



FROM PASTOR ROBERT

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

"We invite all to share the joy of God's love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ."

Our guiding principles are to:

- "Reflect God's love by being inviting, non-judgmental, compassionate, and respectful;
- Work to be dependable and responsive in our community and global efforts;
- Adapt to the changing needs of our congregation;
- Joyfully proclaim the story of God's love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ."

**Ministry Team**

**Robert Neubert**  
Pastor

**Dr. Denise Reed**  
Worship Musician

**Frank Kenny**  
Administrative Assistant

**Sandy Young**  
Administrative Assistant

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Siblings in Christ,

Though this may be an exciting time for us at First Lutheran as we look into new and exciting ways that we can do ministry here in St. Helens, I want to remind everyone that on Wednesday March 5<sup>th</sup> we will be celebrating Ash Wednesday and officially kick off Lent. So if there is any joy or happiness of any kind in your heart it is time to dispel it. Lent is a time of preparation and mourning as we join together to focus on our own guilt, misery, and participation in Christ's death. Let the fun begin!

Here at First Lutheran as we give up not only the word "ha&% # \$ah" (sorry printing of this word in it's fullness is not allowed until Easter morning) there will also be absolutely no smiling or any other expressions of joy. To help in this process you are encouraged to stay away from all small children and/or house pets since their cuteness levels are way too high and produce far too many smiles. Please refrain from telling jokes, and definitely do not watch any comedic movies or TV shows. If you do need to watch anything only watch things that would fall under serious minded religious, historical, true crime, political documentaries, or dramatic movies like Dodgeball: A True Underdog's Story, the Naked Gun movies, or Air Bud. Only things that cause severe frustration, anger, pure logical thought, or depression are considered appropriate. If you find yourself at work or at a friend's house and you feel a smile beginning to crack upon your lips due to the process of actually enjoying one's self, quickly get up and run from the room before those good feelings begin to spread. Do not let those around you cause you to fall into that deep bright pit of sunshine and joy.

In honor of this time of pain and sadness I invite you to read this short explanation of Lent:

In the early years of the Church the period of Lent was a time of intense prayer, instruction, and fasting for Christian initiates as they prepared for baptism. As the Christian Church grew and less and less adult members came into the Church Christians joined in with the initiates during Lent as a way of renewing their faith and commemorating their own baptism. As the years passed it became expected that all Christians would commit themselves during Lent to practicing daily prayer, acts of penance, abstaining from eating meat, fasting during the daylight hours and refrain from participating in any festivities. Since Christians were not allowed to participate in festivals during this time, festivals such as Mardi Gras grew in popularity so that Christians could get all the partying out of their systems before entering into the season of Lent. This also helped bolster the celebration of St. Patrick's Day which falls during the season of Lent and the only time that Christians were allowed to break their Lenten commitments was during a Saint day, or Sundays.

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## OUR CHURCH COUNCIL

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## COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS



The First Lutheran Church Council met on February 9, 2025. The meeting was called to order by President Rodney Sherpe.

- ◆ **January Minutes:** The council reviewed the minutes from the January meeting. It was moved and seconded to accept them as amended and the motion passed.
- ◆ **Financial Report:** Jon Vingerud submitted the financial report including a report on the balance of designated funds through January 2025. Total cost of the new altar rails was \$2,750. A deposit of \$2,500 was made to MCE Roofing to begin work on the roofing repairs. It was moved that the financial report be approved and was seconded. Motion was approved.

- ◆ **Pastors' Report:** Pastor Robert reported on Wendy Rude's funeral. Vincent (Frank Kelly's grandson) wants to be baptized so they are looking to do that at the end of the month. He is coordinating with several people who wish to join the church to get a new member service planned.
- ◆ **President's Report:** Rodney thanked Geri and Tim for their service on council. He reiterated that we have been working well as a team and hopes to see that continue as we move forward.

Committee Reports:

- ◆ **Properties:** Tim Meyers reported that Properties plan on providing council a summary of what has been done and what the other items and goals are moving into the upcoming year.

## TREASURER'S UPDATE



NO REPORT FOR FEBRUARY. See March newsletter.

## CHURCH COUNCIL Cont.

- ◆ **Social Ministries & Outreach:** Mike McCoy reported they are planning an outreach meeting to brainstorm some ideas for advertising for the church.
- ◆ **Habitat for Humanity:** Pastor Robert reported that area pastors have approached him about doing another faith build this year.
- ◆ **Worship & Music:** Written report showing that Ash Wednesday and Lenten soup supper Wednesdays are scheduled.
- ◆ **Fellowship:** Tim Meyers shared about the second reconciliation service with St. Frederic Catholic on May 17th.
- ◆ **Christian Education:** No report but everyone discussed how encouraging it is to see so many kids are worship lately.

### Old Business:

- ◆ Roof repairs will begin very soon.
- ◆ Church directory photos are being taken during fellowship time and quite a few church members have submitted their information forms.

### New Business:

- ◆ Pastor Robert mentioned that Denise Reed has expressed an interest in attending the Synod convention. It was moved and seconded that she attend as a representative of First Lutheran. The motion passed.

◆

- ◆ A discussion was held on the use of the parking lot for overnight parking. It was referred to Properties for further discussion.

### Not on Agenda:

- ◆ Caroline DuBois is willing to serve on the Council again. It was moved and seconded to have her serve. The motion was passed.
- ◆ Barbara Gordon brought an idea to the Council on using some money every month to aid non-profits and organizations to help foster an environment and example of giving support in the community. A discussion was held.

### Review of the March Calendar

- ◆ An addition was made.

### Good of the Order/Announcements

- ◆ The "Super Bowl" special offering made \$108.40 to go to the Food Bank.

### Adjournment and Closing Prayer

- ◆ Pastor Robert provided the closing prayer and President Rodney adjourned the meeting,



## SERVING IN MARCH

### March 2

Ushers: The Sundeen's  
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed  
 Cantor: Kate Freitag  
 Lay Reader: Olive Campbell  
 Communion Server: Caroline DuBois  
 Comm Prep. Caroline DuBois  
 Comm. Clean-up: Laura McDonough  
 Tech: Teri Sherpe  
 Altar Flowers: Norris & Sharyn Sundeen  
 Coffee Fellowship: Fellowship  
 Committee

### March 9

Ushers: Tim Meyers & Kathy Bauska  
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed  
 Cantor: TBD  
 Lay Reader: Sandy Young  
 Communion Server: TBD  
 Comm Prep. TBD  
 Comm. Clean-up: Donna Meyers  
 Tech: TBD  
 Altar Flowers: Jon & Jackie Vingerud  
 Coffee Fellowship: TBD

### March 16

Ushers: Terry Rude & Rodney Sherpe  
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed  
 Cantor: TBD  
 Lay Reader: TBD  
 Communion Server: TBD  
 Comm Prep. TBD  
 Comm. Clean-up: TBD  
 Tech: Teri Sherpe  
 Altar Flowers: John & Jan Burdett  
 Coffee Fellowship: Candice & Peach  
 Becker

### March 23

Ushers: Mike & Linda McCoy  
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed  
 Cantor: TBD  
 Lay Reader: TBD  
 Communion Server: TBD  
 Comm Prep. TBD  
 Comm. Clean-up: TBD  
 Tech: TBD  
 Altar Flowers: TBD  
 Coffee Fellowship: TBD

### March 30

Ushers: Kate & Matt Freitag  
 Pianist: Dr. Denise Reed  
 Cantor: TBD  
 Lay Reader: Henrik & Ally Vingerud  
 Communion Server: TBD  
 Comm Prep. TBD  
 Comm. Clean-up: Geri Logan  
 Tech: Teri Sherpe  
 Altar Flowers: TBD  
 Coffee Fellowship: TBD



## CELEBRATING

### MARCH Birthdays

- 2 Bob Clore
- 6 Kristol Cohn
- 14 Louise Gullickson
- 19 Sandy Hora
- 20 Jean LeMont, Allison Jensen
- 25 Caroll Uselton
- 26 Janet Abbott
- 29 Scott Becker
- 31 Jennifer Higgins



### MARCH Anniversaries

- 2 Norris & Sharyn Sundeen
- 7 Tom & Christina Vingerud

## CONTEMPLATIVE GROUP

The Women's Contemplative Group will be meeting on March 13, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. All are welcome! Contact Mariel McMullen 503-396-1646 or [mariel.mcmullen@live.com](mailto:mariel.mcmullen@live.com)

Contemplative  
GROUP



## FROM PASTOR ROBERT—CONTINUED

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century a man in Switzerland served sausages to some workers during Lent thus breaking the Lenten fast of not allowing meat during the season of Lent and since his action was backed up by Ulrich Zwingli one of the leading church reformers during the Reformation era, this caused a chain reaction regarding the season of Lent where people were no longer forced into Lenten commitments and instead it became a choice where Christians (mainly Protestant) could choose what they would like to do.

While some of the ancient practices surrounding Lent may seem extreme to those of us living today, they did have a purpose and even though Zwingli didn't think that abstaining from meat was necessary (and the eating of sausages actually led to a violent uprising) he and others still believed that making some sort of sacrifice or commitment toward God during Lent was important because it helps ensure that the laity wouldn't become lax in their faith.

### **Biblical foundations and one Historical foundation for Lent:**

- Moses spent 40 days and nights with God on Mt. Sinai.
- Elijah spent 40 days and nights walking to Mt. Horeb.
- God made it rain 40 days and nights in order to flood the earth.
- Jonah told the people of Ninevah that they had 40 days to repent or face God's wrath.
- Hebrew people wandered the desert for 40 years before reaching the Promised Land.
- Jesus spent 40 days and nights in the desert tempted by the devil.
- According to Matthew 9:15 Jesus asked his disciples to fast after he was gone so it is believed that the Apostles began fasting during the 40 day period preceding Easter just after Jesus' death and resurrection.
- The time of Lent marked the time of year in the ancient world when winter food stuffs were beginning to thin out thus it became necessary for people to lessen their consumption if they were going to make food last the entire season. Lent provided a ritualistic way for people to lessen their consumption.

Since I am Lutheran and do believe in grace, our worship committee has decided that three smile like twinges per person will be tolerated during Lent. All those who exceed their quota must sit in the front row during worship.

Peace and Blessing, Pastor Robert



## NEW MEMBER SUNDAY



On Sunday, March 2, we will be welcoming 6 new members into our church family. They are Jon, Olive & Fritz Campbell, Zeb and Shauna-Stroup Harrison and Teri Sherpe. It is so

exciting to see our membership grow, and we are thrilled to have these new members join us! Please give them a warm welcome when you see them!



Pastor Robert with the kids during the Children's sermon.

## ZOOM GUILD



Online  
Bible Study

Zoom Guild chose the next book/video Bible study to start in March. *Nothing Wasted* by Kasey Van Norman includes the following sessions: God Doesn't Waste Your Life; God Doesn't Waste Your Relationship; God Doesn't

Waste Your Regret; God Doesn't Waste Your Pain; God Doesn't Waste Your Nature; and God Doesn't Waste Your Confession. Zoom Guild meets on Monday, March 10 at 11 a.m. If you would like to join the group, please just let a member know. Zoom Guild is made up of Candice Becker, Cathy Bowcock, Beth Hunnicutt, Judy Ann Johnson, Geri Logan, and Audrey Webster. While Candice has already ordered the study guides, you can find them on Churchsource.com (they were on sale here for 7.50 each) or Amazon.

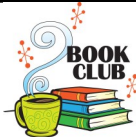
## EXTERIOR DOORS

Recently, several exterior doors have been found left unlocked. Please, when you come into the church and unlock a door, make sure that the door is locked when you leave. We have been lucky so far that no one has entered the church, and we want to keep it that way! I will be contacting the groups that use our church for meetings and reiterate how important it is that they make sure the doors are locked.

PLEASE  
LOCK THE  
DOORS

## FLC BOOK CLUB

In March, the FLC Book Club will discuss *Blue Nights* by Joan Didion. They meet via Zoom on Monday, March 31, at 11 a.m. The Book Club welcomes people who want to just read the book on a particular month; there is not a 12-month commitment or anything formal like that. Just let Candice know so she can add you to the email list.



## HABITAT FOR HUMANITY



Our Vernonia project is sliding across home base! At long last we are approaching the end of construction for Cheri's new house! After hundreds of hours in education and lending a hand during the construction process, she and her teenage daughter and adult blind son plan to call this site "home" very soon. They have lived in Vernonia for many years now, some even without water and power. Their most recent rental has been

sold recently requiring the family to be split up and living with friends, so they are very excited to finally be back together again under the same roof!

We have the doors all in, the flooring down and appliances in place at this time and we are currently working on paint trim. Carpeting will go in next week and then we'll be setting a date for the home dedication! Please let us know if you would like a notification for this event and we can celebrate this huge achievement together!

971-203-0020 or [info@habitatcolumbiacounty.org](mailto:info@habitatcolumbiacounty.org)

## IN OUR PRAYERS

- Our congregation.
- Our nation.
- Peace in our world.
- Refugees and Victims of terrorism and war.
- Those serving in our Armed Forces.
- Police and other first responders.
- Victims of Covid-19 and health care providers.
- Those affected by natural disasters and weather.
- Those in need of healing for body, mind, or soul including:
- Those affected by unemployment, lack of housing and hunger.
- Those in recovery.
- For healing and support for the Heide Family, Terry Rude, Jayne Schilling, Kitty Heide, Clara Jensen, Carlene Clore, Kim Mathisen, Doreen Gordon, Marilyn Hensley, Ashleigh Dahlgren, Cheryl Perkins, and all others in need of prayers.



If you would like something specific published in the "In Our Prayers" column, please contact the office. 503-397-0090

## WORLD DAY OF PRAYER



*World Day of Prayer service will be held on Friday, March 7 at 1 p.m. at Bethany Lutheran Church in Warren. This year's service was written by women in the Cook Islands, and is a very uplifting and joyful service. All are welcome to attend, not just women.*

*This service is held all around the world on the same day, with women from a different country or area preparing the service each year. In 2026,*

*that will be Nigeria, and last year we heard from women in Palestine.*

*Please come join in this worldwide celebration. Light refreshments will be served following the service.*

*Contact Judy Ann Johnson for more information.*



## CATHOLIC-LUTHERAN RELATIONS

From the book "Conflict to Communion" agreed upon in 2016, and resulting from the 50 year effort which culminated in "The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" in 1999, we re-examine two more of the five imperatives considered necessary as we seek unity with our Christian brothers and sisters.

**Item 239:** Lutherans and Catholics are invited to think from the perspective of the unity of Christ's body and to seek whatever will bring this unity to expression and serve the community of the body of Christ. Through Baptism they recognize each other mutually as Christians. This orientation requires a continual conversion of heart.

**The second imperative:** Lutherans and Catholics must let themselves continuously be transformed by the encounter with the other and by the mutual witness of faith.

This witness of faith occurred a few weeks ago when Tom Prebish from St. Frederic told us "Remember, Jesus is calling us to dialogue and understanding."

**The third imperative:** Catholics and Lutherans should again commit themselves to seek visible unity, to elaborate together what this means in concrete steps, and to strive repeatedly toward this goal.

We are still striving to understand these "concrete steps." The most obvious up to this point occurs when we come together with love and sincerity, and humbly ask God to change our hearts.

**From John 17:20-23**

In these three verses referring to the prayer of Jesus on the night of his betrayal, Jesus twice gives reason to why our unity is so important "so that the world may know and believe that you have sent me."

Our unity becomes the witness to the world that Jesus is asking for.

The final two imperatives will be discussed in our next newsletter.

## LENT AND EASTER SCHEDULE

### Lenten and Holy Week Services for 2025



March 5                      7:00 p.m.              Ash Wednesday worship with Ashes and Holy Communion

### Wednesday Evening Soup Suppers and Bible Study at 6:00 p.m. followed by Services at 7:00 p.m. with the Holden Evening Prayer

March 12	6:00 p.m. Soup Supper & Bible Study	7:00 p.m. Holden Evening Prayer
March 19	6:00 p.m. Soup Supper & Bible Study	7:00 p.m. Holden Evening Prayer
March 26	6:00 p.m. Soup Supper & Bible Study	7:00 p.m. Holden Evening Prayer.
April 2	6:00 p.m. Soup Supper & Bible Study	7:00 p.m. Holden Evening Prayer.
April 9	6:00 p.m. Soup Supper & Bible Study	7:00 p.m. Holden Evening Prayer.

### Holy Week Services for 2025



Sun. April 13	10:00 a.m.	Palm-Passion Sunday <i>(palm procession, passion reading, worship with Holy Communion)</i>
Thursday, April 17	7:00 p.m.	Maundy Thursday Worship <i>(Holy Communion, stripping of the altar)</i>
Friday, April 18	12:00 p.m.	Good Friday Service
Sunday, April 2	10:00 a.m.	Festival of the Resurrection <i>(preceded by Easter breakfast; special music, Holy Communion)</i>

## LENT FOOD DRIVE



### Food Collection

Beginning on Sunday, March 9, we will be collecting non-perishable food items throughout the Lent Season. Please bring the items to worship service each Sunday where we will be placing them around the altar. Let's see how crowded we can make the altar for Pastor Robert by Palm Sunday, April 13th. Look at what we did during Advent with the personal items! That was amazing. Following the gathering of the food items, they will be packed up and taken to the Food Bank. Let's help feed our community!

## MONTHLY SCRIPTURES

Beginning in March, you will see the scripture lessons for the Month listed in the newsletter.

**March 2**—Exodus 34:29-35, Psalm 99, 1 Corinthians 3:12-4:2, Luke 9:28-43a

**March 9**—Deuteronomy 26:1-11, Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16, Romans 10:8b-13, Luke 4:1-13

**March 16**—Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18, Psalm 27, Philippians 3:17—4:1, Luke 13:31-35

**March 23**—Isaiah 55:1-9, Psalm 63:1-8, 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Luke 13:1-9

**March 30**—Joshua 5:9-12, Psalm 32, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32



## MARY & SARAH GUILD

Mary Guild will be meeting at Avamere Monday, March 17, at 10:30 a.m. with lunch and visiting at 11:00 a.m. in the dining room. Lunch tickets for non-residents are \$5.00 Please join them for this time of reflection and fellowship.

Sarah Guild will meet on Tuesday, March 18th, at 1:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome



## CELEBRATION OF LIFE

A Celebration of Life service is planned for Joan Heide on March 8th at 11:00 a.m. at Christ Episcopal Church. A time for fellowship & remembrance will be held following the service. Joan was an integral member of this church for several years and formed many long and wonderful friendships. Our condolences to Pastor Heide and family.

*In Loving Memory*

## WELCA HIGHLIGHTS

### LEARN MORE ABOUT WHY WE COLLECT SHOES

**Where** do the shoes go?

**Who** receives them?

**What** else might they need? (Barbie dolls?)

All of your questions concerning items we collect and donate to PEMZ will be answered at the WELCA Mtg by our guest speaker Linda Williams. The meeting will be the first Tuesday 3-4 @ 1pm. If you can't wait until then, check their website: [www.pemzcompassionprojects.org](http://www.pemzcompassionprojects.org). If you can bring one or more pairs of shoes as your 'admission' to the meeting, it would be greatly appreciated. Shoes can be gently used or new (kids, moms or dads sizes)

### BABYKARE KITS for 2025

WELCA will be collecting baby items for Lutheran World Relief. Soon you will be seeing diapers & receiving blankets to sew and bins explaining the specific items needed for the LWR kits. Can't wait: then check the website: [www.lwr.org](http://www.lwr.org).

### Decisions Decisions Decisions

More planning needs to happen soon for WELCA to make more great projects and some things happen the remainder of 2025. Please stay for a planning session following our guest speaker on March 4th at 1pm.



## BUNCO

Now that it is staying lighter later in the evening, the Bunco Group will be going back to it's evening schedule. This month we will play on **Friday, March 21 at 6:30 p.m.** The game is played in the Fellowship Hall. Teri Sherpe is bringing treats. If you have been wanting to try Bunco, please come check it out and meet the wonderful ladies in the group. We always have a great time.



## NEWSLETTER DATE

Please have any submissions for the April newsletter into the office by Wednesday, **March 19th**. Thank you!



Pastor Robert will be on vacation from March 25 through March 28. Have a great time Pastor and family!!.



# IN APPRECIATION

**A BIG Thanks!**

*I want to give a big thank you to everyone at First Lutheran for all you have done for me and my family at this time.*

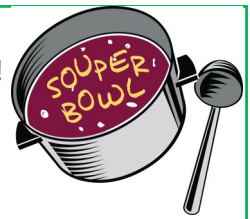
*A special thank you to Pastor Robert and all who helped with Wendy's memorial service. I know Wendy would be pleased and agree that it was "special".*

*Thank you for the generous donations to the Memorial Fund.*

*Last, but not least, was the great lunch served by the wonderful ladies of this —my forever church!*

*Bless you all. Terry Rude*

I really enjoyed being in church on Sunday Feb 9. Super Bowl Sunday! Pastor decided a play on words would be fun and renamed it Souper Bowl Sunday. And in that vein, he set out a couple pots (yes, stove top pots for making soup) on the altar and suggested if people wanted to easily donate to our local food bank, here was our chance!



Lo and behold! Next thing I know, this wonderful giving caring congregation had thrown in \$108.15 in the pots!

I am so happy I am a member of this faithful congregation. We know our giving is THE act of worship. As the Lutheran theologian Mark A Powell states in his book Giving to God, "The Sunday offering is a worship event that provides us with an opportunity for expressing our love for God in the purest way imaginable, by giving up something that we value. The essence of faith is worship and the essence of worship is sacrifice - giving of ourselves in devotion to God."

Barbara Gordon,  
Financial Secretary



**THE KIDS ARE MAKING IT SHINE!**



**THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE**



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360 Wyeth St.  
St. Helens, OR 97051

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# The Skylight

March 2025

First Lutheran Church

**The Skylight**  
is the monthly newsletter of  
**First Lutheran Church**

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