

## Practices for Life

Baptized in the Lord Jesus, we are given a new identity as God's very own children, ambassadors for Christ, representatives for God's Kingdom on earth. With this new baptismal identity, we enter into a new life that Christ has given us—a new life that is dedicated to loving God and loving our neighbor, to serving God and serving our neighbor.

This is precisely why the church is to be focused outside of itself. The church, the people of God, exists not for its own sake but for the sake of others; for the well-being of other people regardless of where they come from, what language they speak, how they look, and what they believe. Our faith, the church's faith, which is rooted in Christ Jesus, compels us to look not toward our own interests but to the interests of others. That is the life that we have been called to; that is the life that we have been initiated into when water was poured over our heads and we received the Holy Spirit at our baptism.

To help us on this journey of life, this baptismal vocation, Christians have engaged in specific spiritual practices designed to deepen their relationship with God and to keep their own selfishness in check as they deepen their relationship with other people. The season of Lent is a great opportunity to intentionally engage in those spiritual practices. I am listing a few of them below.

**Corporate Worship:** Simply put, corporate worship refers to the gathering of the church to engage in formal acts of worship. This is not the same as saying, "I can worship God when I walk through the woods." That is a different spiritual practice. Corporate worship is the formal gathering of the assembly to sing, pray, engage in dialogue with the Word of God, receive the Sacraments, and then be sent to be Jesus outside of that assembly. When we gather, we keep ourselves connected to a body that is much greater than ourselves, and we realize that the body of Christ is not limited just to our local area but spreads throughout the entire globe and across all time.

**Solitude:** Solitude is the spiritual practice that can fully embrace the saying, "I can worship God out in the woods or on the lake or in my hunting blind." Solitude is the spiritual practice that intentionally removes us from other people for the purpose of experiencing what it truly means to be alone. Sometimes it is in those moments of solitude that God speaks loudest. For me, running has become part of my spiritual practice of solitude. When I'm running, I can think through everything I want to think through and give it away to God, and then let God sift through it and bring me some clarity.

**Giving:** It may sound like a cliché, but the practice of giving to someone or something else really does have a profound "feel good" effect. The spiritual practice of giving turns our eyes to the needs of someone else. Giving enables us to see that God has provided everything we need for our lives and has also provided us with more than we need so that we can give to others to help meet their needs. In a way, the spiritual practice of giving fosters community and prevents us from being completely self-absorbed.

**Justice:** Justice is part of our baptismal responsibilities. To be a follower of Jesus is "to work for justice and peace throughout the earth," as it says in our baptismal liturgy. In that liturgy, justice is listed alongside the spiritual disciplines of worship, prayer, and study. The spiritual practice of justice re-trains our minds to first see the value and dignity of every human being, and then second to actively work to maintain the value and dignity of every human being. The theological foundation for the

Christian engaging in justice is the conviction that every human being is created in the image of God and that the life, death, and resurrection of Christ Jesus brings salvation to every human being. The good news of God's love is for everyone, so where there is any inequity or unfairness the follower of Christ actively works to bring equity and fairness.

**Prayer:** Prayer is absolutely central to the Christian life and the foundation of all the spiritual practices. Prayer opens our hearts and facilitates communication with our maker. Often, however, prayer can become a one-way avenue for us to speak to God, which is only half of the communication process. When accompanied with meditation, the lines are open for full communication with God. Prayer becomes, then, both the speaking and listening of our spirits. Practically, prayer can be done with the community or in solitude, vocally or silently. One critical characteristic of prayer, however, is that no matter how it is done, the one who prays can and should pray with the conviction that one's prayers can and will make a significant difference.

**Study:** The spiritual practice of study slows us down in order to develop within us a deeper understanding of 1) our world, 2) ourselves, 3) our God, and 4) our God's interaction with this world and with ourselves. Whereas educational institutions offer opportunities for us to experience focused study in one or more of these areas, the spiritual discipline of study incorporates all four at the same time. Practically, it may involve the slow reading of a book, theological reflection, or the study of scripture. It may also involve deliberate sitting and observing (studying) the world around you, while reflecting on the interplay of the four aspects listed earlier.

**Acts of Service:** Service is an outward action employed for the benefit of another. This is a spiritual practice that Lutherans will often do well. It involves the humbling of ourselves and our needs to recognize the worth and worthiness of others and their needs. At the heart of the spiritual practice of service is the inward transformation that we experience through Christ; the transformation from individuals two servants. Doing acts of service and being a servant go hand in hand.

Those are some of the practices that Christians have been engaging in ever since the resurrection. But I also want to be clear that these are practices that are not unique to Christianity. Our Jewish ancestors in the faith have been engaged in these practices from the time when God first established God's covenant with God's people. These are practices that we Christians have inherited from our ancestors. We engage in these because of who God is and because our relationship with God, our Maker and Redeemer, is integral to our being humans made in God's image. We practice our faith through these disciplines because they lead us to being more fully human.

God's peace be with you as you daily engage in these spiritual practices.

**Pr. D. J. Rasner**

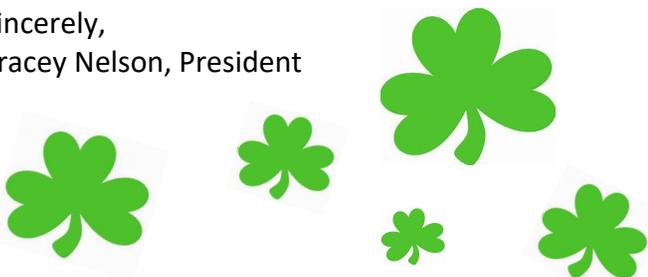


## From the Council

Spring is almost upon us and it isn't coming fast enough for me. I hope you all have been keeping warm during this cold stretch. Our church has struggled with the boiler system and now frozen pipes. Thank you to all who helped out with these issues. We had a nice turn out for our annual meeting on February 7th. There were 3 positions open. It was decided to eliminate two of them. John Ahlberg, who was completing another member's term, was elected to fill the one position remaining open. Thank you John. I would like to also thank Curt and Gale for their years of service. Everything you both have done is greatly appreciated. We held the February meeting on the 9th and your new officers are Tracey Nelson, President, Ken Maki Vice President, John Ahlberg Treasurer, and Karen Kallio Secretary. We have applicants for the administrative assistant and custodian positions. We will be holding interviews for the administrative assistant position and working on a job description for the custodian position. We are following up on the bids for the roof. It was discussed and approved to have a lite luncheon after the Lenten noon service. Pastor DJ did the devotion for the meeting and he spoke of foundations and growth. In recent months it has been stated we are again in transition. I believe First Lutheran has an amazing foundation with greater than 125 years of history. We sent out time and talent sheets last month. I encourage you to use this transition time to grow, try something a little out of your comfort zone (mine is being a lay reader). We have many areas that we could use a little extra help. Please turn the sheets in as soon as you are able. We hope to see you all in the future as the restrictions decrease.

*Prayer: God of encouragement, give us eyes to see our ministry as you do, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.*

Sincerely,  
Tracey Nelson, President



## Stewardship

The 2021 proposed budget was approved at the annual meeting. Included in the budget was a capital expense for a new roof on the sanctuary of \$60,000. Once the project is finalized the council will confirm the cost at a special congregational meeting. January income was amazingly the same as prior year (ok, it was up from prior year by \$3.24). Income for the month exceeded expenses by \$3,124.

	Income	Debits	Net
January	\$7,152.63	\$4,028.99	\$3,123.64



## Technology

During the annual meeting, a new budget line was included to support technology. Thank you for the support! We are building a platform to be able to incorporate more video streaming of services. As yet, we have not confirmed the best method for doing this. As we develop a broader platform, it is very important for you to share your email address with us so we can include you on our distribution list. You will be hearing more about this in the coming months.

## New Council Members

President: Tracey Nelson

Vice President: Ken Maki

Secretary: Karen Kallio

Treasurer: Jon Ahlberg

Peter Wedegartner

Debbie Quarford

Tom Karvala

Morgan Labadie

If you have a problem, a suggestion, or you do not like something, bring it to one of the council members. All suggestions and concerns are welcome!

## Lenten Soup Luncheons

March 3 Council

March 10 WELCA

March 17 WELCA

March 24 Men's Group

Please join us after the 12:00 pm Lenten service for a light lunch.



## Lenten Services, 12:00 Wednesdays

### CHRIST ON TRIAL

Join us each Wednesday at noon for Christ on Trial. We will visit each week scriptural evidence and eye witnesses who will share their encounters with Jesus:

- March 3: A former cripple is, herself, evidence of Jesus' loose interpretation of Sabbath Law
- March 10: "Jesus, Disturber Of The Peace!" Is it true? Prominent Jewish leader Nicodemus weighs in.
- March 17: Evidence that Jesus is a self-elected "Judge and Jury" is offered by a woman caught in adultery.
- March 24: Are charges of cannibalism true? A young man named John is called to the stand. Christ On Trial examines evidence that demands a verdict: Who is this Jesus...for you?



## Spring forward

Don't forget! On March 7, before you go to bed, turn your clocks forward one hour.



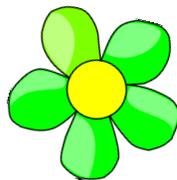
# FORTUNE LAKE

*A place of grace in Crystal Falls, MI*

## JOIN US SUMMER 2021

Fortune Lake is so excited to welcome back both our campers and staff for Summer 2021! We're seeking enthusiastic, creative young leaders who are looking for the experience of a lifetime! Online applications are available now through June 1, or until all positions are filled.

### Upcoming Events



Fortune Lake Annual Meeting (Virtual)  
April 25th 3:00-4:00 pm



Villager  
June 27-July 2, 2021  
Completed grades 3-4



Vagabond  
June 27-July 2, 2021  
Completed grades 5-6



Venturer  
June 27-July 2, 2021  
Completed grades 7-8



### Deadlines to keep in mind:

April 22—Early Bird. Get \$25 off of a full week  
\$15 off of a 1/2 week

June 1—All camper payments due to the Fortune Lake office including scholarships.

**\*\*Call the church office for information on a scholarship to Fortune Lake Bible Camp!**

## Men's Group

Men's group met on February 19. Kurt Markkola led an excellent discussion regarding the book "The Post-Quarantine Church" by Thom Rainer. We are all searching for the right combination of virtual and safe personal interactions during this COVID dominated era. Jim Quayle will lead the discussions on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March. We will continue to share our prayerful thoughts and concerns for the church in the post-quarantine era. Please join us in the fellowship hall at 8:30am for coffee and discussions. Bring a friend...

**Next meeting:** March 19th, 8:30 am

## Wish List for First Lutheran

Are you ever wondering what you could do for your church? There are several items we could use and your donations would be appreciated.

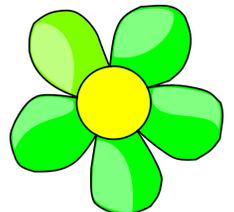
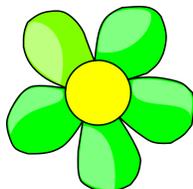
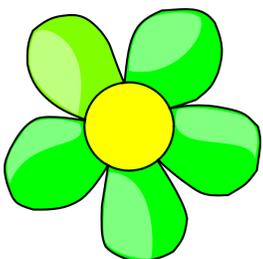
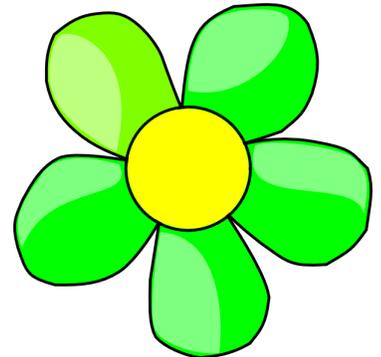
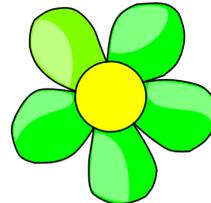
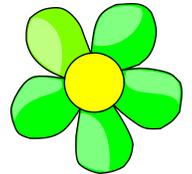
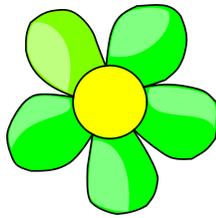
- Dehumidifier for the quilt room. New please.
- Cleaning supplies. e.g. toweling, toilet bowl cleaner, all purpose cleaner, dish soap, new toilet brushes with storage container, toilet paper
- 6 foot long white folding table
- Stamps
- White card stock for certificates
- Ink for printer HP 62XL Must be HP color and black and White
- Bags of salt for entrance ways
- Stick vacuum to pick up all the flies!
- 3-4 floor fans for Sanctuary NEW
- Paper plates/paper cups/ paper bowls
- HEAVY DUTY plastic knives, forks, spoons

# Happy Birthday

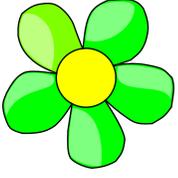
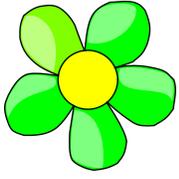
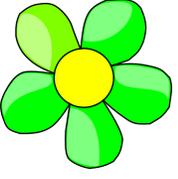
# Happy Anniversary

March 2 Naomi Barry  
March 7 Alice Strom  
March 14 Lynn Peterson  
March 15 Nevin Porier  
March 16 Jason Marcell  
March 17 Kay Barry  
March 18 Braydon Nelson  
March 20 Audrey Ridolphi  
March 21 Holly Rybicki  
March 21 Jane Holm  
March 21 Helyne Burns  
March 21 Phyllis Ponozzo  
March 21 Clarice Arnell  
March 26 Mae Alice Lambert  
March 30 Robert Peterson  
March 30 Jill Poulos

March 4 Vicki and David Medovich



# March

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
		9:00 Quilters	12:00 Lenten Services <i>Christ on Trial</i> 12:45 Luncheon			
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
10:00 Service Rev. Jim Duehring, communion	11:00 WELCA	9:00 Quilters  10:00 Finance  6:00 Council	12:00 Lenten Services <i>Christ on Trial</i> 12:45 Luncheon			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
10:00 Service Donna Ahlberg		9:00 Quilters	 12:00 Lenten Services <i>Christ on Trial</i> 12:45 Luncheon		8:30 Men's Group	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
10:00 Service Rev. Doug Johnson communion <b>Noisy offering</b>		9:00 Quilters	12:00 Lenten Services <i>Christ on Trial</i> 12:45 Luncheon			
28	29	30	31			
10:00 Service Lori Ward  		9:00 Quilters				

[www.firstlutheranironriver.com](http://www.firstlutheranironriver.com)

Webcast: [www.WIKB.com](http://www.WIKB.com)

Broadcast: WIKB 99.1 FM

Church Office: Phone (906) 265-9518

Tuesday, 9-11

[Secretary@FirstLutheranIronRiver.com](mailto:Secretary@FirstLutheranIronRiver.com)

Phone (906) 231-4905

Interim Pastor, The reverend DJ Rasner

***Come join us!***

*Sowing seeds of grace; growing faith in Christ*

**First Lutheran Church**



**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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IRON RIVER MI 49935