

**FIRST  
EVANGELICAL  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH**

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or by appointment



**From Pastor Mark Holmes**

**THE TIME IS NOW!!!**

"I'll get to that tomorrow!" How many times have we said that? Probably too many times! Tomorrow is the day that the diet starts, the squeaky door gets oiled, and the friendship gets mended. It is the day on which more time is spent with the children, more energy is given to the job, and more affection is shared with the spouse. It seems that, for a lot of people, TOMORROW is the most important day of the year!

The annual observance of Lent has a way of taking you by the

shoulders, giving you a good shake, and saying right to your face, "The time is NOW, you fool!" Lent is a time of urgency. It is salvation time.

It is "NOW" time.

For the followers of Jesus, today is the MOST IMPORTANT day of all. Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow is only a promise. But today... RIGHT NOW... is the time for action!

From the moment that Jesus stepped into the Jordan River, bowed his head to be baptized, and was sent by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness, even up to

the day of suffering and triumph in Jerusalem... EVERY moment was important.

Please use this season of Lent to put some urgency into your life AND into the time you spend with those that you love. As we continue our Lenten journey, let us remember that NOW is the time to act.

NOW is the time to believe!

Living in God's Amazing Grace!

*Pastor Mark Holmes*

**Our Lenten focus**

Lent, the church-year season that begins on Ash Wednesday, is a time of penitence and spiritual renewal. Some people give up a luxury or vice during Lent as a form of self-denial; others undertake a project that benefits others.

The point isn't to denigrate ourselves or to see how much we can do without.

Instead, Lent helps us reflect on Jesus' death. As Timothy Keller writes in *The Reason for God*: "The Christian Gospel is that I am so flawed that Jesus had to die for me, yet I am so loved and valued that Jesus was glad to die for me. This leads to deep humility and deep confidence at the same time. It undermines both swaggering and sniveling. I

cannot feel superior to anyone, and yet I have nothing to prove to anyone. I do not think more of myself nor less of myself. Instead, I think of myself less."





## Souper Bowl Potluck

### February 2nd!

We will be joining together on January 6th for our First Sunday Potluck of the year.

We hope that everyone had a Merry Christmas and an amazing New Year.

So come join us and let's have fellowship and share our stories of the holiday season.

## Food Pantry Donations for February!

The Food Pantry would like us to emphasize a specific item each month. Remember, you may bring any item you wish, but spreading this among the contributing congregations keeps a steady supply of their most basic needs coming each month. For the month of February, Tuna, Tuna Helper, and Canned Soup have been requested. There is a basket in the narthex for all food pantry items.

Thank you for being so generous.

## “Home” for Christmas

*Please  
remember, if  
you are  
having trouble  
hearing:  
Listening  
devices are  
available.  
Please ask an  
usher.*

As a small child, I thought I knew how God talked to people – in a burning bush or with a voice calling down from the mountain top. As an adult, I know that He is much more subtle and often speaks to us with what some people call little ‘nudges’. On Friday, December 20, 2019, I got one of those ‘nudges’ – actually more of a shove – although I didn’t recognize God’s voice until later.

It was the start of winter break, and I decided to call my parents, Ross and Lorraine Madsen. We had a good chat, but as soon as I hung up the phone I started sobbing. At first I thought it was sadness because once again, I wouldn’t be ‘home’ for Christmas. I quickly realized it was more than that. It was an overwhelming feeling that I needed to be there. I didn’t know

why the feeling was so strong and chalked it up to thinking that even after 32 years in Iowa, I was homesick.

It didn’t take any convincing once they saw how important this was to me for Todd and Lane to hop in the car with me Sunday afternoon and head northwest to my childhood home near Redvers, Saskatchewan. We didn’t tell my parents or my sister we were coming. It was going to be a Christmas surprise!

On the last leg of the 1000 mile trip Monday afternoon, I called Dad just to make sure he was home. We briefly talked about how nice the weather was and what he had been up to that day. He and my sister, Leanne, were just unloading groceries, and Mom would arrive Tuesday morning. I could hardly contain my

excitement when ten minutes later we walked into the house on the farm. It took a moment for Dad and Leanne to realize what was going on, and then came the long hugs and a few tears, all of which Lane thankfully recorded.

The rest of the afternoon and evening was spent visiting, eating, doing some chores around the house and yard, and getting settled in. After supper, Dad insisted we break out the lefse Mom had sent, and right before bed he and I gobbled up a couple of pieces. I was so happy to be home.

A few minutes after the alarm went off the next morning, we heard a thud. Both Todd and I rushed up the stairs and found my strong, 87-year-old, six-foot-two dad crumpled on the

*Continued on pg. 3*



bathroom floor, not quite lucid, and obviously in tremendous pain.

Although the next hours were excruciating, I remained strangely calm and clear-headed as I realized the reason I was there. What I felt Friday night was infinitely more than homesickness. It was God. God had definitely spoken to me in a way He knew would compel me to make the trip home. I am so thankful I listened.

Sadly, my dad passed away early that afternoon,

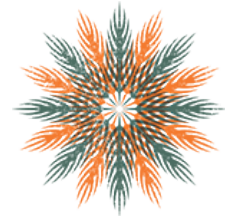
December 24, 2019.

Everyone who has lost a loved one knows the sorrow and grief that accompanies death. I miss my dad every day, but along with my grief, I also feel a sense of peace. Pastor Mark recites after every sermon "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7) I realize now more than ever how true that is.

At the end of that long, sorrowful day, I sat looking out at the trees in the farmyard glistening with hoarfrost from the night light, and these lyrics kept repeating in my head: "Silent Night. Holy Night. All is calm, all is bright. Sleep in heavenly peace."

Sleep in heavenly peace, Dad.

By: Deb Rose



## Neighbors Helping Neighbors

"Free Laundry Night"



We will have laundry supplies, quarters, clean trash bags, plus food!

**We will be holding laundry nights at the Newton Laundry on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays.**

Providing volunteers twice a month for four hours is a large commitment. For this reason we ask that the following guidelines be honored:

1. Washing will begin at 4 pm and no sooner, last loads go in at 8 pm.
2. Clothing, bedding, and towels should not be placed in washers until 4:00 pm.
3. Someone from your family or group should stay on site the entire time.
4. Wash should be removed from the washer and dryer as soon as they are done.
5. Everyone should be on their best behavior, no bad language, running, or fighting.
6. To even out the flow of washing we would encourage people with last names starting with A-M come from 4 to 6 pm, and those with last names starting with N-Z come from 6 to 8 pm.

Upcoming dates for Monday Laundry Nights are:

**January 27, February 10 & 24, & March 9 & 23**

Where: **Newton Laundromat behind Domino's Pizza 107 E 17<sup>th</sup> St. North, Newton**

(Cab rides available through Hometown Cab and Dynasty Cab)

## Ash Wednesday prayer

Merciful God, you called us forth from the dust of the earth; you claimed us for Christ in the waters of baptism. Look upon us as we enter these Forty Days bearing the mark of ashes, and bless our journey through the desert of Lent to the font of rebirth. May our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; our prayer, the chant of humble and grateful hearts.

THANKS  
—from the—  
HEART

## Wednesday Night Community Dinners:

THANK YOU to the people that help with our Wednesday Night Community Dinners! Wednesday Night Community Dinners are at the Methodist Church and our next meal is on the Feb 19th. Please come and help as many hands make for light work. Come help Jesus feed the hungry.

### Chancel Flowers

Feb. 2—  
Feb 9—  
Feb 16— Goos  
Feb. 23—

### Fellowship

Feb 2— Potluck  
Feb.9 — Quanbeck  
Feb. 16—Breuer, Cantu  
Feb 23— Pancake Brunch  
after Worship.



## A MESSAGE OF Love

Make this valentine for a family member or friend.



### What you need:

- 10 wooden craft sticks
- Painter's tape
- Markers
- A photo and glue (optional)
- Craft knife (and adult help)
- Ribbon or a rubber band

### What you do:

1. Set the sticks side by side. Secure with two tape strips.
2. Flip the sticks over. Draw (or glue on) a picture or write a message or Bible verse. If using glue, let dry.
3. Flip the sticks again and remove tape. If you glued on a photo, have an adult help cut the sticks (and photo) apart.
4. Secure the sticks with ribbon or a rubber band.
5. Deliver the gift and invite the recipient to assemble the puzzle.

## Choices in Mission -



**Bury The Altar:**  
Began January 12 and is continuing through February 16, the Sunday after Valentine's Day, We will be working to bury the altar with nourishing foods for the food pantry. The food

pantries receive donations during the holiday season, but these are quickly depleted, making our bury the altar efforts very appreciated! If you are a Thrivent member who would like to apply for an Action Team for this

event, please talk to Craig Peterson or Duane Quanbeck, who can assist you with the process. The Service Committee will assist with the grocery shopping!

## Zinga:



In the most recent update from Zinga, Dr. Jesse Kitundu writes:

"Welcome to this special New Year of 2020, a year of hope. In 2016 we laid down the foundation of The Mary Ellen Kitundu Memorial Birthing Centre, and we hope in a few months it will be ready."

Project manager Selemani "Sele" Shabani outlines what remains to be done before the building can open. This includes a special sewage system, as the high water table makes a regular septic tank system unworkable. The good news is that

experts in the field have volunteered to come out in February to look at what exactly needs to be done. Some work also remains on the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, as well as other projects around the hospital campus. Check it all out at [www.ihptz.org](http://www.ihptz.org).

More good news: Like last year, Dr. Christine Petersen has offered a challenge grant of \$15,000 for a Valentine's Day Love Gift to IHP, so this is a good time to give! Just be sure to note that your gift is towards the Valentine's Day Love Challenge, and the grant will match it.

Please continue to keep Paula and Denny Lofstrom in your prayers as they travel the States spreading the word of God's work at Zinga.

The IHP team here at First Lutheran







## News about First Lutheran and Thrivent:



You have likely heard about things that some First Lutheran members have been doing with Thrivent funding. Thrivent currently has two ways that members can and have been supporting our church; one is through directing "Thrivent Choice Dollars" that are available to them and the other is through Thrivent Action Teams.

### **Choice Dollars for 2019 will expire March 31st:**

If you have a Thrivent product, you might be one of those eligible members who can have Thrivent distribute a portion of its charitable funds (Choice Dollars) to First Lutheran. Members become eligible for Choice Dollars direction based on annuities, insurance premiums paid, contract values and Thrivent volunteer leadership. Choice Dollars are complex and hard to explain in a short article, but these dollars can provide a method of financial support to our church, as well as other non-profit organizations. Here is the website that explains the Choice Dollar Program: <https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-choice/>

More Information  
Records have indicated that there is a potential of over 40 individual First Lutheran Church members who have available Thrivent Choice Dollars they could allocate to First. Thrivent reports that thus far for the 2019 year a total of \$2,791 has already been directed to First by Thrivent members. This is an increase from 2018 of over \$1000. Many thanks go to those Thrivent members who chose to have their Choice Dollars be given to First!

On March 31, 2020 the 2019 Choice Dollars that have been available to allocate to First will expire and cannot be designated any longer. If you

are a Thrivent member, time is of the essence to allocate the funds that may be available from last year. To find out if you have Choice Dollars available to designate, you can either check on-line or call Thrivent (800-847-4836) and say "Choice Dollars".

**Thrivent Action Teams:** If you are a Thrivent member, you could easily initiate an Action team. All Thrivent Benefit members are eligible to lead two Action Teams per year, and there are many eligible Thrivent benefit members at First. In the past few months there have been several Action Teams formed at First Lutheran including the fall Neighbors Helping Neighbors clothing drive and the Bury the Altar food drive for the Salvation Army food pantry.

There are many church needs and projects that could be organized and receive support from Thrivent through a Thrivent Action Team. Think of how \$250 that Thrivent will provide could be used to support a project at church or in our local community. If you want to learn how, you can do this yourself by checking it out at: <https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-action-teams/> Here is a link that describes how others have creatively used Action Teams to support a vast array of projects around the country: <https://thrivent.cotribute.co/community/thrivent-action-teams/detail> Action Teams are a creative way to support a vast array of projects.

If you're interested in helping to access funding or supplies for a project this is what you should do: 1) Think about an upcoming church event or identify a need in our church or community; ask yourself, would I support this with an Action Team. 2) If so and you want to help, talk to others at First who are familiar with the

Action Team process. Duane Quanbeck and Craig and Betty Peterson are Thrivent Advocates and Judy Monroe, who leads the Service Committee, can help you determine how the activity could become an Action Team 3) To get a project approved a Thrivent member needs to complete a simple application online that describes that you will lead your volunteer team in a service activity, educational event, or one-time fundraiser, that can be completed within 90 days. Once your project is approved, you'll receive a Thrivent Action Kit, including a \$250 Community Impact Card that can be used as seed money to get your project off the ground and make a bigger impact; Thrivent Action Team T-shirts; thank-you cards and promotional pennants if you would like them. When the Action Team activity is completed you will need to submit a short summary. You can find out more and apply at <https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-action-teams/> or call 800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Action Teams. One other reminder, if you are not a "Thrivent member" and know of an unmet need, tell someone and they could enlist the assistance of a Thrivent member who could initiate the project and set up the Thrivent Action Team including you as a member of the team. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or need additional information.

**Craig & Betty Peterson**  
**[craig@partnercom.net](mailto:craig@partnercom.net)**  
**641-227-3209**

# february

## BIRTHDAYS

Marlys Amundsen 02/04

Arthur III Greve 02/05

Jane Johnson 02/10

Katie Cantu 02/12

Sarah Grunig 02/12

Andrew Lammey 02/14

Jayne Goos 02/15

Terry Ve Verka 02/15

Bryan Friedman 02/23

Alex Anderson 02/27

Bethany Baumgartner 02/27

Evelyn George 02/27

Ashlyn Karsten 02/27

**“Happy Birthday  
from your church  
family!”**

### In other words



We're so accustomed to hearing the Bible's "love chapter," 1 Corinthians 13, at weddings and other occasions that we may not really hear its meaning anymore. It can help to listen to something familiar said in different words. What new understandings of love does this paraphrase from The Message Bible reveal to you?

"Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't

strut, doesn't have a swelled head, doesn't force itself on others, isn't always 'me first,' doesn't fly off the handle, doesn't keep score of the sins of others, doesn't revel when others grovel, takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, puts up with anything, trusts God always, always looks for the best, never looks back, but keeps going to the end. Love never dies" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a, MSG).



### Special dates

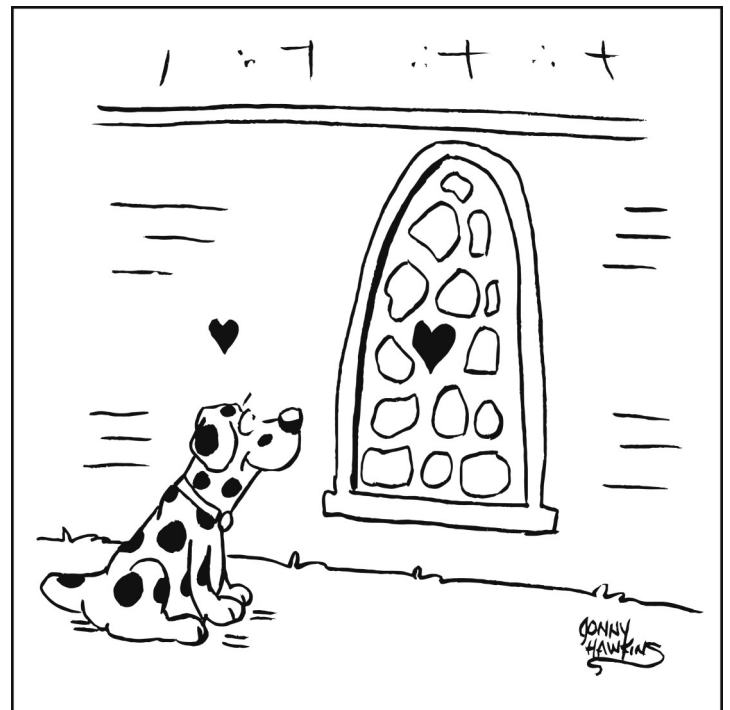
- African-American History Month
- Valentine's Day, February 14, 2020
- Presidents Day, February 17, 2020
- Transfiguration of Our Lord, February 23, 2020
- Ash Wednesday, February 26, 2020
- Leap Day, February 29, 2020

### +Christian Symbol+



#### Shepherd's Crook

The shepherd's crook is a symbol for Jesus, the Good Shepherd. "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). The crook also symbolizes the shepherds who visited the baby Jesus in Bethlehem. It's also used in connection with King David, who worked as a shepherd when he was young.





## February 2020, LSI Newsletter Article and Story



### Happy Valentine's Day from LSI!

"We love because he first loved us." 1 John 4:19  
Lutheran Services in Iowa's (LSI) mission is about love: responding to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. We give thanks for all the ministry partners, both individuals and congregations, who help share this love for Iowa children, families, and adults!

We see this love in newly adopted children and their families, in teens who learn to trade self-harm for self-worth, in Iowans with disabilities who are growing their independence and confidence, in new parents who are raising strong and healthy families, and in so many other moments of joy. You can help carry out our mission of hope and healing by giving a gift and showing love to the Iowa families we serve. For more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI director of philanthropy and church relations, at [Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org](mailto:Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org) or 563-676-2065. -----

Thank you for the love you share and create through LSI.  
Happy Valentine's Day!

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at [www.LSIowa.org](http://www.LSIowa.org) and [www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa](https://www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa).

### "I Feel Like a Parent Now."

When Harmony learned she was pregnant for the first time, she was excited, but apprehensive. She didn't know what to expect when raising her first child.

Harmony's mother, Lois, helped her enroll in LSI's Early Childhood Services, which provide parenting education and resources to families of young children across Iowa. While she was pregnant, Harmony participated in prenatal programming, which helped her maintain a healthy pregnancy and ensure she had everything she needed when her baby was born.

When her daughter, Aya, arrived in October of 2018, Harmony and Lois began participating in LSI's Parent Education Program, where they now attend regular classes and connect with other families in their community.

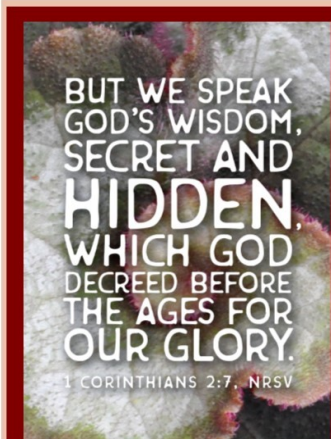
And at home, they receive weekly visits from their LSI Parent Educator, Amy. Each week, Amy brings resources for Harmony and age-appropriate toys for Aya. They work together to monitor Aya's development, and Amy is teaching the family what to expect as Aya begins hitting her developmental milestones.

"LSI helps you learn how to raise your baby and how to learn about being a parent," Harmony says. "Before, I felt like I was trying to swim, but I was drowning. I feel like a parent now."



Answer warm, over in small, loud, hard, young,  
heart and with all your soul and with all your  
strength and with all your mind" and "Love your  
neighbor as yourself," Luke 10:27, NIV





### First Evangelical Lutheran Church

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office@newtonfirstlutheran.org

Office Hours  
Monday—Friday  
8:30 am—12:30 pm

Pastor's Office Hours  
Tuesday & Thursday  
1:00—5:00 p.m.  
or by appointment



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
<b>Super Bowl Potluck</b> 2 Worship/9:30am POTLUCK / Sunday School Youth—Fathom	3	4	5 Property Meeting 6:00 pm	6	7	8
9 Worship/9:30am Fellowship /Sunday School 10:30am Council Retreat following fellowship	10 Hannah 7:00pm N.H.N 4-8:00 pm	11	12	13 Council Meeting 6:30 pm	14	15
<b>Last Day of Bury The Altar</b> 16 Worship 9:30am Fellowship/ Sunday School/ Youth-Shopping Day 10:30am	14	18 Eunice Circle 9:00 am  N.H.N. Meeting 7:00 pm	19 Lois Cr. 9:30 am Martha Cr. 1:00 pm	20	21	22
23 Worship/9:30am Pancake Brunch/ Sunday School 10:30am	24 N.H.N 4-8:00 pm	25 Dorcas 9:00 am	26 Community Meal 5:30 pm <i>Ash Wednesday</i>	27	28	29

## Serving Schedule

	Acolyte	Council on Duty	Lector	Ushers	PA	Fellowship	Child. Message	Music Leader
Feb. 2	Leo Friedman	Corinne Coyle	Jayne Goos	Dirk A. & Alex A.	Duane Quanbeck	Potluck	Robyn Friedman	Colette Hill
Feb. . 9	Hailey Sumpter	Marie Quanbeck	Jim Lammey	Lee S. & Aaron B.	David Good	Quanbeck	Allison Bartholmey	Allison Bartholmey
Feb. . 16	Claire Breuer	Marie Quanbeck	Lane Rose	Bob F., & Stan K.	Deb Rose	Breuer, & Cantu	Robyn Friedman	Jane Johnson
Feb. . 23	Thomas Hodnett	Jim Lammey	Marie Quanbeck	Jim L., & Gary J.	Duane Quanbeck	Pancake Brunch	Aaron Bartholmey	Colette Hill

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50208

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**Watch Past and Live  
services !**

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GOD  
is  
LOVE

