



# 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.

## What is a Disciple?

I often find myself wondering how many Christians these days truly understand what it means to be a disciple. There are some, I imagine, who assume that if we are baptized in the Christian faith and are a follower of Christ, then we are automatically a disciple. For others, discipleship is all about following certain religious rules and traditions that help us live out our existence in this world. And of course, there are also people who believe that it is all about learning to embrace the things Jesus taught and to try to do the things that he did.

In his book, *In the Dust of the Rabbi: Learning to Live as Jesus lived*, Ray Vander Laan seems to wonder the same thing. He writes, "Contemporary Christianity does not always make discipleship central to the faith. Many who call themselves Christians don't even know what a disciple is." Mr. Laan's reasoning for this is because he believes that modern day believers don't really have a basic knowledge of the world and the people of Jesus' day, and because of this they fail to grasp what the Biblical writers assumed their readers were familiar with. For example, things like Near Eastern geography, history, and culture.

During the season of Lent, as we walk with Jesus to the cross, we will be learning about the people and events found in Scripture and will study their geographical, historical, and cultural contexts. This will be done through a special video series filmed at Biblically significant sites such as Galilee, Priene, and Didyma. In fact, on Wednesday nights during our Holden Evening Prayer service we will watch Ray Lander Laan in these locations as we explore the following episodes: 1. When the Rabbi says, "Come" 2. When the Rabbi Says, "Go" 3. The Presence of God: A Countercultural Community 4. Living Stones 5. The Very Words of God. (*Please note that the episodes range from 24 to 30 minutes, so worship will be about an hour, but they are well worth it!*)

To help us unpack this amazing video series, we will be using a corresponding study guide for adult education on Sunday mornings after worship. The books should cost around \$8 and we are hoping to have some copies at the church available for purchase. And if you want to get a jump on the study you can find it on amazon.com (*the title is mentioned earlier in my article*). So, rather than giving up something during Lent, as many tend to do, perhaps you might consider adding to your spiritual learning by joining me to discover what discipleship is all about. The class will begin on Sunday February 25<sup>th</sup> following the viewing of the first episode on February 21<sup>st</sup>.

May God Bless our Lenten journey together,  
Pastor Ryan

Called to proclaim and celebrate the Gospel of Jesus Christ...



**Lent and Holy Week**  
“Learning to follow Jesus”

**Ash Wednesday Service**

February 14, 7:00 PM

**Wednesday  
Holden Evening  
Prayer Services**

February 21-March 20 7:00 PM

**Palm/Passion Sunday**

March 24, 10:00 AM

**Maundy Thursday**

March 28, 7:00 PM

**Easter Sunday**

March 31, 10:00 am

**Lenten Devotions**

Beginning on Ash Wednesday, if you are looking for a Lenten spiritual practice, you are invited to consider adding a special Lenten Devotional that you will study each day. If you would like to participate in a weekly discussion focused on this year’s Lenten devotional (*Gathered into One* from Augsburg Fortress), please consider joining Pastor Ryan on Friday mornings at the Marketplace Café at the Haggan store in Mount Vernon. Our first meeting will be February 16th at 11am.

**Daily Devotionals**

Would you like to receive daily devotionals in your email box? Consider giving “God Pause,” a daily devotion brought to you by the alumni of Luther Seminary a try.

You may sign up using [this link](#). Luther’s seminary structures the devotionals using the Revised Common Lectionary. Watch for the pivot to special seasonal devotionals during the seasons of Advent & Lent.

**Good Friday Service**

This year, on Good Friday, you are encouraged to attend a special ecumenical worship service (featuring different Lutheran churches in the Skagit Valley) that will be held at Salem Lutheran at 7pm. Rather than offering separate services for each congregation, local Pastors from the area have decided to join forces and offer a joint service for us all to attend. Please mark your calendars for March 29<sup>th</sup> at 7pm and if you need a ride don’t be shy about asking a brother or sister in Christ from First Lutheran for help.

*We are nurtured, prepared...*

## Lenten Offerings

This year Social Ministry has decided to dedicate the Lenten offerings to Community Action of Skagit County. Community Action's Fund A Need program helps people who need a little hand up.

Examples of recipients of this program is offering funds to a client who doesn't have an appropriate outfit for a job interview. Or funding a replacement ID for a client who is unable to obtain housing because they are missing identification.

If you would like to help this important program in our community, please look for the specially-marked envelopes by the offering box in the narthex.

Thank you for thinking of our community's needs!

Social Ministry Team

## 2023 Giving Statements

Thank you for your financial support in 2023.

The 2023 Giving Statements have been prepared by our Financial Secretary, Carl Libbey. 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](mailto:financialsecretary@firstlutheranmv.org) or call the church office and leave a message. We will be sure that Carl receives your request.

## Adult Education

After Worship on Sunday, February 25th, we will begin our journey through the study guide that goes along with our Midweek worship service. The book we will be using is called *In the Dust of the Rabbi* by Ray Vander Laan (see Pastor's article for more details). I hope you will consider joining us as we explore what discipleship is all about!



### Confirmation

Just a friendly reminder that during Lent we will not be having our Wednesday evening classes. Students are encouraged to attend our midweek Holden Evening prayer service. Please note that this year the message each week will have an educational component to it (see Pastor's article for more details).



## Sunday School

Don't forget to mark your calendars for our upcoming Sunday School classes. We will be meeting on the 3rd. Sunday of each month (February 18th, March 17th, April 21st ) at 9:00am. If your child is unable to attend, don't forget you can watch the recorded children sermon each week and use the children's bulletin that is mailed out each week to help you with your child's faith formation.

## PARISH ACTIVITIES 2024

We are planning ahead for activities throughout the year and would appreciate your input. If you have suggestions for activities, you would enjoy sharing with your church family, please talk to one of us.

### Feb - March

#### Lent and Easter

**Feb 21** Lenten meal—Friendship House meal. Join us and enjoy the meal that we have served at Friendship House for over 30 years. (Please sign up on the bulletin board in the narthex, so we know how many to plan for.)

**March 6** Lenten Meal—Planned & Prepared by the Altar Guild

**March 20** Lenten Meal- Planned & prepared by the Church council

**March 31 Easter Sunday:** Festival Coffee Hour  
-Muffins and fruit after church

### April

**April 13th** Ladies salad luncheon

**April 28** Church birthday party with Scandinavian treats

### May

**May 19** High school Senior Celebration

### August

August: Church picnic

### September

September 8 Rally Day

### October

October 27th Confirmation and Reformation day

### November

Possible baking class—Scandinavian cookies ???

Thanksgiving Eve pie social

### December

December afternoon sing-along



## The Chosen on the Big Screen

For those following “The Chosen”, it will be our local AMC theater throughout February: Feb 1-14 episodes 1-3, Feb 15-28 episodes 4-6; and Feb 29-Mar 14. Times are: 3:00 pm and 7:30 pm



### A Note From Lutherwood

It's a whirlwind of action at Lutherwood these days! Now that Kevin Beebe is in the directors chair, we are putting summer camping 2024 together as swiftly as possible.

### Summer Kids and Family Camp

We have seven weeks of camp to choose from, including day camps, family camp, elementary through high school camping, music camp, and of course, the ever-popular H2O camp for middle schoolers and high school alike.

You can see the camp line-up and registration link on our [Summer Schedule page](#) at Lutherwood's website. Registration is now open.

\*\*\*\*

### A note from the church office

If your family is interested in using a camp scholarship, please contact Holly in the church office before you sign up for camp. We have requested a coupon code from Lutherwood to enable you to receive a discount when registering. The church then pays a portion of the cost. We hope to hear back from them with the code soon. Please call or email the church office with any questions.

*Sent to be the light of Christ in our world.*



Social Ministry thanks you

This past Christmas season the First Lutheran Social Ministry team requested that the congregation donate warm gloves, mittens, hats, scarves, and socks to people in need. Once again, our lovely congregation went above and beyond. We collected 6 large boxes of warm items because of you!

The adult-sized items were brought to Friendship House and First Steps. And the kid-sized items were all donated to our neighbor, Jefferson Elementary.

The timing couldn't have been better because we were able to get all of the warm items to our organizations right before the cold snap.

Thank you, dear First Lutheran, for thinking of those who need help staying warm this winter.

God Bless!

Heather Romano  
Social Ministry

### **Friendship House Sloppy Joe Recipe**

Hamburger - 4 pounds  
Onion - 2 cups chopped  
Tomato sauce - 3 - 15 ounce cans or 2- 29 ounce cans  
(add 1-15 ounce can of stewed tomatoes along with 2 cans tomato sauce if preferred)  
Garlic salt - 1 Tablespoon  
Chili powder - 1 Tablespoon

Brown hamburger with the onion. Drain off excess fat. Season hamburger with garlic salt and chili powder. Add tomato sauce/stewed tomatoes. Cook over low heat and simmer 30-45 minutes. Chill and freeze in gallon sized zip lock bags. Deliver to church.

Each recipe should fill 2 bags.



We need you, to Sign up to help with Worship

On the bulletin board in our church Narthex you will find a little sign up sheet with a month or two of serving opportunities. We encourage you to take a look at that sign up sheet each week to prayerfully consider helping out with one of the roles or positions that need to be filled.



**Friendship  
House Meal**

We will be providing the evening meal on February 27th and March 26th. Please watch for the February sign-up sheet, shared in the E-News. If financially supporting this ministry works better for you, we appreciate donations for purchases such as the large cans of beans we provide. Donations can be mailed directly to our P.O box # 777 Mount Vernon WA, 98273. Please indicate the funds are for the Friendship House Meal. Thank you to all who are part of this ministry!

**Serves 24**



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

# First Lutheran

*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.*

## **FIRST EVANGELICAL 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](#)

Phone: 360 424-6832

### **To reach our Staff:**

**Pastor- Pastor Ryan Rouse**—360 603-6379

[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)

You are created uniquely by  
God and you 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**—

**Secretary**— Yvonne Carter, Sandy Simon

**Treasurer**— Brad Pickett

**Trustees**

Jeff May, Bob Ramborger, Manny Gomez

**Deacons**

Doug Carter, Heather Romano, Frances Wraspir,

**Parish Activities**

Ann May, Sue Holmes, Jana Svendsen