

First Lutheran Church
1100 East Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802



March — April, 2023

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Duluth, Minnesota

The Mustard Seed



VISION COUNCIL UPDATES



Hi! I'm Amy Merchant. I have been serving on the Vision Council for a little less than a year as the secretary. As a curious individual I tend to ask a lot of questions, many of which don't have an immediate answer.

One of the questions I have been pondering for a while is: How can we extend God's love to folks in the twin ports who have past religious trauma?

While this is a complex issue, and has no easy answer, one of the vision council goals for 2022-2023 has lined up well to start providing an answer to my question.

One of our main goals this year is to "practice hospitality by becoming a Reconciling in Christ Congregation," (RIC)

By becoming an RIC congregation, we are celebrating people for who they truly are. Advocating for folks of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions in the Lutheran church. Additionally, this is important for the children and youth of the congregation.

The Trevor Project estimates that 1.8 million queer youth in the U.S. seriously consider suicide each year. Much of this suffering and shame happens in the context of religious communities. By becoming RIC, we take a stance on LGBTQIA+ issues, and designate ourselves as a type of spiritual refuge.

In a world that tells youth that they need to change themselves to be loved, First Lutheran can open up our doors and celebrate the inquisitive, creative, and beautiful, queer Children of God in our midst.

It should be emphasized that officially becoming RIC is not a shift in our theology. We are simply making public the part of our welcome statement that extends Christ's love to people who identify with a specific sexual identity or orientation. When we affirm our stance, our door opens wider, and we put out a welcome mat to our siblings in Christ who have previously been hurt by the Church.

Legacy Moment



Recap of Will & Estate Planning Workshop Held on January 15, 2023

While we may all agree that having a Will & Estate Plan is essential, many of us postpone creating (or updating) one. On January 15, 2023, congregation members attended the first annual educational workshop, "Will & Estate Planning," between services, which the FLC Foundation sponsored. Board member Paul Kilgore led the event. Along with being a board member, Paul is an attorney with the Fryberger Law Firm.

Participants received a workbook on will and estate planning. This resource contains opportunities to:

Reflect on the experiences that have shaped you and the legacy you wish to leave.

Document important financial and medical information vital for your loved ones to know.

Ensure that your estate is in order, and detail how to distribute your assets and personal effects.

If you could not attend the workshop and would like an electronic copy of the workbook, please send a request to foundation@flcfoundation.org or call Jim Zastrow at 218.390.5065.

2023 Annual Meeting

Did you miss the Annual Meeting? You're in luck, the meeting was recorded. The recording is on our website at the following link, [Annual Meeting](#).

Here are a few things to know:

1. Ann Beck is retiring at the end of August; we will have time to celebrate her ministry among us; she will remain a member of this faith community.
2. We voted on a call committee and we have an identified candidate who is interested in the associate pastor position. Pray.
3. We had conversations about becoming a Reconciling in Christ congregation. We shared what we are excited about and what we are wondering about. If you were not able to attend, the vision council does want to hear from you. Fill out the online survey on the FLC website. (See survey link)
4. Amy Merchant and Sam Weston are your synod delegates.
5. Brad Anderson, Suzanne Canfield & Steve Samuelson were elected for nominating committee.
6. We passed a mission support plan for 2023 with an expected income of \$929,300, expected expenses of \$933,968 and a net deficit of \$4668.

Don't forget to pick up one of the annual reports to see how God is flowing through this faith community.

News from the El Salvador Committee

First Lutheran has been working with the San Antonio Los Ranchos (El Salvador) community since 1997. This relationship has enabled people from both communities to travel and learn about each others' lives, including:

- Getting to know the 3 scholarship students that we are currently sponsoring. Alfredo is studying agro-engineering. Veronica (parent of a 17 month old daughter) is studying public accounting and Wilbur is majoring in nutrition.
- Learning about each others' celebrations: their signing of the Peace Accords, 1992; the death Archbishop Oscar Romero, 1980, the return to El Salvador of thousands of refugees from refugee camps in Honduras, 1987. FLC shared our Fourth of July celebrations and various church activities.
- Sponsoring learning activities with our two communities: such as Day of the Dead, 'a Coco movie discussion,' a discussion on migration with FLC youth and Los Ranchos community members in January 2022, and discussions of pandemic surprises/challenges, June 2022.
- Our committee is presently discussing (with help from the Sister Parish) having a joint virtual event at the end of March. We plan to discuss a video on the former Archbishop Oscar Romero sometime during the last two weeks of March.

We ask for your prayers for our sister community.

Please contact one of the following committee members for more info. Dory Sjoblom (dstinkrain@aol.com),

MN Food Share March Campaign for the Chum Food Shelf



In 2022, the Chum Food Shelf served 15,691 duplicated individuals and gave away 572,349 pounds of food. Both of these numbers were dramatically increased from pre-pandemic and pandemic levels and will continue to rise in 2023.

Help support the Chum Food Shelf in March through contributions of food and cash. FLC will be collecting canned **TOMATO PRODUCTS!!** Drop off donations of canned goods under the Faith, Love, Community banners in the sanctuary.



*Let's make difference in
the lives of our neighbors!*

Free Community Meal

LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH
12:00-1:30PM
FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH



1100 EAST
SUPERIOR
STREET

March 26 and April 30

Come help serve food & greet guests

BRING TOMATO PRODUCTS

Diced, whole
& stewed

NO PASTE!!!



DAMIANO SOUP KITCHEN

FLC has been a long-time partner in this soup kitchen ministry, and we are happy to once again be helping Damiano staff prepare and serve the meal on the 1st Wednesday of each month from 8 – 1. We are open to more volunteers. If you'd like to be part of this team, contact Dale Stahl at dale.stahl1@gmail.com for more information!



(Pictured are three members of our team:
Dale Stahl, Kim Wickman, Mary Kendzora.)



Update about Nadia and Pastor Alexei Krongolm and our Friendship Lutheran Congregation in Russia

A recent text from Nadia paints a gruesome image of the reality of war for our friends in Christ: “... men are not coming back, all of them, who are conscripted they are all brought back in coffins...I have two groups (forums) in social nets. All who joined in November, December. They are all gone. It’s inconceivable sorrow for families, country, nation...It’s a disaster. Please pray for a family, a young man Is being conscripted from Chalna congregation next week.”

Finland to Russia Border crossing: Pastor Alexei and family are in Finland to avoid Alexei being conscripted into the military. They periodically risk crossing the border at night for a few days to spend with the congregation. However, this may become much riskier, if not impossible, since they have learned that as of March 1 it will be required to apply to cross and then be given a date and time, so the authorities can be alerted about who is coming and when. See “Global Partners” on the FLC website: www.flcduluth.org.

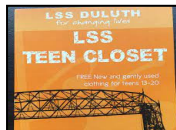


FLC LIBRARY — We have quite a few overdue books. (Some as far back as the onset of the pandemic.) Please check at home and return any FLC library books that you may find. Then check out new ones. —Thank you ever-so-much!!

Teen Closet Update

Thank you for such generous and quality new and used clothing donations, hangers, and shopping bags!

After 28 shoppers in December, there were only 5 in January. Center for Changing Lives staff are looking at the reasons for the drop. We’re hoping for an uptick in February since there certainly is a need for this ministry in Duluth.



Workdays in March/April:

Mon, March 13, 11-1
Weds, March 15, 2:30-4
Sat, March 25, noon-2
Mon, April 10, 11-1
Weds, April 19, 2:30-4

General Schedule:

Second Mon, 11-1
Third Weds, 2:30-4
Fourth Sat, noon-2
Fifth Sun, 9:45-11

Volunteers are always needed.

Special Volunteer Needs for March/April:

1. Transportation for exports to Damiano or Chum
2. Creative people to decorate for Feb-March

Current Need for Donations:

- Plastic or Wood Hangers
- Display shelving or shallow dressers
- Large Metal Shelving unit (to hold large sorting bins)



For more information, contact FLC member Laura Stahl at

269.5598, Laura.MorganStahl@gmail.com

Save the Date!

The annual Lutheran Social Services Benefit for Youth will be an evening dinner on **May 23, at Clyde Iron.**

(More information coming...)



Teen Closet Shopping!!!

Free and gently used clothing for youth, ages 13-21

Schedule:

March 4, 9-11 am
March 9, 4-6 pm
March 13, 4-6 pm
March 23, 4-6 pm
April 8, 9-11 am
April 11, 4-6 pm
April 20, 4-6 pm
April 24, 4-6 pm



Have questions: Please call Caylee at the Center for Changing Lives at 218-451-6290

Please remember to send your photos and stories to flcannualstories@flcduluth.org

We hope you have enjoyed looking through the collection of stories and photographs in the 2022 Annual Report. Your submissions for next year’s report are so important to this publication! Anything as simple as: If you take a photograph at an event, or have an experience to share, a witnessing of God’s work through FLC, send it in. —Thank you!

NEWS FROM FIRST LUTHERAN'S MIGRANT JUSTICE SUPPORT TEAM WORK

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me." Matthew 25:35

For those adults and youth who participated in the ***When Stars are Scattered*** book discussions on Jan. 28th and 29th, they were in for a treat—literally! Not only did they hear about our asylum seeker, AS, who is sponsored by First Lutheran and Gloria Dei Lutheran churches (and lives with Julie and Ryan Jagim), they also heard from Denise Scheer about the community development project carried out by a team in the US and by South Sudanese refugees living in Northern Uganda. They were also able to eat cookies in the shape of stars! We have already shared plans to introduce a new book to read soon which is based on an asylum seeker named Rosie.



Our asylum seeker, AS (who came in May of 2022) is continuing to go to English classes a few times a week while also studying during the evenings. He finds time to get together with friends from Burkina Faso & the Ivory Coast, who also live in Duluth. In his short time here, he has learned how to use the city bus and has also learned how to shovel by clearing his hosts' driveway!

Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunities

In other news, some of our team has met with folks from AMMPARO (a part of the ELCA which stands for Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunities) recently to learn their role in helping asylum seekers of all ages and becoming a Welcoming Congregation. As we explore this connection which requires four commitments from us, we will continue to minister and accompany migrants in our community, pray for justice for them, and also advocate for positive immigration policies. Check this link to learn more: <https://www.elca.org/ammparo>.

*If you wish to continue to help our dear AS in a "hands-on" way, you can send gift cards to assist with food, clothes, and other essentials or monetary donations to First Lutheran Church (with Migrant Justice legal fund in the notes) at 1100 E. Superior St., Duluth, MN. You can also pray for a positive legal process for him and other asylum seekers in the area.

For more information, please contact: Dory Sjoblom (dstinkrain@aol.com) Beth Holst (bethie.holst@gmail.com) or Lezlie Oachs (leslieoachs@gmail.com). —*Thank you*

MIGRANT JUSTICE BOOKS IN THE FLC LIBRARY

Members of the Migrant Justice Support Team and the FLC Librarians have been reading about refugees and asylum seekers in order to understand more deeply what's happening around us in the world right now. If you want to join us, come to the library/library kiosk and check out our books! Here are the first four migrant justice books the library purchased because of recommendations from the Migrant Justice Support Team:

Check out these titles:

*WHEN STARS ARE SCATTERED, a 2020 graphic novel for ages 9 and up.

*REFUGEE, a 2017 novel for ages 11 and up.

*THE BOOK OF ROSY, a 2020 memoir for adults.

*ENRIQUE'S JOURNEY is a nonfiction account of a teenager's quest from Tegucigalpa, Honduras, to the United States.

For more information, please contact our FLC Librarians (Carol Hanson, Rose Drewes, Becky Kilgore, Barb LaMaster & Marcia Lothner) or members of the Migrant Justice Support Team (Beth Holst, Dory Sjoblom or Lezlie Oachs).

Women of FLC Duluth

If you identify as a woman and have a Facebook account, please join Women of FLC Duluth Facebook Group.

This uplifting group offers faith conversations, rejoices together in triumphs and upholds each other in trials. This page is where you can find info on Gathering Circles and other events. —***We hope you will join the fun!***—

Administrators are Suzanne Rauvola, (Suzanne@hbrstudios.com, 218.393.8229) & Laura Stahl, (Laura.MorganStahl@gmail.com, 218.269.5598)

Pray & Support Turkey and Syria

Our daughter Margaret is married to a Turkish native, Ugur Tosun. Fortunately, none of his immediate family were affected by the recent earthquakes, but he has been moved by the extent of devastation and lack of governmental response to try to assist with some relief. Contact us for more info or please contribute to Lutheran World Relief /wr.org/quake or give via our website or by check — put LWR in memo line.

-David and Brenda Sproat

Stewardship

Ecofaith Summit – April 15 at Gloria Dei (Duluth)

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church will host the Ecofaith Summit on Saturday, April 15, from 9:30 – 3:30 p.m. The summit theme is The Pollinator Plot: Cross +Pollination in a Time of Ecological Crisis. Keynote Speaker: Margot Monson, entomologist, and beekeeper. Co-presented by the EcoFaith Network NE MN Synod, Northwest Wisconsin Synod, and St. Paul Area Synod. To register you can click on the link on the FLC website in First News.

Contact Andrea Wynands at arwynands@gmail.com or Carlene Sippola at carlenesippola@gmail.com if you can provide a homestay for Summit participants on Friday, April 14, and/or Sat., April 15.

FLC CREATION CARE TEAM

The Creation Care Team will meet Thursday, March 30, 6:30pm at the Sippola's.
For more info contact John: johnsippola2@gmail.com

50 Days of Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts

What are your spiritual gifts? What are your gifts that reveal Christ to others? The Gift of Leadership, The Gift of Healing, The Gift of Mercy, The Gift of Service, The Gift of Discernment. These are just a few of the spiritual gifts you will explore when you take a quick assessment on the ELCA website.

During the 50 days between Easter and Pentecost, the Stewardship Ministry Team invites everyone in the congregation to take the assessment and discover what your spiritual gifts are. During that time, we will provide a handout that lists and describes each of the spiritual gifts. We will celebrate what we learned on Pentecost Sunday, May 28.

The link will be available in April's First News

LEFSE RUN UPDATE

The 1st Annual Lefse Fun Run was a great success! With all the numbers in, \$5,000 was raised between FLC, Duluth Running Co., FLC and Safe Haven, for Safe Haven!



The Big Time Jazz event was a success!

\$1400 was raised for CHUM!

Earth Day Fair

Sunday, April 23, from 9:30 to 1:30



On Sunday, April 23, Creation Care Action Team invites everyone to an Earth Day Fair. There will be intergenerational earth-keeping activities for all children & adults.

Exhibitors include Shoreview Natives (Pollinator Gardens), Wolf Track Solar Panels, Tom Uecker (Monarch Butterflies,) Ruth's Vegetarian Gourmet (Two Harbors), Ecolibrium3 (City of Duluth Home Energy Audits), an EV exhibit, a Beekeeper exhibit, and more! Local exhibitors will answer questions.

God's Work – Our (Dirty) Hands!

Pollinator and Community Garden Work Crews:

The Pollinator and Community Garden Crews need you to get your hands dirty. Join the pollinator and community garden work crews. Pollinator Work Crew Point of Contact: johnsippola2@gmail.com.

Community Garden Work Crew
POC: stevesamuelsen11@gmail.com



Dig in!!!

FLC Caring Ministry Gathering

Saturday, March 25, 9:30 a.m.

Caring Ministry is an opportunity to provide connections with those who are no longer able to attend worship or participate in church life. Bringing communion once a month is a wonderful way to share the love and community of Christ, but there are many other ways as well, including phone calls, home visits, writing cards, making or delivering prayer shawls...would you like to be involved? Contact Ann at annbeck@flcduluth.org or 728-3668. A light brunch is planned for Saturday, March 25 at 9:30 a.m.

HOLY LAND TRIP

Did you know the Holy Land group is meeting on February 28th and March 21st to discuss some of our books. We are excited as prepare for our trip in the fall.

There are 5 spots left if anyone is contemplating this journey.



Children, Youth & Family



— SECOND SUNDAY —

**Intergenerational
Mission and Service Projects
Activities for all ages! 9:45 am**



Sunday, March 12

Along with supporting the Food Shelf Drive (bring tomato products!) there will be activities supporting Chum's St. Francis Apartments, including preparing freezer meals, and making no-sew reusable bags from t-shirts.

Sunday, April 23

Activities & exhibits for our Earth Day celebration. Watch for more information as it gets closer.

CONFIRMATION & MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

**Middle School & Confirmation will meet
all Sundays in March, and April 2nd**

No meeting on Easter, April 9 or April 16th.

We will meet April 23 and 30th.

Lenten Family Activity Packs are available to take home!

Aligned with our Lenten theme *Seeking: Honest Questions for a Deeper Faith*, the packet will engage your family in each week's Sunday lesson with resources for storytelling and wondering. It's a great way to help children enter into these stories of Jesus as we move through the Lenten season. We'd love for every family with young children to have one! Pick one up at church on Sunday, or stop by during the week.

WELCOME TO THE LORD'S TABLE!

"Whenever you share this bread and cup, I will
be with you, feeding you, loving you, forgiving you."



**Classes on Holy Communion
for 3rd graders & up,
with parents!**

**3 Wed April 26, May 3 & 10
6:30-7:30 PM**

contact
annbeck@flcduluth.org

Sunday School

For ages 2 years –5th grade on the 1st & 3rd Sundays of the month, at 9:45 a.m. Spring, classes will be on March 5 & 19, and April 2 & 16. Kids in grades 1-5 will be exploring the same gospel lessons that we will be hearing at worship during Lent, for a fun integration of learning about Jesus, worship, & life!

The Mustard Seed

**DEADLINE FOR THE MAY/JUNE ISSUE
OF THE MUSTARD SEED IS
MONDAY, APRIL 10**

**Please send all submissions to
office@flcduluth.org**

Worship and Music

FLC Music Ministry

We invite you to be part of our music ministry. Some groups rehearse weekly, some just occasionally. Please speak to Michael Fuchs michael@flcdulut.org about choirs and Karen Sande karen@flcduluth.org about handbells and instrumental ensembles:

Instrumental ensembles for middle schoolers through adults
Youth Ringers handbell group for middle school and high school youth
Jubilation Ringers handbell group for high school and adults meets Wednesdays at 5:45pm
(Thursdays during Lent)
Soli Deo Gloria Choir meets Wednesdays at 7:15pm
Chamber Choir meets Wednesdays at 8:30pm

Good Friday Presentation of Bach's St. John Passion

The Music Ministry at First Lutheran Church will present J.S. Bach's St. John Passion at 7:00 p.m. on Good Friday, April 7, 2023, with members of the DSSO, St. Paul's Episcopal Choir, UW-Superior Singers, and others in the community. To help defray costs, suggested donation is \$20.

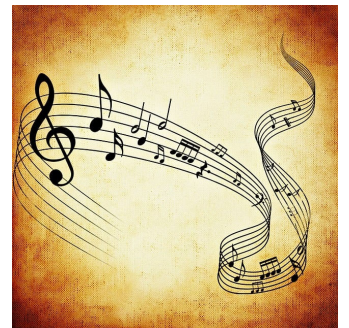
Michael Fuchs Vocal Recital

FLC's choir director Michael Fuchs will give a vocal recital with pianist Teresa Vaughn, Tuesday March 7 at 7:30 in Webb Recital Hall, Holden Fine Arts Center at UW-Superior. Tickets \$15 adults, \$12 seniors and students.

Lenten Organ Recitals

Wednesdays 12:15-12:45 p.m. Freewill donation for Arrowhead Chapter-American Guild of Organists scholarship fund.

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|----------|--|
| March 1 | Agnes Barthel (scholarship student)
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1719 E. Superior St. |
| March 8 | Thomas Hamilton
Pilgrim Congregational Church, 2310 E. Fourth St. |
| March 15 | Charles Sundquist
Spirit of God Lutheran Church, 2431 W. Third St. |
| March 22 | Samuel Black
St. Michael's Catholic Church, 4901 E. Superior St. |
| March 29 | Karen Sande with Kristin Sande & Lian Ojakangas, violinists
First Lutheran Church, 1100 E. Superior St. |



Arrowhead Chorale Concerts

Saturday March 25, 7:30 p.m. & Sunday March 26, 3:00 p.m. at First Lutheran Church.
Dances of Life with guest artists from the Minnesota Ballet Company. Tickets: \$30 in advance, \$35 at the door, \$10 students with I.D. and 17 and under, available at www.arrowheadchorale.com

Friends of the Felgemaker Organ - Early Music Concert

Sunday April 30, 3:00 p.m. at Sacred Heart Music Center, 201 W. Fourth St. Duluth featuring Shelley Gruskin performing a recorder concerto and conducting a mini-opera with chorus and strings, demonstrations of early instruments, and Renaissance and Baroque period organ music. Suggested donation \$20.



FLC Worship Schedule for Lent

Sunday Worship Schedule:

Sundays, 8:30 am and 11:00 am

Midweek Services:

Wednesdays, 6:00pm, with Holden Evening Prayer and Prayers around the Cross, followed by a simple meal, 6:45pm

Seeking: Who will you listen to?

First Sunday in Lent, Feb. 26

Wednesday, March 1

Seeking: How do we begin again?

Second Sunday in Lent, March 5

Wednesday, March 8

Seeking: Will you give me a drink?

Third Sunday in Lent, March 12

Wednesday, March 15

Seeking: Who sinned?

Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 19

Wednesday, March 22

Seeking: Can these bones live?

Fifth Sunday in Lent, March 26

Wednesday, March 29

Holy Week:

Seeking: Where are you headed?

Palm/Passion Sunday, April 2

Service times: 8:30 and 11am

Seeking: Will you wash my feet?

Maundy Thursday, April 6, 7:00pm

Seeking: Why have you forsaken me?

Good Friday, April 7

12pm brief worship service at noon leading into Stations of the Cross Prayer Stations (available M-F throughout the building)

St. John's Passion, 7:00pm

Seeking: What were you expecting?

Easter Vigil, Saturday, April 8, 7:00pm

Seeking: Who are you looking for?

Easter Sunday, April 9

Service times: 8:30 and 11am

Easter Season Worship:

Second Sunday of Easter, April 16th

Third Sunday of Easter, April 23rd

Earth Day Celebration & Fair, April 23, 9:30-1:30

(See page 6)

Fourth Sunday of Easter, April 30th,

Good Shepherd Sunday

Daylight Savings Time

**Begins on March 12. . .
Spring forward!**



Lent Offering will go to the Gabriel Fund.
Assisting people who are housed to help them stay housed.

