

# The Light

## Prayer Service for the Healing of the Nations

Tuesday, March 10  
12 Noon  
*\* Updated Day \**

This is a special service of prayer for peoples, lands, and nations, based on Isaiah 65 and Revelation 21. We will gather around a large map of the world with opportunity to place a votive candle on the map as a way of bringing the light of Christ and the promise of peace and healing to the world.

This will be a reflective prayer service, with prayers and songs, and time for personal prayer. The scriptures offer a vision of God's mercy recreating the world in peace and well-being for all. We gather in the light of God's promise and for the sake of praying for all in need.

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## Discover More During Holy Week Worship & Events

### In Person or Online

We desire to make our Holy Week Worship available for anyone to deepen their walk with Christ, even if you can't be with us in person. To accommodate this, each day of Holy Week will have at least one service streamed live online at [firstlutherancr.org/live](http://firstlutherancr.org/live) or [youtube.com/firstlutherancr](http://youtube.com/firstlutherancr).

### Palm Sunday, March 29

Palm Sunday worship takes place at our regular worship times. Palm Sunday is like a "Little Holy Week" in that we start the worship service with the Triumphant Entry of Jesus found in Matthew 21, and journey through holy week with the texts of Matthew chapters 26 & 27. If you can't make it to any of the other Holy Week worship experiences, you should definitely make Palm Sunday a priority.

**KIDS - Join the Procession!** Kids are invited gather at the back of the worship space and join in the procession of Palms - waving palm branches at the beginning of each worship service.

### NEW: Echo Holy Week Wednesday, April 1

For the first time this year we will hold an Echo Worship on Wednesday of Holy Week. Worship will be at 6:30 p.m. with dinner offered before like usual Wednesdays. This Echo-style service will have interactive prayer stations and a shared reflection between Michael Beckmann and Pastor Katie about Jesus' entry to Jerusalem, the grace of Holy Communion, the betrayal of Good Friday, and the redeeming promise of Easter Morning. We're excited to share this new youth-led, adult-supported Holy Week worship experience!



**First Lutheran**  
discover more : together

# Prayer around the Cross

During the weeks of Lent, we have placed a cross in the sanctuary with votive candles around the cross. During Wednesday worship, at noon and at ECHO worship, you are invited to light a candle as a prayer to God.

There will be a time of healing and prayer and noon worship. At ECHO, at the time of communion, worshippers can go to the cross and light a candle.

We gather around the cross to hear the promises of God and then to offer the names or concerns needing healing and hope and to offer our very presence as a living prayer on behalf of those from whom we pray.



Following this weekend, a prayer station will be in the corner of the worship space for the remainder of Lent.

## Holy Week, Continued

### Maundy Thursday, April 2

We will hold worship at two service times, 12 noon and 6:30 p.m. Commemorating the Last Supper, worship will include communion. 6:30 p.m. streaming live online. Pastor Craig Brown will be preaching. Following the noon worship service, attendees are invited to the lower level fellowship hall (rm. 104) where we will continue our lunch tradition!

**Lunch is Served!** The staff of First Lutheran serves lunch following the 12 noon worship. You don't need to bring salads or desserts, just bring a friend! **Please RSVP** to the church office so we have an idea of how many people to expect!



### Good Friday, April 3

Life and death stand side by side as we enter into Good Friday. Our Good Friday Traditional Service is moving up a bit to 7:30 p.m. The focus of this service of word is on Christ, the Lamb of God. The Adult Choir will be singing "Behold the Lamb of God" from Handel's *Messiah*, and the congregational hymns also speak to "The Lamb of God." This service will include music, spoken narration, and veneration of the cross at the end of this service. This service will also be streaming live online. Please join us for this moving service of walking through the last days of Jesus's life.



### Easter Vigil, Saturday, April 4

Starting outdoors at 5 p.m., this extended-length vigil service is when we mark the turn from the darkness of the crucifixion to the light of the resurrection. It is a service of lessons presenting the salvation story with Holy Communion. This unique service will also be streamed live online. Pastor Steve Knudson will be preaching.



### Easter Sunday, April 5

#### Worship Times at 8, 9:30 & 11:15 a.m.

On Easter Sunday, the **8 a.m.** Traditional Worship will feature our Youth choir and Youth Handbells and Brass Ensemble. The **9:30 a.m.** Traditional Worship will have the Adult Choir, Resonaré Ringers and Brass. Our **11:15 a.m.** Celebration Service will be led by our Celebration Band. Rev. Dr. Steve Knudson will be preaching. The 9:30 & 11:15 services will be live online. There is no Sunday Morning Learning or childcare on Easter Sunday, though the little nursery is open for family use.

The office will be closed on Easter Monday, April 6. If you order flowers from the Easter Garden, you may pick them up Tuesday or after (Order form on the back!).

# Conversations with Jesus at Easter

*An invitation from Pastor Steve*

Our conversations with Jesus reach a dramatic climax during Holy week, Palm Sunday to Easter, March 29 - April 5. The conversation begins with the shouts of hosanna as Jesus enters Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The conversation ends with the shouts of crucify on Good Friday.

In a red-letter Bible, where the words of Jesus are in red, Jesus does a lot of speaking on Monday and Tuesday, see Matthew 25. There is *a lot* of red. As we get closer to the cross, Jesus says less and less, and everyone else says more and more. The pages are only black ink.

On Good Friday, God speaks, not with words, but with action. God takes on the sin of the world, all the bad speech, all the bad action, and in silence Jesus dies on the cross. That would seem to be the end of the conversation with God. Jesus is dead. For the disciples, it was as if God was dead. No more hope. No more promise. No more life. Done. Finished. Silence.

How can the conversation resume? How can hope be born again? How can faith begin? The Gospel of John records the experience of those first disciples, and how the risen Jesus comes to them and speaks that word they need to hear so that the conversation of faith can begin again. At the tomb, Jesus says but one word—not a proof of resurrection, not an argument for God—Jesus says, “Mary.” He calls here by name. And in that moment, Mary is opened to God.

And then in the upper room, where the disciples are hiding for fear, silenced by the fear and uncertainty, Jesus comes and speaks first. Jesus begins—not with a word of judgment, not with a word of proof—Jesus says, “Peace be with you.” A Gospel word. A forgiveness word. A word of grace. And in that moment, the disciples are opened to God.

I invite you to participate in at least one extra worship service during Holy Week. Experience the silence of Jesus, as a way to be prepared to hear the voice of Jesus anew on Easter morning. During Holy Week, we follow Jesus through his last hours leading up to his death. On Easter, Jesus meets us again in the power of the resurrection, and in that worship, we are opened to God. The conversation begins anew.



Our Worship & Study Series during Lent, *Conversations with Jesus*, is bringing us closer to Christ by studying the conversations he had with people throughout the Gospels.

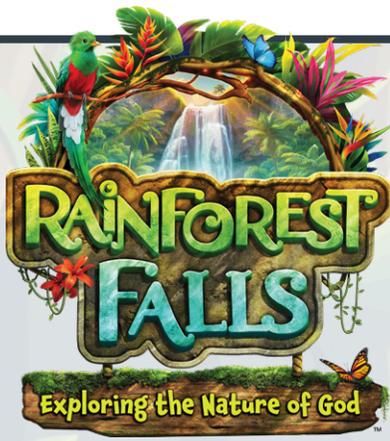
Study Guides that follow our Lenten scriptures and worship services are available in print at the church, or can be found on our website, [firstlutherancr.org/lent](http://firstlutherancr.org/lent).

## Upcoming Monthly Luncheons

Join us for excellent meals and presentations at the First Lutheran Monthly Luncheons! First up on Thursday, March 12 we will welcome Master Gardener Sylvia Street who will answer questions talk to us about Spring planting preparation. Then, just after Easter on Thursday, April 9 we will hear from Kathy Good, Director of the Chris and Suzy DeWolf Innovation Center for Aging and Dementia. Cost for the lunch is just \$5 which you can pay at-the-door or when you RSVP on-line at [firstlutherancr.org/lunch](http://firstlutherancr.org/lunch). You may also RSVP at the church or by calling the office.



*Good food, good friends, and insightful presentations await at each monthly luncheon!*



## 2026 VBS-Daycamp is July 13 – 16, 2026!

Prepare for Adventure this summer as we step through the mist into Rainforest Falls, overflowing with wild waterfalls, towering trees, and colorful creatures! Beneath a canopy of chattering birds and howling monkeys, kids plunge into a lifelong adventure of discovering the nature of God. They'll explore what it means to be rooted in relationship with God, their creator, a safe place in life's storms.



### VBS is NOT just for kids!

**Youth Helpers** guide younger kids through the week with their youthful energy and peer support and positive reinforcement while developing their own leadership skills.



**Adults** are *always* welcome from set-up through tear-down, helping the week progress smoothly and safely for everyone. Whether you can help with decor, music, crafts, snacks or other ways - you too can feel like a kid again and enjoy the summer fun.

### Camper & Volunteer Registration is now OPEN!

Scan the QR code, or visit [firstlutheranqr.org/VBS](http://firstlutheranqr.org/VBS)



## Make a Difference for CFM

You can make a big difference in the welcoming environment and fun-filled atmosphere of The Discovery Zone 4 kdiz and our Rainforest Falls VBS/Daycamp.

### Finishing Renewal

With your help we are outfitting our renewed classrooms with fun furniture and updated supplies for kids who love an exciting experience and for children who thrive best in quieter, less-stimulating environments. Check out our current wants and needs at [firstlutheranqr.org/wishlist](http://firstlutheranqr.org/wishlist).



### Outfitting a Safari

Launching a Rainforest Safari takes a lot of equipment and supplies for an engaging and successful adventure! If you can contribute supplies for our summer VBS/daycamp, use this QR code, or visit [firstlutheranqr.org/VBS](http://firstlutheranqr.org/VBS).



## Ride Bike & Feed the Hungry

We are bringing back the best day of Spring with the CROP family bike ride. On Sunday, April 26 (May 17 rain date) we will gather at Hoover Park on Cedar Rapids' south side, and bike as a big group together to Dan & Debbie's Creamery in Ely.

The cost is \$20 and 100% of the proceeds go directly as a contribution to the Annual Church World Service CROP hunger walk that supports local and international hunger relief efforts. Register at [firstlutheranqr.org/CROP](http://firstlutheranqr.org/CROP)



At First Lutheran Church, Youth & Family Ministry is about making room for real life and real faith to meet. We create spaces where young people—and the people who love them—can ask honest questions, build lasting friendships, and notice how God is already moving in their everyday stories. From shared meals and vibrant worship to car rides, practices, and dinner table conversations, we believe faith grows best in community. Our heart is to partner with families—cultivating curiosity, deep belonging, and the unshakable truth that every young person is deeply loved by God and truly matters here.

## Youth-Led **Echo Worship** Adult-Supported

ECHO is youth-led and adult-supported — grounded, welcoming, and authentic. Each week we gather around Word and Sacrament, sharing Holy Communion and remembering that God's grace is for everyone. More than a service, ECHO is a place to connect, grow, and be part of a caring community—open to all ages, whether or not you have youth in the program. Echo worship will meet April 8, 15, and 22; but will not take place on April 29 due to the Meal Packing Event (see pg. 6!).

### *Echo Easter - April 8*

The Easter story is something we celebrate every year, but when was the last time you *really* thought about what it means for *you today*? Before Easter morning, there was darkness, grief, and emptiness as Jesus' followers watched him die. But then, Jesus came back to life, and everything changed! This week, we'll discover the resurrection didn't end on Easter Sunday—Jesus is still bringing us more life every day.

### *April 15 & 22 - Another Look*

Have you ever had a conversation that opened your eyes to something you'd never thought about before? Or maybe someone asked you a single question that completely shifted your perspective. Words have the power to change everything, and that's never been more true than with Jesus. He asked questions that changed people's perspectives and caused them to take another look at themselves, their lives, and what they believed about God. In this 2-week series from the book of Luke, we'll take a look at some big questions Jesus asked.

## High School Ministry

**HSM is back on Sunday nights,  
March 8 & 29, 6 - 7:30 p.m.**

Sunday nights are a relaxed, welcoming space for high school youth to reconnect, build friendships, and engage in thoughtful conversation about faith and everyday life. Whether students have been involved before or are curious about checking it out, they are always welcome. Stay tuned to emails and our social media for updates on meeting locations! (March 29 will be a #wheresmichael gathering, location to be determined)

### **DON'T FORGET!**

High school students are also invited to join a Wednesday night discussion group following ECHO Worship. After worship, we'll gather for meaningful conversation and reflection, creating space to ask questions, share perspectives, and grow together. Sunday nights and Wednesday discussions each offer a unique way to stay connected and engaged.

## Parents & Caregivers: You're Invited!

As you invest in the faith of your kids and youth, don't forget your own!

We invite you to engage with the Spiritual Transformation Ministries at First Lutheran. Visit the Spiritual Transformation section on page 8 to learn more and take your next step. There's space for you.

# Summer Youth Trip 2026 Boundary Waters Canoe Area

Imagine growing in faith together while paddling the pristine lakes along the Canadian border in the Boundary Waters. Hear the cry of loons echo across the water, breathe in the crisp northern air, gather around the dancing glow of a campfire, and feel the good kind of tired that comes after a full day of paddling. This is a faith-forming adventure — one that builds



community, deepens trust, and creates memories that last a lifetime. This summer, youth are invited to take part in a Boundary Waters canoe trip through Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry, combining outdoor adventure with meaningful faith practices and shared experiences in God's creation.

**Who:** Youth who have completed Grades 5–12

**When:** July 26–31

**Where:** Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry –  
Boundary Waters Canoe Area

**Cost:** \$50 registration fee (total cost \$700-\$800 est.)

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE: MARCH 29**

**Space is limited** to 15 youth/adults; we will have the option for 2 separate trips with more and less canoeing. Please mark your preference with the sign-up/registration.

## Meal Packing 2026!

**Drum roll please – First Lutheran's annual Meals from the Heartland Packing Event is April 29, 2026**

### What is Meal Packing?

Using supplies from Meals from the Heartland, a non-profit organization based in Iowa, we host a date and fill the place with volunteers who come for one hour shifts to serve at production tables mixing ingredients and sealing bags that each provide a meal for four people. The meals then are shipped to crisis areas overseas, or sent to food banks and distribution centers domestically.



In the last two years we have packed over 92,000 meals! Everyone has a role to play in the success of this mission project:



### Event Support

Outside of packaging food, we will need volunteers to help set up in the morning, help with volunteer check-in, and other logistical tasks. For these specific roles, please contact Pastor Katie directly at [Katiell@firstlutheranncr.org](mailto:Katiell@firstlutheranncr.org).

### Be a Team Captain

Recruit a team of friends, neighbors, or coworkers to come and participate in an hour of packing. It is also helpful to encourage your team members to support the event with donations as they are able to provide.

### Help as an Individual

Individuals can sign up for a time slot that fits your schedule to come assemble meals. Event Coordinators will assign you to a table with others to create a full team.

### Can't be here on April 30?

Not only do we volunteer our time to pack food, we pay for the ingredients that go into each meal. You can make a monetary contribution toward the goal.

*Sign up or donate at [firstlutheranncr.org/meals](http://firstlutheranncr.org/meals)*



Come together with Christian women from across the area for a fabulous night of presence and energy as we celebrate being "beautifully and wonderfully made" by our Creator.

Save the date for Friday, April 10, 2026. Starting at 6 p.m. we will enjoy food, fellowship, movement,

centering, and worship together throughout a purposeful and meaningful evening. Guest presenters will include local speaker Tracy Berta, worship leader Laura Secrist, and Pastor Katie Lowe Lancaster.

This is a great night to invite to invite other Christian friends from around town - because this is not just a night for our congregation. The cost of the evening is a suggested donation of \$30 for food, supplies, and a blessing gift for a local women's shelter. Register today at [firstlutheranncr.org/women](http://firstlutheranncr.org/women)



**Bonus for families!** Our Guy Squad is also hosting a Dad & Me Dinner & Karaoke event the same evening (see below), so the whole family can come have a great evening of food & fun at First Lutheran.

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## Dad & Me Dinner & Karaoke

Kids, put on your fancy dinner clothes and grab your Dad because it's time to sing! Join us 5:30-7:30 p.m. Friday, April 10 for a night you'll always remember as our professional DJ helps you and your Dad sing along to all your favorite hits. Uncles, Grandpas, and fun neighbors welcome! Cost is \$30 and includes a plated meal, sparkling grape juice, music, and fun. Register today at [firstlutheranncr.org/dad](http://firstlutheranncr.org/dad)



## Ladies' Night Out

Ladies Night Out is a monthly opportunity just to have some fun, enjoying the warmth and support of Christian friends and community. On Monday, March 30, 2026 we will meet at 5:30 PM at the Tuscany Grill, 475 Northland Avenue NE in Cedar Rapids. Kris Umbach is this month's hostess, her phone number is (630) 400-9637. If you plan to come, please call her to make a reservation, or put your name, phone number and email address on the sign-up sheet in the narthex. We're looking forward to seeing you there!

## Guy Squad: Pickleball

Just for the guys - grab your Pickleball paddle or borrow one of ours for a fun night of the popular sport that provides great exercise for people of all skill level and abilities. We'll gather at 7-9 p.m. Thurs. March 26 at Smithfield Courts in SW Cedar Rapids. Invite a friend to come with you. Cost is \$10.

Sign up & pay online at [firstlutheranncr.org/men](http://firstlutheranncr.org/men)

## Men's Golf League

2026 League play begins Monday, May 4 with reserved tee times at Gardner Golf Course on Monday afternoons thru the end of September. We usually gather about 20 guys for the season. Al Fletcher hasn't even buffed his drivers yet, but we still need to reserve tee times soon! If you are interested in nine holes of not-too-competitive golf (and a little fellowship), contact Al Fletcher for more information: [afletcher.tfc@gmail.com](mailto:afletcher.tfc@gmail.com), 319-365-9844 (home) or 319-210-5811 (cell).

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# Spiritual Transformation: Ongoing Opportunities to Grow

Spiritual transformation begins with something simple but profound: slowing down long enough to notice where God is already at work—within us, around us, and in the ordinary rhythms of daily life. It's not about striving or fixing. It's about paying attention with honesty, curiosity, and trust. We're grateful that this ministry continues to grow in meaningful ways

On Wednesday mornings, a group is gathering for a thoughtful book discussion of *A Hidden Wholeness* by Parker Palmer. Together, participants are exploring what it means to live with greater integrity between our inner and outer lives. The conversations have been rich, reflective, and deeply encouraging. Look for a new book discussion coming in April/May!

## Group Reflection or Spiritual Direction (Monthly)

Our Monthly Group Spiritual Direction remains open to everyone. This small, trusted circle creates space for prayerful listening and shared reflection on where God is moving in our lives. There is no pressure to perform or advise—just a gentle rhythm of speaking, listening, and noticing.

Group Spiritual Direction works well if you:

- Enjoy learning from others' experiences
- Appreciate mutual encouragement and community

- Want to see God's movement in a variety of stories
- Group Spiritual Direction meets once a month, the third Thursday of the month at 6 PM. March 19- April 16- May 21

In addition, Individual Spiritual Direction sessions are available by appointment. These one-on-one conversations offer a confidential space to explore questions, transitions, discernment, or simply the desire to deepen your awareness of God's presence. This is ideal if you:

- Want one-on-one guidance
- Are navigating a life transition or season of questions
- Long for a rhythm of reflection and discernment

Whether you feel drawn to group conversation, a book study, or personal spiritual companionship, there is space for you. Spiritual transformation is not about having everything figured out—it's about being willing to show up and notice.

For either type of Spiritual Direction, details can be found in the "Grow" section of our website. Watch there and in other communications for our next registration, or contact Michael Beckmann in the church office if you have any questions.

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## Contemplative Hands

*Called to Creativity*

*Contemplative Hands* is an occasional gatherings for conversation and reflection while we work with our hands stitching, knitting, crocheting, drawing, etc.

Don't have a "hand practice"? Come anyway for the fellowship. Don't have the supplies or know how to knit or crochet? We have some yarn and needles on hand would be happy to share and or teach you! Think this will be a time of silence and solemnity? No way! Laughter and sharing are great prayer practices."

The next *Contemplative Hands* is on Tuesday, March 10 at 1:30 p.m. in room 307. Please plan to join us and bring a project of any kind that you are working on! If you have any questions, feel free to contact Linda Klein at (319) 804-5535 or email [ljlk595@icloud.com](mailto:ljlk595@icloud.com).

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## New Grief Circle

*Support Group for Healing Hearts*

Grief is painful and can be isolating. A grief circle is a safe, confidential and supportive community where you can share with others who are also grieving. First Lutheran's Grief Circle will come together for 8 weeks on Wednesday afternoons March 11 to April 29, 4 - 5:30 pm in room 307.

Through reading, private journaling, and conversation, we explore nine "essential touchstones" that will guide us into finding hope and healing as we journey through our grief. Anyone who is grieving the loss of a loved one or change in life circumstances is welcome to attend.

Feel free to share this opportunity with family and friends. To find out more or to register, contact Visitation Chaplain Sheila Anderson at [Sheilaa@firstlutheran-cr.org](mailto:Sheilaa@firstlutheran-cr.org), or 319-213-6611.



# First Lutheran Musical Arts Series

Great music is in store this spring at First Lutheran! Mark down these special concert events and come join in community to listen and to eat!

## Spring Serenades

Mid-day concerts following Lent worship

Don't miss the last two serenades Wednesdays, at 12:30 p.m.

- o March 11 – Steve Shanley – Jazz Piano
- o March 25 – Hsin-Hin Liu – Piano and Trombone

Celebrate the budding of Spring with our series of mini concerts by the Music Faculty of Coe College. A lite lunch is offered following each concert.

## Mark your Calendars:

MORE Upcoming Concerts at First Lutheran include:

- New Horizons Community Band**, April 25, 2:30 p.m.
- Cedar Rapids Concert Chorale**, May 5, 7:30 p.m.
- Pipes, Pedals, & Pie**, June 9, July 14, Aug. 11, 7 p.m.

For changes or updates watch the Music Arts page at [firstlutheranocr.org/about/music-arts](http://firstlutheranocr.org/about/music-arts)

## FLC Financial Giving Summary

as of February 28, 2026

### 2026 Annual Operating Fund:

Y-T-D Actual Income	235,833
Y-T-D Budgeted Income	236,727
Giving over (under) budget	(894)

Thank you for the good start to our new year. We are only slightly behind budgeted income for the first two months of 2026. All ministries have been funded.

Sign Out! Hymnfest 2026  
**"Gaze in Amazement"**  
 3 pm Hymn Festival  
 with Potluck Dinner following

Sunday, April 19, 2026  
 led by Dr. Jeffrey Blersch  
 Concordia University, Seward, NE

Sing Out! Hymn Festival is a beautiful way to offer our collective praises and prayers to God, and to sing and hear old and new hymns, and inspirational readings and scripture.

This year's spring hymnfest will celebrate God's amazing providence through readings and song. Congregational hymns will be interwoven with special music from First Lutheran's music ensembles as well as a mass-choir from area ELCA congregations.

Following the concert we will gaze in amazement at the plethora of food options with a potluck dinner for everyone! Bring your favorite main dish, side, or dessert and enjoy a big community meal together!

**Share an invitation** online by sharing our Facebook Event at [facebook.com/firstlutheranocr](https://facebook.com/firstlutheranocr), or pick up a Music Arts card from the Engagement Center.

### Renewing for God's Mission Capital Fund:

	3-Year Budget	Project-to-Date Actuals:
Income	3,192,000	2,216,264
Expenditures	3,192,000	2,391,683
Surplus/Deficit	-	(175,419)

Upfront giving towards the RGM pledges continues strong. Nearly all of the Rinderknecht contract has been completed. Our forecast for achieving the 3-year balanced budget remains positive.

The Trust Committee's Legacy Project is underway! As indicated in the annual meeting and other recent communications, First Lutheran Church is seeking to bolster its Trust Fund endowment through "legacy" giving by members of the congregation. Legacy giving, also known as "planned" or "deferred" giving, is a meaningful way to make a lasting impact on the mission and future of the church after the individual's passing. We are very excited about having our Legacy Team members connect and have great conversations with various members! We will keep you updated with progress.

Trust Committee Member, Lois Buntz, will serve as Legacy Project Coordinator and be joined by volunteers:

- Julie and Lou Banker
- Martha and John Bonte
- Anne Jahnke
- Dick Johnson
- Tom Wolle
- Bob Koenig
- Pastor Steve Knudson
- Pastor Craig Brown
- Pastor Katie Lowe Lancaster

This group is meeting with members to explore their interests in the Trust and discuss how their vision for the future of First Lutheran can be realized through legacy giving. If you would like to learn more about creating legacy gifts for the future of the congregation, contact Bob Koenig in the church office to start your conversation.

## Expanding Awareness Online

Thanks to a Google Non-Profit Grant, we are able to create localized, online promotions at no cost to the congregation.

This program helps us promote our concert series, and raise awareness of activities like our Saturday Evening Meals and events the upcoming annual meal packing.

This type of innovative resourcefulness is just one example of ways we can raise awareness of our congregation in the community to help more of our neighbors discover more: together.

## Extending our Reach to the Community

First Lutheran is positioned at a peak moment in the course of our history as a congregation, in our ability to meet the world as the out-reaching hands of Christ, and as a people of faith in trying times. Our congregation has welcomed over 100 new households totaling over 200 new members since 2020. As people have found their way to First Lutheran, they have found a welcoming, caring community, deeply rooted in the heart of Cedar Rapids with a hunger to deepen faith, and Christ-like compassion to serve our neighbors and all of God's Kingdom. Our family of faith is amazing; and some say the best-kept secret in town. But God hasn't placed us at such a time and place as this to keep it a secret; we can't keep hiding our light under a bushel. We want to intentionally open our doors and introduce ourselves to a broader cross-section of the community as never before.

First Lutheran Church is seeking to contract services with a marketing individual or firm to work with us to tell our story to the community and connect with people seeking a place of spiritual meaning and belonging. We are at a strong position as a congregation to create greater clarity, visibility, and consistent outreach to connect to younger adults and families seeking belonging and purpose in the community.

As our marketing partner, this person or firm will collaborate with leadership to craft a clear story for the congregation and help us find opportunities to raise awareness of the congregation in our region. We are seeking a partner with strong storytelling and content development skills and experience with other faith-based or nonprofit groups.

A more thorough description can be found and shared from [firstlutheranncr.org/employment](http://firstlutheranncr.org/employment). Interested parties should submit a statement of interest, relevant portfolio, and references to Senior Pastor Steve Knudson at [stevek@firstlutheranncr.org](mailto:stevek@firstlutheranncr.org).

## Please include in your Prayers...

### 90+ Birthdays in March!

Pat Thompson celebrating 96 years on March 16

Tom Robinson celebrating 98 years on March 22

#### ... and April:

Ann Gesme, celebrating 96 years on April 29.

Rev. Dick Lehmann, celebrating 92 years on April 22.

Joe DiBernardo, celebrating 90 years on April 18.

### 50+ Wedding Anniversaries in March!

Herb & Cindy Andersen celebrate 53 years on March 18

Tom & Deb Schamberger celebrate 54 years on March 30.

#### ... and in early April:

Joe & Melanie DiBernardo celebrate 67 years on April 11.

Darrel & Linda Millard celebrate 62 years on April 4.

### Hospital/Surgical, etc. Prayers for Healing:

Bobby Brewster    Maria Hein    Roxanne Rustand

Mary Kay Grodt

### Our Sympathy to:

Jeri McGillicuddy, family & friends on the death of her mother Merna Schroeder on February 17.

Dalene, Matthew, Michael, Tara, Stella & Mikey Sinnott on the death of Mike Sinnott Sr. on March 1

**Submit Your Prayer Requests** to our First Lutheran Prayer Chain by calling the church office at (319) 365-1494, on our website at [firstlutherancr.org/prayer](http://firstlutherancr.org/prayer), or on the Church App under the Contact button. Consider joining our Prayer chain to receive and pray over the concerns of fellow members each week.

## Faith First Podcast

Listen to our weekly podcast for prayer, praise and a look behind the scenes on your favorite streaming service:

- Spotify
- Apple Podcasts
- Amazon Music
- iHeart

... and always available on our website:  
[firstlutherancr.org/grow/podcast](http://firstlutherancr.org/grow/podcast)



## WORSHIP GUIDE

Piano-led Traditional Worship: 5 p.m. Saturdays

Organ-led Traditional Worship: 9 a.m. Sundays

Band-Led Contemporary Worship: 11 a.m. Sundays

Sundays & Wednesdays - worship LIVE online  
at [firstlutherancr.org/live](http://firstlutherancr.org/live)

Radio worship radio on Sunday mornings at  
8:30 a.m. on KMRY 1450 AM or 93.1 FM, or  
anytime at [firstlutherancr.org/podcast](http://firstlutherancr.org/podcast)

### March 7&8 - The Third Sunday in Lent

**Preaching:** Pr. Craig Brown

**Scripture:** John 4:5-29, 39-42 NRSVue

**Special Music:** (9a) Youth Choir & Bells

### March 14&15 - The Fourth Sunday in Lent

**Preaching:** Pr. Steve Knudson

**Scripture:** Psalm 27; John 9:1-11, 35-41 NRSVue

**Special Music:** (9a) Handbell Ensemble

### March 21&22 - The Fifth Sunday in Lent

**Preaching:** Pr. Katie Lowe Lancaster

**Scripture:** John 11:1-45; Psalm 130 NRSVue

**Special Music:** (9a) Adult Choir  
(11a) Junior Choir

### March 28& 29 - Palm Sunday

**Preaching:** Pr. Craig Brown

**Scripture:** Matthew 21:1-11;

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 NRSVue

**Special Music:** (9a) Junior Choir

### Holy Week 2026

Wednes., April 1 6:30p Echo Holy Week

Maundy Thurs., April 2 - 12 noon worship  
with lunch following; 6:30 p.m.

Good Friday, April 3 - 7:30 p.m. worship

Easter Vigil, April 4 - 5 p.m. worship

Easter Sunday, April 5 - 8 & 9:30 traditional,  
11:15 a.m. Band-led

*See pages 1 & 2 for Holy Week Details.*

The next edition of *The Light* is scheduled  
to publish on April 9, 2026

Change Service Requested

## Easter Garden

Create a dedication honoring loved ones or special events, and beautify our worship space! We rent decorative potted palm plants for Palm Sunday and Holy Week. Donations given for flowering plants are pooled together to purchase a large variety of flowers, which vary in cost. If you will pick up a plant the week after Easter, we ask that you indicate this on the bottom of the form. Your dedications will be included in the Easter worship bulletins.

Visit [firstlutherancr.org/eastergarden](http://firstlutherancr.org/eastergarden) to make your dedication, or return this form with payment before Monday, Mar 30. (Mar. 23 if dedicating Palms)



Donor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Given in:  memory  honor  celebration of:

Dedication: \_\_\_\_\_

Large Palm Rental \_\_\_\_\_ x \$30 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Small Palm Rental \_\_\_\_\_ x \$20 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Large flowers\* \_\_\_\_\_ x \$28 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Medium flowers\* \_\_\_\_\_ x \$16 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Small flowers\* \_\_\_\_\_ x \$12 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total attached: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\* I will pick up flowers after Easter.



**First Lutheran**

discover more : **together**

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text-to-give: text "give" to (319) 895-1494

[firstlutherancr.org](http://firstlutherancr.org) @firstlutherancr

**General Voicemail / After-hours: Extension 100**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Rev. Dr. Steve Knudson</b><br>extension 106                | <b>Senior Pastor</b><br>stevek@firstlutherancr.org                           |
| <b>Rev. Craig Brown</b><br>extension 105                      | <b>Lead Pastor for Outreach</b><br>craigb@firstlutherancr.org                |
| <b>Rev. Katie Lowe Lancaster</b><br>extension 113             | <b>Lead Pastor for Discipleship</b><br>katiell@firstlutherancr.org           |
| <b>Sheila Anderson</b><br>extension 135                       | <b>Visitation Chaplain</b><br>sheilaa@firstlutherancr.org                    |
| <b>Michael Beckmann</b><br>extension 112                      | <b>Dir. of Youth &amp; Family Ministries</b><br>michaelb@firstlutherancr.org |
| <b>Brett Wolgast</b><br>extension 111                         | <b>Cantor</b><br>brettw@firstlutherancr.org                                  |
| <b>Marita Wolgast</b><br>extension 110                        | <b>Dir. of Traditional Worship</b><br>maritaw@firstlutherancr.org            |
| <b>Tanya Rosenkranz Malloy</b><br>extension 132               | <b>Junior &amp; Youth Choir Director</b><br>tanyar@firstlutherancr.org       |
| <b>Joel Reeves</b><br>extension 109                           | <b>Dir. of Contemp. Worship Music</b><br>joelr@firstlutherancr.org           |
| <b>Bob Koenig</b><br>extension 108                            | <b>Director of Support Services</b><br>bobk@firstlutherancr.org              |
| <b>Maddy Newhouse</b><br>extension 103                        | <b>Minsitry Engagement Coordinator</b><br>maddyn@firstlutherancr.org         |
| <b>Megan Roling</b><br>extension 103                          | <b>Office Administrator</b><br>meganr@firstlutherancr.org                    |
| <b>William Mittelsteadt</b><br>extension 115                  | <b>Director of Communications</b><br>willm@firstlutherancr.org               |
| <b>Ruth Ehrhardt</b><br>extension 131                         | <b>Food Service Coordinator</b><br>ruth@firstlutherancr.org                  |
| <b>Rich Hillyer</b><br>extension 116                          | <b>Custodians</b><br>richh@firstlutherancr.org                               |
| <b>Ernie Decious</b>  | ernied@firstlutherancr.org   |
| <b>Todd Cornell</b>   | todd@firstlutherancr.org   |
| <b>Audrey Montgomery Gardes, Avery Karkosh, Kraig Wilford</b> | <b>Worship Production Team</b>   |
| <b>Jenna Ackman</b>   | <b>Childcare Coordinator</b>   |