

FIRST
LUTHERAN
CHURCH
COLORADO SPRINGS

ekklesia

02.04.26

FROM THE PASTOR

THE LAST FEW weeks (years) have shown us a world of discord and disappointment alongside multitudes of joy and delight. I'm at Synod Council as I write this, and the Bishop just asked the question (that had been posed to her by church members), "Where is the church?" It was an interesting question to ponder and contemplate and had a wide swath of more questions and answers. My brain did not go to the distractions of the world, but to the community that continues every day. I was reminded today that when the world around us is in disarray, the work of the church remains steady. We choose to worship together, to share the good news, to visit the sick. Every week our campus is bustling with musicians, quilters, knitters, card players, Bible study groups, walking groups, youth group, and men's group. We gather in community and share life together. We pray for each other and for the needs of the world. We disagree with each other and love each other. We work to follow teaching of Jesus for the sake of the world.

Today I want you to remember that you are the church and ask yourself, "What are the ways that you find yourself living that out?" It's going to be a different answer for each of us. For some we are advocates; we speak our beliefs out loud and for those whose voices have been silenced. For others we quietly do the work of the church visiting and serving others. Some are intentional in starting or ending the day with devotions, prayer, and reflections that bring them closer to God and that are done for those who may not have the words to pray. Where is the church, we are together doing the work of the church and showing the love of God in the unique, ordinary, and extraordinary ways that we have all been called.

Yours in faith,

Pastor Carrie



Pastor Carrie Baylis

Sunday's Message

FEBRUARY 1, 2026

THE BEATITUDES, MATTHEW 5:1 – 12

PASTOR CARRIE BAYLIS

BROTHERS AND SISTERS in Christ grace, peace, and mercy to you from Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

The Beatitudes give us a lot of room to welcome God into the different spaces of our life. I don't think we always hear them that way. We tend to think that what Jesus describes as a blessing is far from it. And I'm not here to disagree; it's tough to swallow that all of these blessings often are in the midst of struggles, of parts and pieces of life and discipleship that we did not anticipate. But just as in the texts we've had the last few weeks, we're learning that the ministry of Jesus always comes with the promise and promises of God with us and God for us.

Suppose you could combine the personality traits of the Beatitudes and put them all into one person. What does that even look like? Consistently kind and yet also a bit shy, shunning the limelight. Always downplaying actions by claiming they were never enough to achieve what one really wants, and so we might conclude this person has a bad self-image. This would be a person quick to lend a hand to anyone in need but also quick to get a bit depressed every time she hears a news story about an oil spill off the Louisiana coast or after seeing pictures of children dying in the terrors of war. This would be a person as often as not who looked distressed and seemed often to be on the verge of tears; someone who could never shrug off anything. This would be a person who was transparently religious, someone whose heart seemed so centered on God and that most everything they did would come off looking like an offering. This would be a person who would seem perpetually

restless and dissatisfied with lots of life's facets, big things and little things. It would be someone who consistently gave money to environmental groups, who volunteered to clean up highways, who pitched in on programs to aid the homeless, who talked at dinner parties about the need to do something to help those who live in poverty or who are gripped by addictions to opioids or pornography.

Mr. or Miss Beatitude might not always be a barrel of laughs. As often as not they would have a serious look of concern on their face or a tear of sympathy in the eye, and would rather talk about substantive issues of global climate change or the war on poverty than engage in typical cocktail party drivel and niceties. They could even be busy enough with helping the disenfranchised that some would sneer at the idea of one who appeared to be "out to save the world."

Mr. Beatitude or Miss Beatitude might even be seen as a troublemaker and a nuisance, what with all the restless talk about issues, causes, and politics, not to mention the fact that there seemed to be no satisfying this person – always hungering and thirsting for something better for others. And so, it's quite possible that among some people anyway, Mr. or Miss Beatitude would be ridiculed. The life of Mr. or Miss Beatitude will be a busy and restless not because he or she is trying to get to heaven but because folks like this have seen the kingdom in Jesus and they're not going to settle for less ever again.

As such, there is a curious paradox running through the beatitudes. On the one hand it is clear that graced followers of Jesus don't really "fit" in this world. If, as Jesus predicts, we get ridiculed and persecuted, part of the reason will be because we're

not giving in to the world's agenda. We're going to challenge a lot of conventional wisdom and shake up the powers that be. On the other hand, though, the beatitudes do not call us to be world-shunning folks. We are not to pretend that society or culture don't matter, that politics is beneath our notice, that the environment can slide into a hell of pollution because this world isn't our home anyway seeing as we're headed for heaven. Instead, the beatitudes make clear that we are to hunger and thirst for God's righteousness all the time.

The sermon's opening section sets out nine beatitudes and as both the preacher and you the listener we are with faced a decision – whether to read the beatitudes as character ethics setting out qualities of individual piety (be humble), to be read in terms of human emotions ("happy are..."), or to read them as ways in which God acts in this world to favor not the privileged powerful but the oppressed poor, deprived of but struggling for justice.

The beatitudes employ plural or what I like to think of as communal language, not singular, individualistic language. The context of verses we've heard the last few weeks indicates Jesus' concern with and participation in society. And the content of the beatitudes concerns societal visions, structures, and practices, too.

These first four beatitudes declare divine favor on situations and practices of exploitation. They promise divine reversals in both the present and the future. The next five beatitudes (Matthew 5:7–12) name human actions that express God's transforming and challenging work for a just world. They identify distinctive practices—doing mercy, being pure in heart, making peace, being persecuted and reviled—that further God's justice. These actions mark the identity of the community of Jesus' followers that variously co-opts, challenges, and redefines dominant cultural commitments.

Do you know what my favorite thing about the beatitudes is? That they make space for us to live into God's promises. It's a reminder that we are not in this alone to build community, to support all of God's people, to love one another, to provide for the needs

of others and what God has first provided for us. The beatitudes are not just moral guidelines or ethics for us to live by and standards to hold others to, but they are God's promises for us to bring His kingdom into the world today through the teachings of Jesus Christ and by the grace we have already received in his death and resurrection.

I want to share with you finally, the message version of this text. I thought it was easier to find God's promises or the places to make space for God to enter into when I looked at the text in a different format. I invite you to listen and ponder. I'll give some space between each verse to think about how we find God's promises in our own lives as we go out to live those promises for the sake of the world.

5 1-2 When Jesus saw his ministry drawing huge crowds, he climbed a hillside. Those who were apprenticed to him, the committed, climbed with him. Arriving at a quiet place, he sat down and taught his climbing companions. This is what he said:

3 "You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule.

4 "You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.

5 "You're blessed when you're content with just who you are – no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought.

6 "You're blessed when you've worked up a good appetite for God. He's food and drink in the best meal you'll ever eat.

7 "You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being 'care-full,' you find yourselves cared for.

8 "You're blessed when you get your inside world – your mind and heart – put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.

9 "You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of competing or fighting. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family.

10 "You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom.

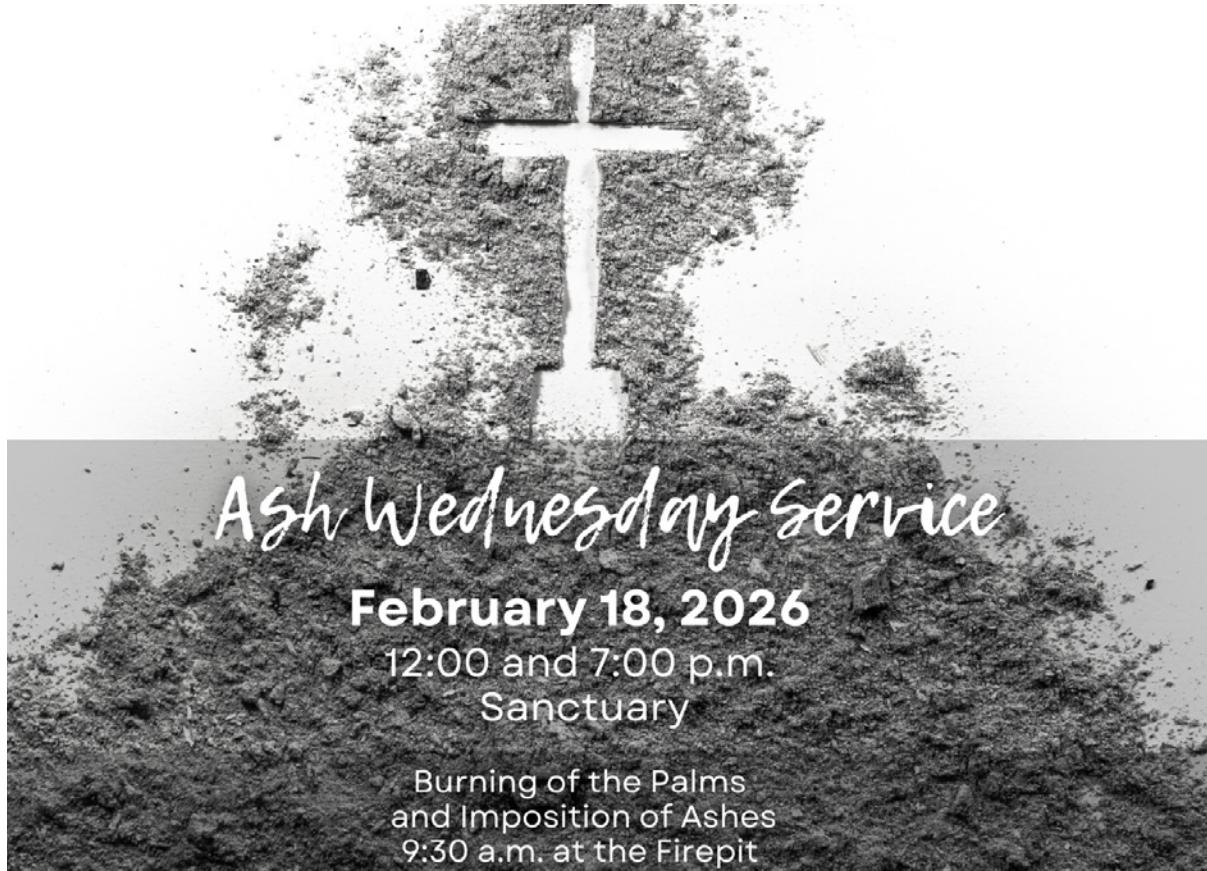
11-12 “Not only that – count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens – give a cheer, even! – for though they don’t like it, I do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble.

Where are you giving and receiving God’s promises today; where will you bless and be blessed? Amen.

SEASON TWO

Generation to Revelation

First Lutheran Church Podcast



ARE YOU AVAILABLE AND ABLE TO HELP AROUND THE FLC CHURCH CAMPUS?

During heavy times of events or winter weather, our sextons and administrative staff can use a little help. We are looking for energetic individuals to help with snow removal and/or set-up and tear-down of tables and chairs for events. Sometimes we need a little extra help with churchwide mailings. We are also looking for people willing to serve as a photographer for major church events (your camera or borrow ours). Indicate where you are willing and able to help here: <https://bit.ly/48pizFo>

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

At First Lutheran you can become a member by attending the new member orientation class(es) of your choice and making the affirmation of baptism promises to the congregation. The next classes will be held in February 2026. The promises will be made on Sunday, February 22.

February 8, 2026 – Introduction to First Lutheran
Meet the staff of First Lutheran Church and get to know others looking into church membership. Noon in the Fireside Room.

February 15, 2026 – Lutheranism 101 – Pastor Travis will review what we “as Lutherans” believe and the promises you will make during the service of inclusion. This is a great time to ask questions. Noon in the Fireside Room.

Lunch will be served at both classes.

Register here: <https://bit.ly/3s2W5qN>

ALTAR FLOWERS

Altar flowers designated in memory or in honor of a loved one are now \$100.

Order flowers here: <https://bit.ly/4nKyPYq>

YOU'RE INVITED TO A WEDDING!

First Lutheran members Gary Olson and Gwynethe Miller are getting married in the Sanctuary at 2 p.m. on Friday, February 6. They have not sent out invitations but would welcome friends who would like to attend. There will be a reception in the Peel House following the ceremony.



WHICH WINNIE-THE-POOH CHARACTER DO YOU MOST RELATE TO?

There are a minimum of 61 volunteers serving in a variety of areas every Sunday morning at First Lutheran Church. Over the last 26 weeks, we've averaged 441 people attending our Sunday worship services. That means 13.8% of those in attendance are serving in some capacity. If you haven't found the niche where you would be comfortable serving, I encourage you to read about the various gifts of the characters in the beloved children's stories of Winnie-the-Pooh.

Pooh has a massive heart, focused on presence, simplicity, and love. He is best suited to lead a small group where his ability to simply "be" with people comforts the hurting. Piglet has quiet courage and is deeply sensitive to others. He is perfect for visiting the sick or working in children's ministry where his gentle nature makes him approachable. Tigger is energetic, optimistic, and always ready to volunteer. He brings life to the community, making him ideal for serving as a



CHERYL MAHON, MINISTER OF CONGREGATIONAL SERVICE

greeter who welcomes everyone with enthusiasm. Eeyore, while gloomy, is loyal and appreciates small blessings. He is best placed to serve comforting the grieving or visiting our homebound members. Rabbit loves order, planning, and keeping things running smoothly. He is best suited to serve as Sacristy Coordinator, Worship Assistant, or Usher. Owl is perfect for leading a Bible study group. Kanga is warm, motherly, and caring. She would serve best hosting our coffee reception or Welcome Center on Sundays. Christopher Robin is the "beloved disciple" and the leader who brings the group together. He would serve best as an Usher Coordinator or Assistant to the Minister of Congregational Service (me).

This spring on April 19, we will be holding a "Service Fair" in the Gathering Place between worship services. This will give you a chance to chat with some of the most experienced members of our congregation that serve in a multitude of roles both "on stage" and "behind the scenes" each Sunday morning. Find out what they enjoy most about the areas they serve, what they find challenging, and what they've learned along the way. Mark your calendar!

Save the Date For ...

GALLERY OF LIVING ART 2026



MARCH 13, FRIDAY
Gallery of Living Art • 7:30 p.m.

MARCH 14, SATURDAY
Jr. Gallery of Living Art • 11 a.m.
Gallery of Living Art • 2 and 5 p.m.

MARCH 15, SUNDAY
Gallery of Living Art • 3 p.m.

Free admission | Free childcare in our professionally staffed nursery | Doors open one hour prior to each presentation

AGING TOGETHER

FIRST FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH
PEEL HOUSE | 10 - 11 A.M.

The next meeting will be **Friday, February 6**.
Call Maureen Tuttle **719.640.1985** or Anne Rivers
719.351.4268 for more information, or if you'd like
a ride to the meeting. This is a casual gathering to
share our thoughts and experiences during our
journey through the years.

WAYFARERS

THURSDAY | FEBRUARY 19 | 11:30 A.M.

Meet at **Texas T-Bones/ Famous Dave's**, 5245
North Academy Blvd. (across from Target)
Contact Leta Gatchell if you plan to attend:
719.322.0505 or **73gatch@gmail.com**



WEDNESDAY NIGHT
LIGHT

ROLLING DINNER

Gathering Place 5:15 – 6:15 p.m.

WORSHIP

Worship starts at 6:30 p.m.
Followed by Small Groups
(*Students through Adults*)

Pre-Confirmation for grades 6–7

Confirmation Small Group for grades 8–9

High School Small Group for grades 10–12

Adults Small Group **led by Pastor Carrie Baylis**

Save the Date...

Inspire Faith
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN DINNER

February 26th at 6 p.m.

World War II Aviation Museum



SHROVE TUESDAY

YOUTH FUNDRAISER

TRADITIONAL PANCAKE DINNER
SUPPORTS THE YOUTH PROGRAMS
AT FIRST

TUESDAY **17** 5:30 P.M.

FEBRUARY

IN THE PEEL HOUSE

THE EMMAUS WAY

“...Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him.”

—John 12:2b

Some of what was discussed at our Meaning of Life retreat included how to find meaning in who you are, where you are. Of course, we always want to be aware of invitations God is speaking to us about areas in which to pursue growth and change, and we want to faithfully move deeper in those directions when we know of them. But something I think is important to know is that, in Christ, God is already imbuing your life with rich meaning, right where you are.

Some of you may already know that I have a soft spot in my heart for Martha. In certain Christian circles, Luke 10:38-42 has been used to give her a bad rap, holding her up as an example of who not to be. I

know this has harmed some people—especially women in certain contexts—who have been told all their lives that their God-given duty is to serve everyone else, but then when Martha and Mary are discussed, Martha is maligned for putting service above devotion. This leaves them feeling that their service is disappointing to God, and that they are

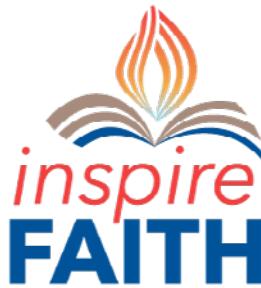
supposed to be someone other than who they are. So, what does Martha have to do with meaning in our lives? I’m glad you asked.

In John 12, we find Jesus as the guest of honor at a dinner party. And we read these words: “Martha served.” Some have chuckled that it’s clear that Martha hadn’t learned her lesson, but I disagree. This situation does not find her running from the kitchen to insist anyone help her, and I think the next part of the sentence shows why, “Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him.” The key to the whole story is what happened in between Luke 10 and John 12: Jesus had called forth life from death. Do you see it? Martha was still the same Martha, still doing the same Martha things according to her gifting, but she was no longer doing them in a Martha way – she was doing them in light of the Way, with the Way, changed by the One who is the resurrection and the life.

This is what gives meaning to everything we are and everything we do—it is the meaning that hovers all around and through us, at all times. The resurrected Christ dwells in our hearts through faith, so when we pay attention and choose to live from that source, how can our lives have anything but meaning? Friends, let’s commune (Lazarus) and serve (Martha) and worship extravagantly (Mary), with meaning, together.



LORI DUNCAN, MINISTER OF SPIRITUAL CARE



INSPIRE FAITH CAPITAL CAMPAIGN BEGINS!

On Sunday we launched the Inspire Faith capital campaign with a reflection from Dave Rose, a long-time member of First Lutheran. We also handed out the *Stories of Generosity 2026 Devotional* written by members of the congregation reflecting on how their faith and generosity has been inspired.

Our logo for Inspire Faith is grounded in the words of Matthew 5:14-16, which remind us, “You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” At its foundation lies an open book—the Word of God—from which light and life emerge. Rising from its center, a flame symbolizes the presence of the Holy Spirit, calling believers to live and act with faith that radiates outward into the world.

The design is intentionally asymmetrical. The right-hand page leans gently downward, a quiet reminder that God reaches down to us through His Son, Jesus Christ, who sits at His right hand. The left side lifts upward in response, representing humanity’s movement toward God in love, trust, and service.

Color reinforces this sacred dialogue.

- Red evokes the fire of Pentecost – the Spirit’s energy and renewal.
- Taupe grounds the composition in the humility and stability of the Word.
- Blue anchors the design in steadfast faith and divine constancy.

Together, these elements express the heart of the campaign’s message: to be people who are grounded in Scripture, ignited by the Spirit, and shining with the light of Christ—illuminating others and inspiring faith.

We embark on this journey of faith and generosity as we aim to raise funds to expand, remodel and enhance the church building to serve as a stronger tool for ministry in the decades to come. Please commit to reading the generosity devotion book daily, and praying our campaign prayer. “Heavenly Father, you alone are worthy of our worship and love. Inspire our faith as we share your love with the world and welcome more of your children into this community of faith. As you have given us so much, make us generous to bless your church and strengthen our witness so that all may know the joy of salvation. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen”

Next week we will hand deliver material for the campaign to each member with an invitation to the all congregational dinner on Thursday, February 26.

IMAGINE: JESUS INSPIRES OUR FAITH

WEDNESDAYS | 11:30 A.M.

FEBRUARY 25 – APRIL 1

“When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd...” – Mark 5:27a

Join us on six Wednesdays during Lent for a 30–45-minute guided Scripture meditation, where we will craft a quiet place to hear about Jesus and have our faith inspired to draw near to him. If you’ve never experienced entering into the Bible to encounter Jesus through guided meditation, come and touch the hem of his cloak.

Feb. 25	The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9)
March 4 (Mark 5:24-34)	The Woman Who Was Healed
March 11	Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52)
March 18	The Restored Man (Mark 5:1-20)
March 25 7:36-50)	“Do you see this woman?” (Luke
April 1	Jesus Washes Our Feet (John 13:1-17)

AED/CPR TRAINING

TUESDAY | FEBRUARY 17 | 6:30 P.M.

PEEL HOUSE | ROOM 201

Colorado Springs Firefighter and Paramedic, Clark Gaddie, is not only extremely knowledgeable, but has the ability to make one feel comfortable using the AED equipment and performing basic CPR. We all need to know what to do in the case of an emergency while we are waiting 5-10 minutes for help to arrive after dialing 911. All are welcome!

COME FOR THE YOUTH SHROVE PANCAKE
DINNER/FUNDRAISER AT 5 P.M. AND STAY FOR
TRAINING!

Register here: <https://bit.ly/4sNWKJP>

DINING OUT WITH FIRST LUTHERAN

SELECT TUESDAYS | 5:30 P.M.

VARIOUS RESTAURANTS

All are welcome to join this group, which meets at local restaurants on two Tuesdays of each month to enjoy various cuisines and fellowship. Reservations will be made two weeks in advance, so be sure to sign up early. To register, visit <https://bit.ly/4iRh4ff>.

UPCOMING SCHEDULE

February 24	Urban Tandoor 8125 North Academy Blvd
March 10	La Bella Vita 4475 Northpark Dr
March 24	Famous Daves/Texas Roadhouse 5245 North Academy Blvd
April 14	Bourbon Brothers 13021 Bass Pro Drive

EASTER HOPE EVENT

We have confirmed that we will be bringing Easter worship to Four Mile Correctional Facility on Thursday evening March 26, 2026. This facility will give us more space to host worship for more offenders than Arrowhead did at Christmas. Volunteers can choose to prepare and/or serve the snack, visit with the offenders, act in an Easter skit, pray with the offenders, etc.

Register here: <https://bit.ly/4qMpEZz>

In the Life of the Church ...

Birthdays

February 9 Trinity Isidore
Jake Marcotte
Chase McCall

February 10 Ashley Harmon
Ann Harris

February 12 Austin Cerniglia
Vickie Kennedy
Bob Tim
Jill Yellico

February 13 Bill Lipscomb
Edith Rayer
Sarrah Yoder

February 14 Alex Brtek
Ardy Sawaya

February 15 Ralph Peterson

Anniversaries

February 12 Noemie and Greg Anderson 42 years

February 14 Skee and Ginger Hipszky 34 years
Connie and Allen Mericle 34 years
Diane and Shane Millburn 41 years

February 15 Betty and Bill Slaughter 57 years



Prayer Requests

Lannette Abbey
Fred Bachmeier
Janice Baldwin
Elmer Bauman
Tana Beall
Bob Bent
Joan Boehm
Bill & Barbara Brown
Karl & Pam Cartwright
Tanya Charbonneau
John & Debbie Chlebus
Nell Clowder
Linda Collier
Rinda Dunson
Alan Flinn
Edna Fross
Kelly Gemplet
Corinne Gibson
Larry Gilliam
Nola Gosch
Deb Grove
Hannah
Private Steven Harris
Ginger Hipszky
Jake Hodnett
Randy Hollar
Bill & Doreen Hulk
Irene
Alan Jacobsen
Matthew James
Josh Jones
Shirley Jones
Ann Junk
Jonas Kagarise
Tami Kephart
Nina & George Komatz
Kyong Kelley
Gaye Lynn Kielcheski
Cindy Koger
Jesse Lawrence & Family
Timothy Lillich

Dayne Lindquist
Patricia Lopez
Susan Lundmark
Michael & Karen Matkin
Jim Matthews
Nick McKibben & Family
Hugh McNeely
Brandon Miller & Family
Gwyn Miller
Marilyn Miller
Larry Moe and Family
Paul Moe
Wilma Nicolaisen
Sam Norton
Owen & Family
Patsy Pedersen
Jack & Judy Peterson
Ralph Peterson
Darlene Radke
Jeff Rapp
Karen Simon
Catherine Spencer
Matthew Stark
Gwen Stein
Becky Sternal
Barbara Swan
Michael Taylor
Aaron & Cindi Thorson
Bob VanDuyn
Karen Henderson-VanDuyn
Jay Voth
Sandy Weber
Christine Welch
Libby Wilson
Greg & Carolyn Young

Please keep these members – and family and friends – of First Lutheran in your prayers this week. If you are requesting to have a name added to the prayer list, please consult with that person prior to making your request. Prayer requests may be submitted by using a Connection Card (in church) or by emailing teri@flccs.net.

In Remembrance of Lucille Moe

whose memorial service will be February 5, at 1 p.m. in our Sanctuary with a reception to follow in the Peel House..

