



The Torch

March-April

2019

"To receive and share Christ's embrace"

Dear Friends in Christ:

The most significant time of the church year is fast approaching; **The Season of Lent**. Some might argue that Christmas is more important because of the birth of Christ, but without His suffering, death and resurrection, Christmas would not be complete. Jesus came to die, but more importantly, He came to live so that all believers in Him might have eternal life with Him.



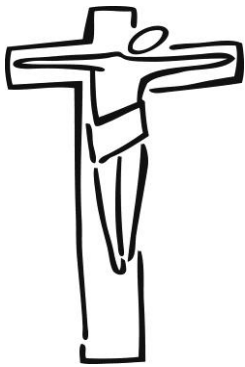
Lent begins with **Ash Wednesday** on **March 6**. Our worship service will be at **11:30 AM**. The service will begin with the imposition of ashes in the sign of the cross on our foreheads and end with Holy Communion.

In addition to our regular Sunday worship services, we will offer a new opportunity to gather together in small groups for **Midweek Lenten Bible Studies**. Instead of worship service, we will meet in each other's homes to study and discuss the sermon and the Bible reading from the previous Sunday. The devotional theme for this season is **Miracles of Lent**. Small groups are already forming, so if you haven't yet signed up, please do so by calling the church office.



The season of Lent comes to a close with **Holy Week**, beginning on **Sunday, April 14 at 9:15 AM** with the observance of **Palm Sunday**, which is sometimes known as the Sunday of the Passion. When our Lord made His triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem He knew that the shouts of "Hosanna!" would change to shouts of "Crucify!" before the end of the week.

Before Jesus entered into His suffering He ate one last Passover meal with his closest earthly friends, the twelve disciples who had been with Him for three years. In that Last Supper He gave us a very special gift: the forgiveness of sins in the taking of His body and blood in simple bread and wine. We will remember this great gift and its meaning with a special **Maundy Thursday** worship service on **Thursday, April 18 at 7:00 PM.**



The observance of Holy Week will conclude on **Good Friday** with a **Tenebrae Service** of darkness that commemorates the Crucifixion and death of Jesus. As the church lighting is slowly extinguished, we are reminded of the darkness that surrounds us, darkness into which we shine the light of Christ. Join us at **7:00 PM, Friday, April 19.**

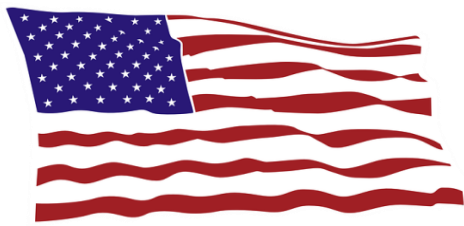
Our celebration culminates with **Easter Sunday** as we point to a vacant cross and an empty tomb, the symbols of our Lord's triumph over death, the grace, and Satan himself. We'll gather behind the church in the lower lot at the empty tomb for a **Sunrise Service** at **7:00 AM on Sunday, April 21.** Music will be provided by *The Salida Brass*. Join us for a **Pancake Breakfast**, hosted by the Ministry of Elders, **at 7:45 AM.** Finally, the celebration continues with our **Easter Festival Worship Service** at **9:15 AM** in the sanctuary.



In the space of one short, but incredibly important season there are eleven opportunities, including our regular Sunday worship services and Small Group Devotionals, to worship and thank God for His great gift of salvation **AND** eleven opportunities to invite a friend. I hope to see you – and your friends – as often as possible.

Saved to Share,

Pastor Bill



OPERATION SPIRIT FROM THE HEART OF THE ROCKIES

Thank you very much for your generous donations.

No more magazines until further notice.

Any cards and letters you would like to send would be GREATLY appreciated!!

Monetary Donations are also needed to cover the costs of shipping and purchasing other supplies and items for the troops. Please make checks payable to First Lutheran Church and write "Operation Spirit" on the memo line.

PLEASE PRAY FOR: Mark Cunningham, CH(CPT) James Brown, Anah Kotila, Tim Wilson, Kenneth Wilson, Thomas Sweet, Jake Engleman, and Garrett Taylor.

**PACK TROOP BOXES 9 A.M. TUESDAY
MARCH 26TH & APRIL 23RD**

UPCOMING EVENTS

ELDERS MEETINGS: 3/3, 11:30AM

4/7, 11:30AM

FOR LENT SCHEDULE, SEE FIRST TWO
PAGES

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

03/03 Bob Christiansen

03/03 Joan Hapl

03/04 Phyllis Tietzel

03/09 Keith Surber

03/18 Betty Albers

03/20 Myles Shuey

03/26 Linda Maltas

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

03/03 Glen & Paula Saari

03/13 Bob & Pam Christiansen

03/16 Willis & Janene Shuey

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

04/11 Carol Kellerman

04/12 Joan Benny

04/12 Rev. Eric Stinnett

04/24 Greg Kettering

04/28 Dudley Fecht

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

04/15 Gerrie & Chuck Johnson



Kids First Literacy Club

First Lutheran Church

MISSION REPORT

2018-2019

2017-2018

First Kids Literacy Club was initiated and we recently celebrated our first year, with the help of faithful volunteers and 8 students. Our second year program was kicked off with an Ice Cream Social, First Responders were invited and the Salida Fire department and a Fire Truck were our guests. During the first week of the August, we manned a booth for the Back to School event put on by KHEN. The 2018-2019 opening day of tutoring was September 15, and 10 students were registered. With the welcome addition of new tutors we are able to provide one on one tutoring on Friday mornings. We are most thankful for the support of our congregation; several are involved weekly in this vital community outreach. With the financial gifts of the congregation and family members of our volunteers we are self -sustaining.

First Lutheran Church has several outreach programs that are active, they are:

Comforters- who meet weekly and have assembled 80+ quilts for delivery to those in need.

Operation Spirit- who meets monthly to assemble care boxes for mailing to our troops

The Grainery- is supported with gifts of money and food items collected in the Narthex

PRC- donations of money and items for newborns are also collected in the Narthex.

This past year several of our members attended the yearly fund drive dinner, it was most informative and the speakers were inspiring.

These outreach programs are vital to the life of First Lutheran Church and our community. We are called to serve the needs of our community and beyond.

Each of these Mission groups are always in need of more volunteers, prayerfully consider what you can do.

Respectfully submitted,

Gerrie Johnson

**NOTE: Following is my State of the Parish Report for the Congregational Meeting
on February 24, 2019**

I have shared with you before my disdain for numbers when it comes to the various indicators used by churches. Whether at the congregational level or higher, everyone wants to measure the assorted aspects of our life together as the Body of Christ numerically. One of my least favorite questions when pastors get together is, “How many do you worship?” I know exactly what they mean; they want to know the average worship attendance at other churches. Personally, I see it as a thinly veiled attempt to rank themselves with other churches by comparing statistics. Since I figured this out, I throw them a curve by saying, “One. We worship one God.” They don’t ask me that question very often anymore.

I just received the annual request from the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Office of Rosters and Statistics asking us to report our numbers. How many new members? How many transfers out? How many births? How many deaths? How many infant baptisms? How many adult baptisms? How much money did the members give? And on and on they go.

But are improved or increasing numbers an indicator of the health of a congregation? I’m talking about spiritual health here. Is a church with 500 people in worship any healthier than a congregation, such as ours, with 50 or fewer in attendance each Sunday? We have seen in the news time and time again where the leader of a megachurch gets himself in trouble because of worldly temptations, and the church falls apart after his departure or removal. That is not a healthy church; it’s a personality cult gathered around an attractive, charismatic leader. When the focus becomes the leader instead of Christ the departure of the leader often results in the collapse of the church.

That is why I so like the mission focus of the Rocky Mountain District for the next triennium, as developed by our current district president, Rev. Roger Schlechte. It is, quite simply, *“Know the Truth, Understand the Culture, Live the Faith.”* The details are spelled out in the January issue of *Peaks and Valleys*, the RMD newsletter that is included in *Lutheran Witness* each month, but here is the gist of it:

*“Jesus proclaims that God’s Word is truth. He says, ‘**I am the way, and the truth, and the life**’ (John 14:6). The truths of God’s Word are continually and carefully proclaimed in our churches, schools and early childhood centers, in formal and informal settings,”* writes Schlechte. But, *“while we articulate the message of the Gospel, people are not crowding into the sanctuaries to hear” that truth.*

“That brings us to the next phrase ... ‘Understand the Culture.’ The Western church no longer occupies a primary place in the community.” The truth of that statement is borne out each time I answer the question, “What do you do?” When I say that I am the pastor of First Lutheran Church, most people say, “Where’s that?” And these are people who have lived in and around Salida for many years.

There is a sharp divide in our local culture. On one side are people a lot like this congregation: seniors who have raised their families and are now enjoying retirement. On the other side are younger singles, couples, and families who work hard, often at more than one job, to be able to enjoy their active lifestyle in a high-cost environment. Statistically—and I know I'm using numbers here, but it's important—on either side of that divide approximately one-quarter of our population considers themselves “spiritual.” Not churched, but “spiritual,” in whatever form that takes. This includes life-long members of the several Christian congregations in our community to the person who believes that crystals and the local shaman hold the key to enlightenment. This is the culture we need to understand.

Finally, we *“Live the Faith.”* Again, President Schlechte writes, *“We want people to see us as a people filled with hope, and with love and care for others. We live out our faith not only on Sunday mornings, but every day and night of the week! As followers of Jesus, we represent him wherever we are, in whatever we do and in whatever we say.”*

In consideration of these criteria, I ask myself how we, as a Christian congregation measure up. I know for a fact, because it is my primary responsibility as your pastor, that we *“Know the Truth.”* I proclaim it from the pulpit week in and week out, Sunday after Sunday. I know that people—members and visitors alike—walk out the doors on Sunday having heard God's truth. That's the good news.

Based strictly on my observations, I cannot say we're doing so well with the other two criteria: *“Understand the Culture”* and *“Live the Faith.”* I cannot be with each member of First Lutheran Church 24/7, so this is not a comment on your individual faith life. This is based on my experience with the congregation as a whole.

While ministries like “Kids First Literacy Club” are a step in the right direction, I believe that if we truly understood our culture and sought to live the faith as a congregation, we would have an early childhood ministry facility on this property today. It would be there to meet one of the stated needs of the community and to share our Christian faith with the little ones and their families who so desperately need to know the truth of Jesus Christ. Based on our public early childhood center being filled to capacity along with the recent closure of a private facility, I believe such a building would, at the present time, be full and have a waiting list.

Perhaps, God willing, in the not so distant future, First Lutheran Church will overcome its collective fears and take that step of faith.

Saved to Share,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Bill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MARCH 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 9a KFLC	2
3 9:15 Worship & Communion 10:15 Fellowship 10:30 Bible Class & Sun School 11:30am Elders Meeting	4 7:00p – 8:00p AA Meeting	5	6 7:00p – 8:00p AA Meeting 1p Bell Choir	7 8:00a Men's Breakfast HRRMC Cafeteria	8 9a KFLC	9
10 9:15 Worship & Communion 10:15 Fellowship 10:30 Bible Class & Sun School	11 7:00p – 8:00p AA Meeting	12	13 7:00p – 8:00p AA Meeting 1p Bell Choir	14 8:00a Men's Breakfast HRRMC Cafeteria	15 9a KFLC	16
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APRIL 2019

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	1	2	3 1pm Bell Choir 7pm AA meeting	4 8a Men's Breakfast HRRMC Cafeteria	5 9a KFLC	6
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THE THEORY OF THE DIPPER AND THE BUCKET

Submitted by Sharon Blanchard

You have heard of the cup that overflowed. This is the story of a bucket that is like that cup only larger; it is an invisible bucket. Everyone has one. It is always with us. It determines how we feel about ourselves, about others, and how we get along with people. Have you ever experienced a series of very favorable things, which made you want to be good to people for a week? When this happens, your bucket is full to overflowing.

A bucket can be filled by a lot of things that happen. When a person speaks to you, recognizing you as a human being, your bucket is filled a little—even more if he calls you by name. If he compliments you on your dress or on a job well done, the level in your bucket goes up still higher. There must be a million ways to raise the level in another's bucket.

But remember, this is a theory about a dipper and a bucket. Other people have dippers and they can get their dippers in your bucket. Let's say I am at a banquet. Nice tablecloth, china, real silverware, everyone is dressed up. While I am visiting I inadvertently upset my coffee. A big brown spot appears, steam coming up from it; I'm embarrassed. I turn redder than I usually am red. The coffee keeps crawling right towards the lady across from me. Finally it does it! It dribbles on her. She jumps a little, but she is really just being nice because it is HOT!

Now I am so embarrassed I would like to stop the world and get off. Then "bright eyes" down the table from me says: "You upset your coffee." I made a mistake; I knew it first; and then he said, "You upset your coffee!" HE GOT HIS DIPPER IN MY BUCKET!

Think of the times this person makes a mistake, feels terrible about it, only to have someone tell him about the mistake as though he did not know it had happened.

Buckets are filled and buckets are emptied. When a person's bucket is empty, he is very different than when it is full. You say to a lady whose bucket is empty; "That's a pretty dress you are wearing today." And she may reply in an irritated, defensive way; "What was wrong with the dress I wore yesterday?"

The story of our lives is the interplay of the dipper and the bucket. Everyone has both. The mystery of the dipper and the bucket is that the only way we can fill our own bucket is to fill someone else's bucket. Civilization has been trying to learn this for a long time. The question is whether we will learn it soon enough or not.

The next time someone is right about what is wrong with you, and you already know it, you can say, "Hey, you have your dipper in my bucket!" Or better yet, when you hear others "dipping" somebody else you can say, "We are getting our dippers in his bucket. We ought to be filling his bucket instead of dipping." And in doing this, you can experience the mystery of the dipper and the bucket.

First Lutheran Church



Sunday

9:15	Worship
10:15	Fellowship
10:30	Bible Class

Pastor Bill Cate

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