



822 Douglas Street
Alexandria, MN 56308
320.762.2196
www.firstlutheranalexandria.com

Non-Profit
Organization

U.S. Postage
PAID

Permit No. 89
Alexandria, MN

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please visit our website, www.firstlutheranalexandria/events, to see our church calendar with full details and descriptions of all church events.

APRIL WORSHIP THEME

The joy of Christ's Resurrection cannot be celebrated in just one Sunday. From Easter Sunday through Pentecost we celebrate the Season of Easter and God's triumph over death and the grave. Join us in worship as we witness Jesus alive and present among us. He is risen indeed!

RAISING THE ROOF DINNER

Friday, April 6 | 6:00pm | Fellowship Hall

Cost: \$40. Purchase tickets before and after worship services at the Welcome Center or in the church office during business hours.

MOTHER'S DAY SONG PERFORMANCE

Sunday, May 13 | 8:30 & 9:45am Worship Services | Sanctuary

Kids of all ages, moms and grandmas are welcome to join us as we sing *Thank You* during the Call to Worship. Rehearsals will be Thursday, May 3 in the Choir Room and at 5:00pm on Wednesday, May 9 at 5:00pm in the Sanctuary. Email Paula Odland with questions: paula.odland@firstlutheranalexandria.com.



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH | APRIL 2018

We Say Yes!

New Building Update

It was an exciting night as the congregation came together on Wednesday, March 21 and said YES to proceeding with the construction of our new church home and authorizing First Lutheran to borrow \$4,150,000.00 from Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA. There was good discussion and many questions. It was felt that a realistic and thorough plan was presented.

There were 214 members present and the vote was 208 yes and 6 no. This is a bold step for FLC, but we take it trusting that just as God has been faithful in the past, we believe that God will continue to make a way. If you would like more information or details in regard to construction costs or our financial plan, a summary is available at the Welcome Center.

Groundbreaking Celebration

Sunday, May 6 | 2:00pm | New Church Site

For over 12 years, we have been working on a plan for a new facility to be home to our growing faith community. After a positive vote to move forward with construction, we are excited to hold our Groundbreaking Celebration. A warm welcome is extended to all to attend this historic event. Refreshments will be served following the ceremony.

Church Events

- Apr 5 - WELCA Coffee & Dessert
- Apr 6 - Raising the Roof Dinner
- Apr 7 - All Ages Morning Movie
- Apr 7/8 - Take Stock
- Apr 8 - Bells on the Pond Concert
- Apr 10 - Family Music Class begins
- Apr 12 - Men's Breakfast
- Apr 14/15 - Take Stock
- Apr 16 - Bookseekers
- Apr 22 - Youth Brunch
- Apr 22 - Kingdom Kids Sing
- Apr 29 - Sundae Sunday
- May 1 - VBS Registration begins
- May 2 - Neighborhood Picnic
- May 3 - Faith and Life Forum
- May 6 - Groundbreaking

VBS 2018

June 11-15 | 8:30-11:30am | FLC

Save the date for VBS 2018 for ages preschool through 5th grade. Registration will be online and begins May 1. All hands on deck are needed to help make this ministry a success. Vacation Bible School is a growing ministry and is offered when many people are at work. We are need of small group CREW leaders, individuals interested in decorating, preschool craft & play leaders, preschool game leaders, one-on-one for special needs kids, and much more. Please contact Randi Rach if you want to join in this week of fun, faith and fellowship.

Neighborhood Gatherings

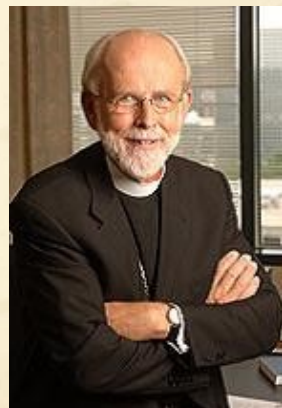
One of the ways we are living out our Deep and Wide theme this year is to establish and deepen our relationships with one another. To do so, we are in the process of dividing the congregation up into neighborhood groups. In May and June, members and friends of First will be invited to come together over

root beer floats at informal neighborhood gatherings. We will be looking for people to be hosts for these gatherings so if you would be interested in hosting or would like to learn more, talk with Pastor Greg. Keep your eyes open for more details over the next month.

Faith and Life Forum

Thursday, May 3 | 2:00-4:00pm
Fellowship Hall

We are excited to welcome former Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, Mark Hanson, to be our speaker for our first Faith and Life Forum. The theme for the day is *Making Our Way Through Transition: Retirement, Health, Housing, Relations and Faith*. This event is open to the public and there is no



charge. Please join us as we welcome this engaging and thoughtful speaker.

New FOCUS Format

Beginning in May, the FOCUS will transition into a quarterly publication. We look forward to using it to lift up various ministries, celebrate what God is doing at First Lutheran and to tell our story. At the same time, we will expand our weekly e-news letter and use it to keep the congregation up to date with the latest events, opportunities to serve, and calendar. The e-news will be emailed each week and hard copies will also be available at the Welcome Center. We are making this change in an effort to save on printing and postage as well as being good stewards of our time and resources. You can help us by turning in or confirming your email address and then requesting that both the FOCUS and e-news will be emailed to you. To do this, contact the church office at 320.762.2196. You can also check out what is happening on our website, www.firstlutheranalexandria.com, or on our Facebook page. Thank you for your cooperation in helping us to be good stewards and condensing our resources.

Houston Youth

Every three years, Lutheran students in the ELCA gather for worship, to volunteer and to build homes. This summer, our youth and adult leaders will be heading to Houston, TX for this gathering.



The theme for this year's gathering is "This changes EVERYTHING" and will be June 27-July 1. Our youth will have an opportunity to BE the change, and BE changed themselves as they meet youth from all over the world with our faith in God in common. We have 50 students registered, along with a number of adults from First Lutheran church.

Our yearly fundraising for the trip kicks off in April. Our Take Stock campaign will run from April 7-15 with youth calling members of the congregation and collecting donations between worship services to help offset the cost of the trip. Shares are \$10/share. We will wrap up our fundraising with a brunch on April 22. Join us for a great meal and fellowship!

Volunteer Spotlight



Name: Connie Fields

How long have you attended/been a member of FLC? Since 1994-1995.

Tell us about yourself: I retired from Douglas County Public Health (Horizon) after 20 years. I work part time as the Douglas County Early Childhood Coordinator. I've been an RN for 40 years.

Tell us about your family: My son, Chris, is 25. He lives and works in Chicago. I am proud of him and get a lot of joy when we spend time together. Molly is my daughter of sorts. Her mom, my friend, died in 2015. I have known Molly her whole life.

What is your favorite ice cream flavor? Vanilla with homemade chocolate syrup.

What is your favorite sports team? Vikings!

What is your favorite book? Jesus Calling

What is your favorite Bible verse? Romans 5:1-5

In what ways do you volunteer at church? I usher, make communion bread, I am a Stephens minister, help with the Living Nativity, and am a KICK teacher.

Why is it important for you to volunteer? I feel like I'm giving back by sing the gifts God has given me: smiles, friendliness and helpfulness.

Tell us about a time that was especially meaningful to you as a volunteer at our church? Recently, while administering communion, I got "choked up." I felt so emotional about sharing bread and wine with others. The service was beautiful.



Pastor's Pen

Dear Friends and Family of First:

"Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live, a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive."

-Marty Haugen

These words from Marty Haugen's beloved hymn, *A New Church Home*, capture the exciting and important task before us. It has taken us well over ten years to get to this point and a great deal of energy, discernment, planning and investment has happened.

We are a congregation of over 2,000 members with varied opinions and approaches to both faith and life. For many, there is a lot of enthusiasm around this project, while for others, there may still be questions or concerns. For many, our church home at 9th and Douglas holds blessed memories of milestones and events. Over this next year we will celebrate and thank God for our rich history and all of the ministry and memories that have taken place here.

It took a lot of courage to build on this corner years ago and then to build a new sanctuary in 1949. It takes that same courage and faith now as we continue to follow God's lead. I am looking forward to experiencing all that God has in store for us. We have seen over and over again that when we come together as a team, we can accomplish great things.

Thank you for who you are, for your faithfulness, generosity and vision. The best is yet to be.

Pastor Greg