

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Mandan, ND 58554

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*Building Faith and
Transforming Lives
in Christ.*

www.firstlutheranofmandan.org
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ADDRESS LABEL



First Lutheran Church April Newsletter

April 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,

Easter is hard to miss, both in the religious and secular worlds. Church attendance booms, chocolate sales soar, and the Easter Bunny and the Risen Christ duke it out for bragging rights over the river and through the woods at Grandma's house on Easter Sunday (*I vote for Jesus, but I do like chocolate eggs; now please pass the ham*). And, given that Easter's arrival coincides with Spring's sweet, seductive rebirth, what's not to like? So, blast the trumpets, bring out the pastels, and go ahead and treat yourself to a new Easter outfit that will be sure to draw onlookers as you go up for Holy Communion. Yay, Easter! We're glad you're here. Yes, of course, Jesus was crucified...but...*He is risen, and he is risen indeed*. So, let it rip: Hallelulia!!

But, apart from Easter Sunday's rip-roaring and giddy exuberance, I have to wonder if most of the ways that we typically experience the ongoing good news of Easter (the risen Jesus part of Easter) are usually a lot more subdued. Quiet. Hushed. Tiny. Whispered, instead of shouted. Remarkable, in the most unremarkable of ways. *But no less spectacular....*

Two days after I had my heart catheter ablation procedure a couple months ago, I headed to my local grocery store to grab a couple items. *No lifting of anything over 5 pounds*, was one of the strict prohibitions I had been given, so I made sure my two bags were under that limit. I then paid for my items, grabbed the bags, and headed out the door. It was twilight, that haunting, often-gorgeous "in-between" time (even in February) when the sun and moon are scheming on trading places, and the descending darkness evokes not fear but awe.

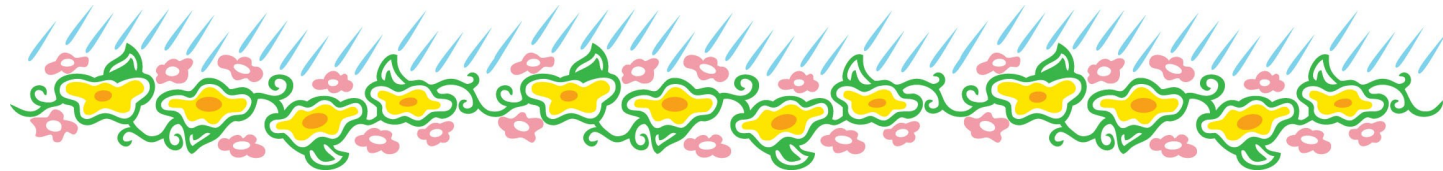
As I stepped out of the store, I happened to glance to my left where there was a man, bent at almost a 90 degree angle, hovered over his small, neatly-packed grocery cart, and who had just begun a slow, labored stroll to the white van he had parked about 40 feet away in the handicap-accessible parking space. I not only have rarely seen anyone so stooped-over but also have rarely seen anyone moving *that* slowly. And suddenly, my awe-inspiring descending darkness was supplanted by a healthy dose of fear. *What if someone doesn't see him in this dangerous dusk? It will take him minutes, not seconds, to get to that van! Should I ask him if he needs help? Does he even want my help? Should I go and stand like a sentry beside him, so drivers see me and drive with more caution? Should I pull out my phone and hit the "flashlight" icon???*



(Continued on page 11)



We will be having a new member orientation on Sunday, April 26th at 5:00 P.M. If you are interested in becoming a member here at First Lutheran please call the church office at 663-3594 as soon as possible. Thank you.



“May Day” Baskets

We are collecting spring/summer/early fall items and personal care items for our homebound, assisted living, and nursing home residents.

Please consider being a blessing to these precious members by donating items, assembling baskets, and/or delivering them. There are boxes in the narthex to drop off your donation items.

Questions? - please call Lori at 701-471-9436.

**“May Day” baskets
will be assembled & delivered on Sunday, April 26th, 2026.**

If you would like to help with assembly and/or delivery, please come to the First Lutheran Church chapel after the 10:45 AM service on Sunday, April 26th, 2026.



PLEASE NOTE!



We will be transitioning our Sunday and Wednesday worship times to our summer schedule starting in May. **ONE SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE at 9:30 a.m., beginning Sunday, May 3rd.** Following the Sunday schedule change, we will then move back to 6:00 p.m. for our Wednesday evening worship service, beginning Wednesday, May 6th.

I continued on my journey to my car, as those and other questions cascaded through my mind; but something inside of me said, “Turn around, Leer,” and so I did. Strolling over to the man, I leaned down towards him and said, “Would you like some help?” (He still had most of the journey to go). He paused for a few seconds without answering, as if he were determined to finish this task himself, but then said, “Sure. I bought too much tonight, and I could use the help putting these things in my van.”

And so, the two of us walked—the freshly-heart-ablated sentry with his four-pound bags, and the bent-over man who was going way under the speed limit. We walked. *Slowly. Silently. Ponderously. Like we were the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.* It was as if time was suspended. Midway through the journey (as I continued to scan for approaching cars), he stopped his stuffed cart, craned his neck to look up at me, and said, “You’d be surprised.” “What do you mean?” I asked, wanting to keep forging forward to the van. “Most people are nice,” he softly uttered back to me. *Most people are nice.*

We then resumed our journey through the crosswalk (carrying crosses, maybe?) without stopping, but not before he went on to tell me that it is not uncommon for him to encounter folks who reach out to him when he is in public in much the same way that I did. And even though he usually wants to do as much as he can when he goes out-and-about, and prides himself on his independence, he really appreciates the help.

And so, our encounter ended with worrywart me unloading much of his cart (more than five pounds, I’m sure!); him barking bent-over orders regarding where I should put the bags; and then me placing the bags in his van. As I closed the van door and prepared to head to my car, he then muttered an understated, “Thanks for the help.” And I said, “You’re welcome.” And we went our separate ways--my heart burning within me. *How can this man drive a vehicle, O Lord? Please guide him home in the darkness....and please forgive me for lifting a little more than five pounds tonight. And maybe I should stop overthinking all of this and stop asking all these questions?*

Writing in one of his many books about the stories in the Bible in which the resurrected Jesus shows up after his death, the late great Christian writer, Frederick Buechner, says: *Jesus is apt to come, into the very midst of life at its most real and inescapable. He never approached from on high, but always in the midst, in the midst of people, in the midst of real life and the questions that real life asks.*

So, to sum up: Most people are nice. Don’t lift over five pounds after an ablation. Pay attention to the small, the tiny, the hushed, and the unremarkable. And: He is risen, indeed. Happy Easter.

In Christ,

Pastor Phil

Note: No Wednesday Evening Service on April 1st

Maundy Thursday, April 2nd

7:00 P.M. Worship with Holy Communion

Good Friday, April 3rd

7:00 P.M. Tenebrae Service (No Holy Communion)

Easter Sunday, April 5th

8:00 A.M. - Easter Service

10:00 A.M. - Easter Service

(Holy Communion will be offered at both services for Easter)

Easter Breakfast

8:30-10:30 A.M.



Women of First Luncheon will be held at Stage Stop on Wednesday, April 8th 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.

April Youth Page

Mark Your
Calendar...

APRIL

2nd: LAF ~ Pulled Pork

9th: LAF ~ Nachos

16th: LAF ~ Hot Dogs

23rd: LAF ~ Sloppy Joes

30th: LAF ~ Pulled Pork



SAVE THE DATES!
First Lutheran Church
welcomes
Camp of the Cross Ministries



for 3 fun filled days of Vacation Bible School

When: Monday, June 1st - Wednesday, June 3rd

Who: Kindergarten - 6th Graders

(PreK kids should be going into Kindergarten in the 26-27 school year).

Cost: \$20.00 per child / \$40.00 per family

Additional details will be provided closer to June.

RUMMAGE SALE

The mission trip kids are going to be having a **rummage sale on Saturday, April 25 from 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.** We are looking for GOOD used items/clothes you are not needing anymore. **Please DO NOT drop off broken items, torn/stained clothing etc.** (if you would not purchase it please do not drop it off).

IF YOU ARE DROPPING OFF CLOTHING PLEASE PUT THEM IN A BAG/BOX AND HAVE THEM SORTED ACCORDING TO SIZE AND LABELED FOR US. (EXAMPLE: 18 MONTH GIRLS, 2T BOYS, MENS SMALL, WOMANS LARGE), ETC.!

Drop off hours are Monday-Friday from
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. by the South
Sunday School door.

Drop off donations are being accepted
starting April 13 - April 22.



Pastoral Acts

Baptisms:
Kolsen Thomas Doll
Emmett Arthur Anderson

Funerals:
Jake Pertile
Eugene Eckholm
Dennis Erickson
Chloe Leingang

Memorial Fund

In memory of Tom Frank given by Kathy Brandvold (for chairs).

In memory of Fran Boehm given by Leon & Jeanne House.

April ~ Mission of the Month

Weekend Meals for Mandan Kids

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.

NO GLASS JARS PLEASE!

You may put your items in the boxes in the Narthex. Thank you!

Special Thanks

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!



Deadline for articles for the May Newsletter will be April 17th.

Worship Schedule

Sunday ~
8:30 am ~ Traditional Worship
9:45 am ~ Church School
10:45 am ~ Contemporary Worship

Wednesday ~
5:45 pm ~ Church School
6:30 pm ~ Worship
7:30 pm ~ Confirmation

February	26-Feb	YTD	2026	Percentage
FINANCIAL GIFTS	2026	2026	ANNUAL	2026
	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	BUDGET	%
Total Receipts	60,112.23	94,353.79	665,225.95	14.18%
Total Disbursements	51,217.27	99,117.78	665,225.95	14.90%
Receipts Over or (Under)				
Disbursement	8,894.96	(4,763.99)		
BUDGET 2026				
ACTUAL INCOME vs. BUDGET				
	Received	Weekly	Difference	
February 1, 2026	16,922.00	12,792.81	4,129.19	
February 8, 2026	1,860.28	12,792.81	(10,932.53)	
February 15, 2026	23,792.68	12,792.81	10,999.87	
February 22, 2026	16,977.84	12,792.81	4,185.03	
Interest Earned on Checking	\$ 559.43			
	60,112.23	51,171.24	8,940.99	
BUDGET 2026				
DEBT RETIREMENT				
BUILDING FUND	Received	Weekly	Difference	
February 2, 2025	833.00	1,153.85	(320.85)	
February 8, 2026	291.72	1,153.85	(862.13)	
February 15, 2026	2,477.25	1,153.85	1,323.40	
February 22, 2026	986.85	1,153.85	(167.00)	
			-	
	4,588.82	4,615.40	(26.58)	

IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE FOR FEB 2026 *		ATTENDANCE FOR FEB 2025	
February 1, 2026	158	February 2, 2025	136
February 4, 2026	82	February 5, 2025	43
February 8, 2026	167	February 9, 2025	216
February 11, 2026	102	February 12, 2025	73
February 15, 2026	150	February 16, 2025	143
February 18, 2026	298	February 19, 2025	54
February 22, 2026	172	February 23, 2025	191
February 25, 2026	138	February 26, 2025	65
*These numbers do not include our online worshippers.			
Total Attendance for Month	1267		921

Old Business:

- Lights on the South side of the church – Travis put in AED bulbs. It is much brighter out there now. Thank you, Travis.
- Lillis for lights on the North side- They were here and Jackie mentioned it to them. She will call them to see if they can give us quote.
- New Vision bid for cameras in the dead zone on the NE side of the church – The quote is \$5,496.81. A motion was made by Veronica to get the new security cameras installed. Kristy seconded. No one opposed. Motions carries. Jackie will call them and get this started.
- Rain Gutter guards. We received 3 different quotes for these. A couple were quite expensive. We need more information from some of these companies before we can make a decision. We will table this until next month.
- Fellowship Hall chairs – 2 examples we sat in tonight. Each council member sat in them and voted which they liked best. Quotes were then shared for chair #1 is \$8954.26 for 250 chairs. Chair #2 quote is \$22,394. A motion was made by Lori to purchase chair number 2. Cara seconded. Paper ballot given. 5 opposed. Motion defeated. A motion was made by Travis to purchase chair #1. Seconded by Kristy. 3 opposed. Motion carries. What should we do with the old chairs? A motion was made by Kristy to offer the old chairs to our parishioners for a free will donation. Tim seconded. No one opposed. Motion carries. Felt chair leg covers also need to be purchased to preserve our flooring downstairs. This will be at a cost of around \$600 for 250 chairs. Jackie will work with Tim to get these ordered.

* The chairs in the chapel are starting to fall apart as well. In fact, Kenton's chair broke tonight and it had to be thrown. There is getting to be a collection of them in the storeroom in the chapel that are wobbly. Cara said her son-in-law, Hunter Heinle, would be willing to look at them and see if they can be fixed. We also could look into purchasing some for the chapel too. It would have to be a different style than the fellowship hall chairs. We will table this until next month

- Youth Task Force: There have been 2 meetings so far. It was recommended by this group that we should pursue hiring for 2 positions. One would cover the education program and one would cover middle and high school programming along with the mission trip. This group will work on creating a list of duties for each of these. Each position would probably be around 20-25 hours per week.

New Business:

- Wind and Hail Deductible Buyback option is \$2883.58. This would make our deductible \$10,000 per occurrence instead of \$47,329 per occurrence. We purchased this last year. Travis made a motion to purchase the buyback option. Cara seconded. No one opposed. Motion carries.

Next Meeting: April 16th, 2026

Lord's Prayer

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

First Lutheran Church Council Minutes

Date: March 19th, 2026

Members Present: President Kenton Holle, Vice President Tim Faller, Veronica Barnick, Kristy Mindt, Travis Schmidt, Greg Grube, Lori Meyers, Sue Ziemann, Cara Mitzel, Pastor Phil, Pastor Adam

Members Absent:

Additional Present: Jackie Klein, Curtis Peterson

Meeting was called to order by President Kenton Holle

- Motion to approve the agenda was made by Veronica. Kristy seconded. None opposed. Approved.
- Motion to approve the February minutes was made by Kristy. Sue seconded. No one opposed. Approved.

Correspondence:

- Mandan Golden Age Club thank you for donations for home delivered meals
- Missouri Slope thank you in support of the M-Fund

Devotion: Pastor Phil: If you had to write your own obituary, what would you highlight? If someone else wrote it, what would they highlight? Philippians 2: We are called to serve others.

Pastor Phil's Report: 2 funerals plus one tomorrow. One burial and Prayer service. Two baptism. No weddings but several on the horizon for this summer. Sunset Nursing home worship service with Pastor Adam on March 9. Weekly hospital calls and some care center/nursing home calls. Two Funeral planning meetings. Occasional Tuesday text study meeting with pastors. Sr. Choir practices most Wednesdays and Confirmation weekly with Pastor Adam. Executive Team meeting last week and LAF gatherings almost every week. Meet with Pastor Adam every Monday. Attended Youth/Ed Task Force meeting March 8th. Met with lay visitation team on March 11th. First Communion instruction was held March 1st and they will receive their First Communion on Maundy Thursday. Coming up - Will participate in Ecumenical Easter Vigil Service on 4/4 at Bismarck United Church of Christ. "Palm Sunday Path" at 3pm on Mar 29th. This is a march from Trinity Lutheran in Bismarck to the State Capitol with worship to follow on the Capitol steps. See wndpalmsundaypath.com for more information. Senior Choir Cantata on Palm Sunday at both services. Synod Assembly May 29-31st.

Pastor Adam's Report: Led 2 worship services at Maplevue memory care. The residents really enjoyed the service. He also played a couple of songs for them on guitar. Sat down with Deacon Beth Anderson to begin receiving coaching. Attended informational meeting about next year's ELCA Youth Gathering over zoom. Coming up – Holy Week and Easter services and First Call retreat Apr 20-22nd. Youth/Mission trip: Finished Selling bundt cakes, kuchen, and Easter flowers. Caramel rolls will be sold on Sunday. World's Finest Chocolate sales go through the end of March. We will host Easter breakfast from 8:30 10:30 on Easter Sunday. Kidnap the pastor and the Rummage Sale will be in April. Airline tickets have been purchased, and car rental is reserved. The first of 2 payments to Next Step has been made.

Financial Report: Financial Report by Curtis Peterson.

- A motion was made to approve the February financial report as presented was made by Tim. It was seconded by Greg. No one opposed. Motion carries.
- The new credit card has been approved. This will be much better. There is a lot more flexibility with this one. Pastor Phil and Jackie will get a new card, and Pastor Adam will also get one. The other card will be closed.
- CD matures on April 14th. We have a 10-day period from the 14th to make any changes. Current interest rates are 3.7% today.

Jackie's Report:

- Jordan was here with information for property and general liability insurance and our umbrella policy. Total cost for all 3 is going up from \$21,378.60 in 2025-26 to \$23,011.92 for 2026-27.
- New Vision quote for cameras that would cover the dead zone area. Total cost of \$5496.81. Cameras are very helpful. Just Thursday, the police department asked to see camera footage because a car hit a tree and would have come all the way down both levels into the parking lot had the tree not been there. They come often to see camera footage.
- New member orientation is Sunday, April 26th at 5pm. Council members will bring a dish to share.
- Donation of the dryer from Kris Nelson: Jackie asked if some of the council members could go get it and take out the old one. The council will call her and make arrangements.
- New signers for the church account are complete. Tim, Travis and Kenton are now good to go.
- Mr. Squeegee will be called soon to get the windows cleaned for April
- Disabled American Veterans will be here again for LAF April 9th.
- Jackie will call Lillis again as we have not gotten a quote to add additional lighting.

Team Reports:

- Executive Team: All items covered in the agenda
- Worship Team: Met February 23rd
 - * Discussed figuring out back-ups for our accompanists. Kenton visited a church that had a recording of an accompaniment from their Clavinova. Is that an option for us? It does have the capability, but not sure what that would look like. Jackie mentioned we have used recordings in the past but you had to be very careful because it can be erased very easily. Some Clavinova versions you can save to a USB or to a different type of external hard drive. The manual is available at the church and may be worth looking into.
 - * Discussed about having a recognition Sunday for all of our music personnel as we appreciated their talents very much. Not sure what time of year would be best. Pastor Phil likes this idea.
 - * Alter Guild is mentioned in the handbook. They are responsible for changing the alter cloths and banners. When was the last time we had this? It has been a long time since we have had this.
 - * Summer worship schedule will start May 3rd with one service at 9:30am. Starting Wednesday, May 6th, services will move to 6pm.
 - * Kathy Brandvold will be taking an extended leave after Palm Sunday to be with her son and grandchildren in the Twin Cities. We will need to be creative with our accompanist schedule since she accompanies worship, Praise Team and Senior Choir.

- **Evangelism & Outreach:** Met March 19th.

- * Discussed offering more for new members after their orientation to help get them involved.
- * Would like to offer more temple talks on things coming up
- * Discussed having greeters at the door like there used to be. This is in addition to the ushers. Maybe this could be us as council members that do this.
- * Greg mentioned starting Barbecue and Bible study. You grill out and then have a bible study. He heard about this and thought it would be great way to include men of all ages in our church.

- **Property Management:**

- * City meeting for phase 1 of the construction project for the area around the church was held downstairs at the church Mar 12. This includes 4th Ave and 9th St. Specials assessment is based on the size of the property. This will be around \$230,000 plus interest (which usually is 5%) over 15 years. It may come in lower than that. They always give the higher end of the estimate.

- * Riprap on the north side of the church has been talked about in the past. This could be a cheaper option. The team asked Braun if Riprap on the North side would even be a possibility. They said it may be possible but no elaboration of how it would work with the current plans.

- **Stewardship:** Met March 10th. Mostly talked about the chairs. We have donations totaling \$19,600. We may need to raise money to get as many chairs as we need and then replace some of the tables downstairs as well. Some of them will soon need to be replaced. See Old Business for more on the chairs.

- **Youth & Parish Education:**

- * Surveys will be sent out to get feedback. The hope is that we get a lot of information about what families are looking for.
- * Talked about getting a Youth bible study going with 6-8th grade and 9-12 grades separately.
- * Want to possibly do a mock-in for the high school age kids. Previously was 8-12th.
- * Also talked about finding places for the Confirmation kids to complete their volunteer time. Kristy mentioned that Brave the Shave is looking for volunteers.
- * Camp of the Cross will come June 1st, 2nd and 3rd for VBS. The church is charged a \$250 deposit and \$40 per child to have Camp of the Cross here. We have charged \$10 a kid for many years to attend. A motion was made by Kristy to charge \$20 per student or \$40 per family for VBS. Seconded by Travis. No one opposed. Motion carries.
- * First Communion will be held on Maundy Thursday.
- * See Pastor Adam's report for mission trip updates. See Old Business for Youth Task Force update.