



# First Lutheran Church

Called to proclaim and celebrate the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we are nurtured, prepared, and sent to be the light of Christ in our world.

## ***Chosen, to follow Jesus!***

During the Season of Lent, people often choose to give up something they enjoy or something that may be holding them back from going deeper in their relationship with God. In essence, this practice is a kind of a spiritual fast for the individual to help them keep their focus on Jesus as we journey with Christ to the cross. And while I support anyone who chooses to avoid eating certain foods (like sugar or meat, or soda, or carbs), or to refrain from indulging in activities that might be impacting their faith formation (like drinking too much, sleeping too much, working too much), I often encourage individuals to try adding a Spiritual practice into their routines instead.

This is because in the past, when I have tried fasting during Lent, I have found that oftentimes when we deprive ourselves of the things or activities we enjoy, we aren't always successful. But maybe that is the whole point, because as we try to avoid certain temptations to quit, we are learning to place our trust in God and ask the Lord for help. After all, it does wonders for our faith (and yes our egos too) when we don't give up and we make it to Easter Sunday. (To this day, I remember the year I gave up meat for Lent and how good I felt spiritually after a successful 40 day journey.) And yet, if we try adding a Spiritual practice into our lives (such as: worshipping weekly, daily Scripture study, prioritizing prayer, volunteering more, upping our financial giving, daily devotions, or weekly Bible study) we may experience an even deeper transformation in our lives and in our faith.

Each year, I like to offer up a theme for Lent and this year's theme is, "Chosen to Walk with Jesus!" My hope is that it will be a reminder that we have all been called to follow Jesus, just as he asked his original disciples to follow him! It also goes well with the Bible study I am hoping to offer after worship on Sunday mornings (11:30am), which will explore the new Biblical series, "The Chosen," and how it compares to the stories we read about Christ in the New Testament. Please click the link in the e news for instructions for watching the T.V series "the chosen." Pastor Ryan is also more than happy to come help you find a way to experience it for yourself. (Seems like a good way for us to get to know each other a little better).

Aside from offering up a Bible Study that connects with, "The Chosen," there will also be other opportunities to help you in your Lenten journey. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, you are invited to join us for worship and receive an anointing with ash as the cross is marked on your forehead. Those who attend the service will be encouraged to take a grey silicone bracelet, featuring an ash cross with the words, "Remember you are dust. To dust you shall return," that you will be encouraged to wear throughout Lent as a reminder of our mortal nature and our need for redemption.

*Continues Pg. 2*

Continued from Pg. 1

During our midweek worship services (Wednesdays at 7pm) we will be using Holden Evening prayer and rather than hearing a sermon, you will hear a power testimony offered up through a special drama series called the, "Silent Witnesses." Each week you will hear an inspirational story featuring memorable objects involved in our Lord's suffering and death — a thorn, the robe, a nail, the spear, the shroud, and the stone which guarded the tomb. On Wednesday nights here at First Lutheran, these witnesses will come to life and break their silence in order to share their viewpoint and deepen our understanding of the Passion story.

I'm looking forward to our Lenten journey together,

Pastor Ryan

## Brunch with the Pastor

If you haven't had a chance to have Brunch with the Pastor, please consider signing up on the bulletin board in the church Narthex. On the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month, up to six people are invited to join him at a local restaurant to share a meal together and to get better acquainted. Please note that if you have already had an opportunity to attend one of these events, you are more than welcome to attend again but please wait until the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday to sign-up so others have an opportunity to participate. **On Feb 26th we will meet at the Curious Chef (Near Michaels) in Burlington at 12:30 pm. (30 minutes later than usual because of the Congregational Meeting)**



## "Chosen to follow Jesus"

### Mid-week Lenten Services

#### **Ash Wednesday Service**

Feb 22, 7:00 PM

#### **Wednesday Holden Evening Prayer Services**

March 1-March 29, 7:00 PM

### Holy Week

#### **Palm/Passion Sunday**

April 2, 10:00 AM

#### **Maundy Thursday**

April 6, 7:00 PM

#### **Good Friday**

April 7, 7:00 PM

#### **Easter Sunday**

April 9, 10:00 am



Lenten offerings will be focused on helping furnish the 70 units of Martha's Place. More information to come in the next few weeks.



Save the date for our  
**Lenten Soup Supper**  
**March 15th at 6:00pm**

*More info to come...*

# First Lutheran

## Semi-Annual Meeting

Please join us on February 26th as we gather to hear the ministry reports from our leadership & thank the 2022 Church Council for their dedicated service.

### Grief Support Group

Now that things are starting to get back to normal (with Covid cases decreasing), I have been asked if I would be willing to offer a grief support group at First Lutheran. I know that there have been a number of individuals in our Congregation who have lost loved ones during the past few years, and I'm certain that there are people who have also dealt with other types of tragedies or loss that has caused them heartache and pain. It is my hope to help you find some healing and to perhaps also assist you in finding ways to deal with your grief.

During Lent, I am starting a grief support group, by offering a special Bible study on grief to help lay the foundation for the group.

**If you are interested in attending please click on this link to take a quick survey regarding meeting time.**

If you would like to know more about the Bible study, see a description from the author of the leader's guide: "Born out of her own deep grief experience, Rev. Rev. Collette Broady Grund offers a six-session study, using Scripture to access and process grief. Each Scripture story is paired with one or more stages of grief. Participants are invited to access their grief through an opening meditation, then read the Scripture story and reflect on questions. Each session closes with a blessing, meant to remind participants that God is present and at work in the grieving process.

God Bless,  
 Pastor Ryan



On January 28th, the Church Council had a retreat, All Council members were there except one who was ill. There was an excitement about what 2023 will bring with many ideas for growth both physically and spiritually. The Spirit is definitely moving among these members. With God's help, and help from Council Members, it will be contagious among all Congregational Members in 2023. I feel the Spirit seems to be stronger in our congregation now than it was at the beginning of the Covid Pandemic.

No matter what our situations in life are, praising God and our Lord Jesus is the primary reason we worship and attend church. However, the support and fellowship among other worshippers as also vital to our spiritual health. Doing for others is also vital to our spiritual health. Our congregation has done well in these above areas, but we must let the Spirit guide us to do more. That is part of what congregational growth is. First Lutheran can become a "beacon of light" in our community.

I will finish with this quote from Luke 19, verse 8. It is about Zacchaeus, a rich tax collector considered a very sinful and bad person in biblical times. 8 And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him "Today salvation has come to this house..."

God Bless First Lutheran in 2023.

Donn

*We are nurtured, prepared...*

## 2022 Giving Statement Reminder

Thank you for your financial support in 2022. A reminder: If you would like a copy of your statement, please email Carl, stating if you would like the statement emailed to you or mailed to you via the postal service.

You may email Carl at  
financialsecretary@firstlutheranmv.org

or call the church office and leave a message. We will be sure that Carl receives your request.



## Worship & Music Mtg. March 7th at 1:30

Are you interested in helping plan worship? Feel free to join us, if you have some ideas or suggestions or if you are interested in finding out what we do. And if worship planning ends up being something you enjoy, you may even want to formally join the Worship & Music Committee.



A big **thank you** to Kathy Birch, from all who donate hats & scarves to the mission box in the fellowship hall. In January, Kathy delivered about 13 pieces to a local charity. This month she has taken another 14 hats & 1 scarf.

Also big **thank you** to all who generously share their time, talents, and treasure to create the cold weather items to be shared with the unsheltered!

Roberta Windham



Our current book for discussion  
is...

## **“Love is the Way”**

by Bishop Michael Curry

*Walk the path of love with one of the warmest, most beloved spiritual leaders of our time, and learn how to put faith into action.* On March 16th at Noon (in the Chapel) we will be discussing the book, "Love is the Way," by Bishop Michael Curry. Please see the following summary from Amazon.com: "As the descendant of slaves and the son of a civil rights activist, Bishop Michael Curry's life illustrates massive changes in our times. Much of the world met Bishop Curry when he delivered his sermon on the redemptive power of love at the royal wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle at Windsor Castle. Here, he expands on his message of hope in an inspirational road map for living the way of love, illuminated with moving lessons from his own life. Through the prism of his faith, ancestry, and personal journey, *Love Is the Way* shows us how America came this far and, more important, how to go a whole lot further.

*The way of love is essential for addressing the seemingly insurmountable challenges facing the world today: poverty, racism, selfishness, deep ideological divisions, competing claims to speak for God. This book will lead readers to discover the gifts they need in order to live the way of love: deep reservoirs of hope and resilience, simple wisdom, the discipline of nonviolence, and unshakable regard for human dignity."*



## Upcoming Events

**February 12 - Souper Bowl Sunday:** While many people will be overeating at Super Bowl Sunday parties around the country, there are plenty of others who wish they had enough food to feed their families. Connie will bang a large pot in hopes that the congregation will donate non-perishable food items (with pop top lids) or funds to help Neighbors in Need. Thank you for considering helping our neighbors!

**February 12 - Catholic Community Services Temple Talk:** At the end of the service, we'll listen to a representative tell us about Martha's place, a new housing development in Mount Vernon that is aimed at helping households who are homeless or who are at a high-risk of becoming homeless. Find out what work is being done to help house local people and what we can do to help our neighbors.

**February 19 - Shrove Sunday Pancake Brunch:** Social ministry invites you to stay after the service for a pancake brunch. We will offer gluten-free and diabetic-friendly options. Let the Social Ministry team thank you for all your generosity with a hot meal.

**Wednesday, February 22 - April 9:** For Lent, Social Ministry is following Jesus to help improve the lives of the local homeless community. Lenten offerings will be focused on helping furnish the 70 units of Martha's Place. More information to come in the next few weeks.



For many years designated giving has enabled the church to offer Lutherwood camp scholarships. These scholarships have paid 1/2 of the early bird camp registration fee for Sunday School Students. The funds have come from very generous member donations to the camp scholarship fund. We have been blessed to offer many scholarships to our Sunday school students each year. If you are interested in donating funds to help replenish the camp scholarship fund, you are encouraged to donate by writing "Camp Scholarship" in the memo portion of your check. Thank you to all who have donated to this scholarship over the years!



## Habitat For Humanity Groundbreaking Ceremony Feb 24th at 4:30

Members of First Lutheran are invited to attend the groundbreaking ceremony of the habitat homes being build in our neighborhood. The ceremony will take place on the lots where the 3 homes are being built, on the conner of Blackburn and La Venture. We have offered Habitat parking for this event and also for overflow parking for volunteers working on the site throughout the time the houses are being built. Pastor Ryan is honored to be leading a prayer at the ceremony on February 24th.

## Friendship House Meal

First Lutheran has a consistent role in serving our homeless neighbors. Once per month, we gather supplies for a dinner to be served at both the *Friendship House Cafe* and now at *Skagit First Step* in Burlington. Thanks to your generosity!

Watch for a sign up sheet in the e news or on the refrigerator in the kitchen. We will be serving the evening meal at the Friendship House on Feb 28th, and again on March 28th.





## A Glance at Stewardship

Year to date as of End of January 2023

**Giving** \$19,086

**Expenses** \$15,695

\$3,404.32



## Hymn Sing

Come 15 minutes early & join us for a hymn sing before worship on March 5.

## Church Calendar

Remember that we have a calendar attached to our website

[www.firstlutheranmv.org](http://www.firstlutheranmv.org)

We do our best to keep it updated with all the church happenings & community building use. If you would like to add a meeting or event to the calendar, please email the church office at

### FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

2015 E. Blackburn Rd.  
Mount Vernon WA 98274  
Mailing: PO Box 777  
Mount Vernon WA 98273

#### Worship Services

Sunday Worship 10:00 am

**Church Office**—[office@firstlutheranmv.org](mailto:office@firstlutheranmv.org)

Website w/calendar [www.firstlutheranmv.org](http://www.firstlutheranmv.org)

Join us on [Facebook](#)

Church Phone: 360 424-6832

Direct number for Pastor Ryan Rouse— 360 603-6379

#### To reach our Staff:

**Pastor- Pastor Ryan Rouse**

[Pastorryan@firstlutheranmv.org](mailto:Pastorryan@firstlutheranmv.org)

**Holly Oliver,**

Parish Administrator-[office@firstlutheranmv.org](mailto:office@firstlutheranmv.org)

**Pete Olson,**

Worship Accompanist-[peterdonne@yahoo.com](mailto:peterdonne@yahoo.com)

## First Lutheran

All are created uniquely by God and all are welcome here.

Your Abilities· Age· Culture· Economic Status· Gender Expression/identity· Life Circumstances· Marital Status· Questions· Race· Sexual Orientation· are welcome here.

### Our Congregational Leaders

**President**— Donn Hollenbeck

**Vice President**— Bob Ramborger

**Secretary**— Yvonne Carter, Sandy Simon

**Treasurer**— Brad Pickett

#### Trustees

Jeff May, Bob Ramborger, Brad Clifton

#### Deacons

Heather Romano, Bud Fish, Doug Carter

#### Parish Activities

Ann May, Sue Holmes, Jana Svendsen