for Cathy and Kathy and were invited to Pastor Phil's party for staff and music ministers. First Christmas Eve service went well. Went to Iowa to celebrate the holidays the week of Dec 28th. We had to stop in Fargo due to the weather. The rest of the week with family and friends was good. Met with the mission trip crew on Jan 7th and scheduled major fundraisers for the next few months. Jan 11th was my first baptism. Will meet with the call committee on the 19th. Caramel Rolls will be sold Jan 18th. Pizza with the Pastor will be held Jan 18th at 5pm. This is an opportunity for 7-12th grade students to come and talk about youth ministry here at First Lutheran. Future caramel roll fundraisers will be Feb 22nd and March 22nd. We plan on serving the Easter breakfast on Apr 5th and holding the church Rummage sale on Apr 25th. Kidnap the pastor fundraiser was moved to the week of Apr 19th. First Lutheran will be hosting the next Mock-in for area youth on Jan 30th 6-10pm. Other fundraisers included selling Kuchen, Bundt cakes, Chocolates and Easter flowers. We also are looking into doing a cash raffle.

Financial Report: Financial Report by Curtis Peterson.

- A motion was to approve the December financial report as presented was made by Veronica. It was seconded by Greg. Motion carries.
- A motion was made by Kenton to approve the proposed budget as printed to present at the annual meeting. Travis seconded. Motion carries.

Jackie’s Report:

- City meeting will be Feb 24th in the fellowship Hall from 5-8pm and will have a presentation about the plans for this area’s road project.
- Lynette Horn, the family liaison for things like the Angel Tree for the area, will be here Sunday and next Wednesday for a temple talk during services.
- Praise Team – who is the point of contact? Jeannie House will be the point of contact as of right now.

Team Reports:

- Executive Team: All items covered in the agenda
- Worship Team: Ash Wednesday Feb 18th
- Evangelism & Outreach: nothing new to report
- Property Management: Nothing new to report
- Stewardship: A reminder has been put in the bulletin and newsletter about our council openings and other ways to contribute to the mission of the church.
- Youth & Parish Education: The kids did great at their Christmas programs. Church School and Confirmation leaders have done an excellent job and are already organized for the winter and spring. Thanks to all who have participated. See Pastor Adam’s report for other youth updates.

Old Business:

- Property Project – What will be presented at the annual meeting? This is in the annual report. We don’t have anything new. We were hoping for a final report from Braun but haven’t received it yet.
- West sidewalk – city planning meeting. The city is aware of problem, and it may be part of the Phase 1 that was talked about at the open house this evening. More to come as it gets closer.
- Gutter screens – we will get these put in this Spring
- Missouri Slope relationship – keeping open communication. Ongoing support
- Confirmation photos – Brenda plans to work on this after the new year
- Church School task force – front and center on the “to-do” list
- 2026 Budget – proposed budget was approved by the council to present at the annual meeting
- Fellowship Hall Chairs – we will discuss this with the congregation at the annual meeting
- New council members/agenda for new council member orientation session – will be held Feb 10th

New Business:

- Annual review for Pastor Phil was completed. Pastor Adam and Jackie’s will take place soon
- New Council Members- we have someone to fill the 1-year term. We still have three, 3-year terms open. Kenton and Tim will do a temple talk this Sunday, and Brenda and Travis will do the temple talk on Wednesday.
- Pay increase for accompanists. This is in the budget. Kenton made a motion to increase the pay to \$100 per service and \$50 for the second service on that same day. Tim seconded the motion. Motion carries.

Next Meeting:

- Organizational meeting directly following the annual meeting
- New Council Member Orientation meeting will be February 10th at 7pm in the Chapel.
- February 19, 2026

Lord’s Prayer

Meeting Adjournment - A motion was made to adjourn by Tim. Seconded by Greg. Meeting Adjourned.

December	Dec-25	YTD	2025	Percentage
FINANCIAL GIFTS	2025	2025	ANNUAL	2025
	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	BUDGET	%
Total Receipts	84,549.22	604,776.38	634,158.69	95.37%
Total Disbursements	49,929.61	532,580.84	634,158.69	83.98%
Receipts Over or (Under)				
Disbursement	34,619.61	72,195.54		
BUDGET 2025				
ACTUAL INCOME vs. BUDGET				
	Received	Weekly	Difference	
December 7, 2025	13,692.69	12,195.36	1,497.33	
December 14, 2025	9,829.59	12,195.36	(2,365.77)	
December 21, 2025	8,697.44	12,195.36	(3,497.92)	
December 28, 2025	51,722.90	12,195.36	39,527.54	
Interest Earned on Checking	\$ 606.60			
	84,549.22	48,781.44	35,767.78	
BUDGET 2025				
DEBT RETIREMENT				
BUILDING FUND	Received	Weekly	Difference	
December 7, 2025	902.72	1,153.85	(251.13)	
December 14, 2025	1,193.72	1,153.85	39.87	
December 21, 2025	837.41	1,153.85	(316.44)	
December 28, 2025	5,001.07	1,153.85	3,847.22	
	7,934.92	4,615.40	3,319.52	
IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE FOR DECEMBER 2025		ATTENDANCE FOR DECEMBER 2024		
December 3, 2025		94	December 1, 2024	158
December 7, 2025		168	December 4, 2024	68
December 10, 2025		110	December 8, 2024	152
December 14, 2025		248	December 11, 2024	69
December 17, 2025		270	December 15, 2024	273
December 21, 2025		197	December 18, 2024	182
December 24, 2025		709	December 22, 2024	188
December 28, 2025		86	December 24, 2024	718
			December 29, 2024	92
Total Attendance for Month		1,882		1,900