




Mission Statement:
Sharing God's grace through prayer, witness, and service.

February 2024

First Lutheran Church
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FIRST HAND

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OUR WELCOME STATEMENT

At First Lutheran, all means all, and the gifts of God are free. We welcome, love, affirm, and include everyone in our faith community regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Here in this place, you will find a warm, loving Christian family which strives to faithfully proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to all of God's children. We renounce racism, discrimination, and persecution in any form, in faithfulness to the gospel, and to the best of our ability, we promise to provide ministries and pastoral care to all who seek God in this place.

GOD WELCOMES ALL, AND SO DO WE



February 14, 2024

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

For the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and humans have no advantage over the animals, for all is vanity. All go to one place, all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again. (Ecclesiastes 3: 19-20)

As many of you know, my father died last August. Three and a half years earlier, in January of 2020, my mother died. With the passing of my father, a realization hit me rather profoundly-something I am sure that many of you who are members of my generation may have experienced as well. With the exception of my Aunt Rita, my father's sister, who is in her 90's, I am now a member of the oldest generation in my family. There is no longer a "buffer"- no longer a generation of people between me and death. And while hopefully I have at least 20 more years to enjoy God's beautiful creation before I meet my Lord and Savior face-to-face, the idea that my brother and sister and I are now the elder generation is a sobering thought. And indeed, there is no guarantee for any of us as to how long we have.

February 14 is Ash Wednesday: the one day in the church year when we confront the very real truth that our time on earth is limited: that we are dust, and to dust we shall return.

The above quote from the third chapter of Ecclesiastes was supposedly written by King Solomon, when he was in his old age. Solomon started his reign out on the right foot, asking God for the wisdom to judge his people righteously when God came to him in a dream and asked him what he wanted. Solomon was blessed not only with wisdom, but with great wealth, victory over his enemies, and a harem of wives and concubines. But efforts to appease his foreign wives by worshipping their gods caused trouble, and after he died, the nation of Israel separated into two countries; both of which would eventually be conquered by foreign powers. Now in his old age, Solomon wonders: "What is the purpose of life? Why do we struggle so? Is it all for nothing? Will our final fate be no better than the fate of animals? Animals die, we will die. They return to dust, and so will we. Despite his great wealth and power, Solomon knew that he would die just like everybody else. And Solomon had no concept of an afterlife.

We may not have Solomon's wealth or power, but we have one thing that Solomon did not have: Christ. We know that Christ lived, died, and rose again, and because he lives, we shall live also. But the purpose of living is not to slog along through life, looking out only for ourselves, until we can live in heaven. Our purpose is to invite people into a relationship with the living Lord. Our purpose is to let people know that God has broken into our world. Our purpose is to live as Christ lives, working for justice, righteousness, and peace, secure in the knowledge that by God's grace, we are saved through faith. Our purpose is to let our light so shine before others that they will see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven.

This year, Ash Wednesday also happens to fall on Valentine's Day. I had seen a funny Facebook post where the pastor was drawing a heart on people's foreheads instead of a cross. While I promise that I will not do that, the ashes we will wear are a reminder that not only do we have a limited amount of time to help bring about God's kingdom, but also a reminder that God loves us. And we are called to love one another: not with the kind of "eros" love that Valentine's Day sparks, nor even with a kind of "philos" or "brotherly" love, but with the "agape" love of Christ, who loves us unconditionally, and who calls us to live a life of humility, service, and love for one another.

Rather than Ash Wednesday being a time of lament, let us view it as a call to action. We don't have a lot of time, so let's get to work on doing the mission of God: to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

In the abiding hope of the empty tomb,

Pastor Larry



Financial Secretary

February 2024

Winter weather provides a double challenge for our church. When ice, snow, severe cold or winter illness prevents members from attending weekend services our offering suffers. This has a direct impact on the funds we have available each week to pay our bills and meet our payroll. The problem becomes even more complicated when we are faced with increased heating, salt and snow removal bills. Any extra help that you can give is greatly appreciated. If you do have to miss a service for illness or weather, please know how very grateful we are when you drop your offering off later in the week or include it with your next week's offering. This really helps us keep our budget balanced.



Director of Music

February 2024

Seems like we just finished the Christmas Season but Ash Wednesday is Wednesday, February 14, 2024. Services will be available here at First Lutheran Church. Sundays of Lent begin Sunday, February 18.



“Redeeming Love”

From the depths of darkness and despair
Came a love that was beyond compare
Jesus gave His life upon the cross
To save us from eternal loss
His love is pure and true
And always makes me anew



February 14, 2024



This year First Lutheran Church will have two Ash Wednesday Services with communion and the imposition of ashes.



The first service will be at **noon** and the second service will be at **7:00 pm.**



The next evening, we will be serving Our Daily Bread is **Monday, 19th.** If you can't help us serve, but would still like to help you could provide the dessert. Desserts needed are cupcakes, cookies or brownies. Volunteers are asked to arrive at Our Daily Bread about 4:15 pm prior to the serving time of 4:30 pm. If you are planning to help, please let the office know.

Pastor is currently teaching a Bible Study on the book of Matthew. There are two sessions available—1:30 pm on Mondays and 7:00 pm on Tuesdays.

The Monday session began on 1/22 and the Tuesday session began on 1/30. You could still attend either session.

“SOUPER BOWL” LUNCHEON
February 11th



FOLLOWING WORSHIP SERVICE
SPONSORED BY FAITH CIRCLE

A VARIETY OF SOUPS AND SALADS AND, OF COURSE, A DESSERT BAR WILL BE SERVED. THERE IS A SIGN-UP SHEET IN THE LOWER NARTHEX IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PROVIDE OTHER TYPES OF FOOD FOR THE LUNCHEON.

YOUR ADMISSION: CANNED SOUPS/CANNED FOODS/NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS FOR THE LCS FOOD PANTRY.

CASH DONATION WILL BE ACCEPTED WHICH WILL BE GIVEN TO THE FOOD PANTRY.

COME ENJOY GOOD SOUP, GOOD FOOD, GOOD FELLOWSHIP...AND GET READY TO CHEER ON YOUR FAVORITE SUPER BOWL TEAM!



TUESDAY

LUNCH IN THE COURTYARD!

We will meet at noon on Tuesdays,
February 6th & 20th.

Bring your lunch and join us for fun and fellowship.

**CHRISTIAN ACTION MINISTRY TEAM WILL MEET MONDAY, 2/12 @
7:00 PM IN THE CHURCH LOUNGE. WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS.**



Faith Circle will hold their February meeting in conjunction with the Tuesday Lunch on February 20th.

The Mission Project for February is to collect a £ ♥ VE offering for the Home Of Peace Orphanage In Tanzania.

We will also collect offerings for our general fund & Pennies for Habitat

Bring your lunch and join us for fellowship and good conversation.



LET'S GO TO THE MOVIES!

Oureach Committee is looking into starting a congregation/ neighborhood monthly movie presentation. This would be family movies, such as Disney. Parents would be able to drop off their kids but would have to sign them in and out. We could get popcorn from the movie theater. We are thinking about doing this from 2-4 the second Sunday of every month, in the Fellowship (Rice) Hall.

BUT, before we can get this off of the ground, we need to know if there are people that would be willing to commit to helping with this. We cannot do this if we don't have volunteers that will be there to help supervise.

If you are interested please let Brenda Shively know at 937-935-6706 or call the church office.



Nursery Volunteers Needed

We are excited to realize that we are in need of volunteers for our nursery. If you would like to volunteer for this service please contact the office.

SAVE THE DATE

LaComedia Dinner Theatre Springboro, Ohio

The Church Basement Ladies in “Plowin’ Thru”

Thursday May 16th

Tickets \$46 Includes Buffet Dinner and Show This is a noon matinee. We would be leaving from the church parking lot at 9:00 AM.

See Susan Wyckoff for more information and to reserve a seat.



The year is 1975 and all your favorite characters are back in the 9th installment of the wildly popular series. Whether this is your first visit to the basement or you've seen 'em all, you won't want to miss this brand new show!

It's been five years since Pastor left and the church is struggling. As Pastor comes back to fill in as interim, Karin has taken a leadership role in the church and Beverly, now a mother of three, is ready for a larger role in the kitchen.

Come along as the ladies don their polyester pantsuits and sing, dance and laugh their way thru this hilarious and touching new musical, ***Plowin' Thru***.

Ministry Team Meetings

2/3 9:00 am-2:00 pm Council Retreat
2/12 7:00 pm Christian Action
2/26 7:00 pm Worship



Church Council– 2023

(still 2023 until new members installed)

President– Chris Hildreth Blair

Vice-President– John Bodin

Secretary– Carolyn Novak

Treasurer—John Belser

Members—Ray Kramer, Judy Lunz, Brittany Porter,
Liz Rose, Kris Shannon, Brenda Shively, Ray Swisher



Articles for the March 2024
Newsletter will be due by
Tuesday, **February 19.**



Ministry Teams

Highlights

- ***Christian Action***

Projects

- ***FLIRT***

Continued safety plan

- ***NLCF***

Continued grant requests

- ***Outreach***

Developing new ways to reach neighborhood families.

- ***Property***

Repairs

- ***Worship***

Special services

Contemporary Services

- ***WELCA***

Tuesdays in the Courtyard

Projects & “Souper Bowl” Sunday

- ***Quilters***

200+ quilts in 2023

- ***CHEF***

7 grants given in 2023

During the past month we have remembered many in prayer. We remember in prayer all who are in need of God's presence and care ...

especially:



Health Issues or Surgery

Don Voorhies

Gloria Kipker

Walt Stephan

Linda Kauffman

Duane Siegenthaler

Jordan Banks

Cheri Comstock

Dave Comstock

Chris Hildreth Blair

Judy Vassar

Brenda Shively

Stan Kinney

Entered the Church Triumphant

Loren Kipker

Sally Stephan



- 02/01 Jeff Manahan
- 02/02 Mike Starkey
- 02/09 Kathy Fultz
- 02/10 Pastor Larry Novak
- 02/11 John Warren
- 02/11 Liz Rose
- 02/12 Phil Pulfer
- 02/13 Pat Taylor
- 02/13 David Keck
- 02/14 Curtis Barger
- 02/15 Morgan Allen
- 02/15 Shelby Starkey
- 02/15 Hadley Keckler
- 02/17 Joann Karn
- 02/17 Nancee Starkey
- 02/20 Zane Gamble
- 02/24 John Gensemer
- 02/24 Robyn Miller
- 02/27 Mackenzie Swartz



Open Flower Vases Dates	
February & March	
Feb. 18	2 vases
Feb. 25	1 vase
Mar. 10	2 vases
Mar. 17	2 vases
Mar. 24	1 vase

SUNDAY ATTENDANCE FOR DECEMBER

	On Site	Online
December 3	70	37
December 10	74	0
December 18	85	64
December 24 (3 services)	165	180
December 31	58	39
TOTAL	452	320
Average	90	64

Worship Assistant

2/4 Cindy Weikart
2/11 Beth Harman
2/14 Cindy Weikart (noon Ash Weds.)
(7:00 pm) Ash Weds.)
2/18 Winnie Bodin
2/25 Chris Hildreth Blair

Communion Assistant

2/4 Dan Shively
2/11 Dave Vassar
2/14 Jinny Fergus (7:00 pm) Ash Weds.)
2/18 Ray Swisher
2/25 Cindy Weikart

Reader

2/4 Dan Shively
2/11 Beth Harman
2/18 Jean Wright
2/25 Cindy Weikart

Altar Guild

Rachel & Carl Gillespie

Communion Bread

Pastor Larry Novak

Greeters

2/4 Marge MacGillivray
2/11 Ray & Kris Swisher
2/14 Rachel Gillespie (noon Ash Weds.)
Jinny Fergus (7:00 pm Ash Weds.)
2/18 Dave & Cheri Comstock
2/25 Tom & April Jameson

Acolyte

2/4 Brooks Bodin
2/11 Dane Reffner
2/14 Carl Gillespie (7:00 pm) Ash Weds.)
2/18 Lottie Bodin
2/25 Alexis Hogan

Crucifer

2/11 Delaney Reffner

Ushers

2/4 Ray Swisher
2/11 Ray Kramer
2/14 (7:00 pm Ash Weds.)
2/18 Dave O'Brien
2/25 Gail Keck

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>28</p> <p>Snow date for the Annual Meeting 9:00am Confirmation Class 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service</p>	<p>29</p> <p>10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA (RH) 1:30pm Bible Study</p>	<p>30</p> <p>3:00am Pastor's Meeting 9:00am Quilters 7:00pm Bible Study</p>	<p>31</p> <p>3:00pm NA (RH)</p>	<p>1</p> <p>9:00am Homeless Shelter Board Meeting 3:00pm NA (RH) 7:00pm Choir Practice 8:00pm Bell Practice</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Office Closed 9:00am Council Retreat 10:00am ETB</p>
<p>4</p> <p>9:00am Confirmation Class 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service</p>	<p>5</p> <p>10:00am Staff Meeting 11:00am Chaplain MRH 12:00pm AA (RH) 1:30pm Bible Study 6:30pm Dulcimers</p>	<p>6</p> <p>9:00am Quilters 11:00am Chaplain MRH 12:00pm Lunch in the Courtyard 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting 7:00pm Bible Study</p>	<p>7</p> <p>9:30am Cluster Meeting 11:00am Chaplain MRH 3:00pm NA (RH)</p>	<p>8</p> <p>8:30am Continuum of Care Meeting 11:00am Chaplain MRH 3:00pm NA (RH) 7:00pm Choir Practice 8:00pm Bell Practice</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Office Closed 11:00am Chaplain MRH</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Office Closed 10:00am ETB 11:30am ETB</p>
<p>11</p> <p>9:00am Confirmation Class 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service 11:00am "Souper Bowl Lunch" 2:00pm ETB</p>	<p>12</p> <p>10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA (RH) 1:30pm Bible Study 7:00pm Christian Action Meeting</p>	<p>13</p> <p>9:00am Quilters 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting 7:00pm Bible Study</p>	<p>14</p> <p>12:00pm Ash Wednesday Service 3:00pm NA (RH) 7:00pm Ash Wednesday Service</p>	<p>15</p> <p>3:00pm NA (RH)</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Office Closed 6:30pm Dulcimers</p>
<p>18</p> <p>9:00am Confirmation Class 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Deadline for newsletter articles 10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA (RH) 1:30pm Bible Study 4:15pm Our Daily Bread</p>	<p>20</p> <p>9:00am Quilters 12:00pm Lunch in the Courtyard & Faith Circle 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting 7:00pm Bible Study</p>	<p>21</p> <p>3:00pm NA (RH) 6:00pm Lenten Dinner 7:00pm Lenten Service</p>	<p>22</p> <p>3:00pm NA (RH) 7:00pm Choir Practice 7:00pm NLCF 8:00pm Bell Practice</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Office Closed 1:00pm ETB</p>
<p>25</p> <p>9:00am Confirmation Class 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service</p>	<p>26</p> <p>10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA (RH) 1:30pm Bible Study 7:00pm Worship Ministry Team Meeting</p>	<p>27</p> <p>9:00am Quilters 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting 7:00pm Bible Study</p>	<p>28</p> <p>10:30am CORE Meeting 3:00pm NA (RH) 6:00pm Lenten Dinner 7:00pm Lenten Service</p>	<p>29</p> <p>3:00pm NA (RH) 7:00pm Choir Practice 8:00pm Bell Practice</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Office Closed</p>