Love One Another: Jesus’ Farewell Discourse

At last…it’s spring! The snowmen outside have melted and the piles are continuing to melt. The snowmen decorations inside have likely been put away, and possibly replaced by spring colors, flowers or maybe Easter decorations. In our worship life together, we continue in the season of Lent for two more weeks before hearing again the timeline of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (April 14th), his Last Supper with his disciples on Maundy Thursday (April 18th), his trial and crucifixion on Good Friday (April 19th), and ultimately, his glorious resurrection on joy-filled Easter Sunday (April 21st).

Maybe you know Jesus’ timeline well. Maybe you know bits and pieces well and others are a little foggier in your memory. This month, I’d like to point you to a part of the timeline we don’t often hear in worship during Holy Week: chapters 13-17 in the Gospel of John. This section is sometimes referred to as the “Farewell Discourse”, and is Jesus’ extended speech to and prayer for his disciples that takes place before, during and after the Last Supper—just before he is arrested and killed. I highly encourage you to take some time to read through those chapters this month. (Back up to chapter 12 to begin with the Entry into Jerusalem, if you want.)

These chapters contain what Jesus was deeply concerned about in his final hours…spoiler alert: much of it is about loving each other! Contained in these few chapters we find Jesus:

…washing his disciples feet, and telling them to “wash one another’s feet” also (John 13:14).
…declaring a new commandment, that we love one another, just has he has loved us. (John 13:34-35)
…sharing that there are many rooms in God’s house, and that he goes to prepare a place for them and will come again to take them to be with him forever. (John 14:2-3)
…promising the coming of the Holy Spirit to be with them (and us) forever” (John 14:16)
…leaving them with words of peace (John 14:27)
…describing himself as the vine, and us as the branches, and encouraging us all to abide in him…to stay connected. (John 15:1-11)
…reminding them that the world may despise them and that it may be a tough road at times (John 15:18-26)
…But also that the Spirit will be with them; that their sorrow will ultimately turn to joy (John 16:1-24)
…And then, in chapter 17, Jesus prays for his disciples—for protection, unity, to commission, and to make God’s name and love known throughout the world.

Jesus’ “Farewell Discourse” in John, 13-17 contains many reminders and teachings for us to lean into today, and his prayer in the 17th chapter was prayed for those there at that time AND those for all time—including us! Jesus prayed for YOU—for protection, unity, to be filled by God’s love, and to be sent into the world to share God’s love. That’s pretty powerful stuff.

May we all be filled by these words…filled with God’s peace…filled with the love of Christ…and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. And may we carry that into our day each day and into the world around us—to be shared with neighbors and co-workers, acquaintances and strangers, friends and family.

May God’s Love Fill You Up,
Pastor Amy
First Lutheran Church  
Council Minutes  
Meeting: Wednesday, March 13, 2019

**Members Present:** Todd Kramer, Heather VanderVoort, Dan Rettmann, Tammy Radloff, Katie Ovitt, Chad Paulson, Luke Krueger, Payton Markgraf, Ryan Johnson. Pastor Amy was also present.

**Members Absent:** Michelle Melberg, Paulette Johnson, Stacie Kramer, Gary Rippentrop, Jessie Novotny.

The meeting was called to order by Katie Ovitt, President. Each Council Member shared “High’s, Low’s or God at Work.”
Devotions were led by Dan Rettmann.

**April Council Duties:**
Head Usher, Scripture & Prayer, Communion Helper – Gary Rippentrop
Finance Helpers – Chad Paulson

**Secretary’s Report:**
M/S/C by Todd Kramer/Tammy Radloff to approve the minutes as written.

**Pastor’s Report:**
Pastor Amy went through her report and outlined regular commitments that she has for each month for our church, for our community and for our conference. Some of these include: Psalters Bible Study, Pastoral Text Study, Lead Worship at Prairie View and BLHC, BLHS Ministerial, MN Valley Conference Pastors, WELCA Circles, Confirmation Classes and planning, Pastoral Care Visits, Hospital Visits, Pastoral Counseling, Emergency Assistance Requests, Worship, Prep, Administration and Communication, Finance Committee Meeting and Council Meeting.

Thank you to *Bill and Thad Roebke* for all the work all winter, but especially in this past month, in moving and clearing snow and ice from our parking lot, street parking areas and sidewalks.

Thank you to *Tina Kuemper*, our Financial Treasurer, for attending Equipping Congregations Day in Willmar, and experiencing helpful workshops and speakers.

**Finance Committee:**
Checks & Balances: Giving is down for the month due to missed services and one Sunday with no Sunday School.

Expenses look high but it is because the insurance came out this month.

M/S/C by Todd Kramer/Tammy Radloff to pay 6% of our offering income to Synod Benevolence rather than the full amount since offering is down for the month of February.

**Youth & Education Committee:**
BLHALY St. Patty’s Day Meal scheduled for March 17th has been cancelled.

Family Fun Fest will be held on April 14th (Palm Sunday).
Heather Gee has resigned as the Sunday School Superintendent as of the end of May 2019. We are looking for a new person to take her place.
Michelle Melberg and Katie Ovitt will be heading up VBS.
SWMN Synod Sr. High Youth Gathering will be held April 5-6 in Alexandria, MN. There are 4 kids from First Lutheran and 2 kids from Zion Lutheran planning to attend this event. Pastor Amy will also attend.
Confirmation Sunday is April 28th and we have 7 students affirming their faith at First Lutheran.

**Worship & Music Committee:**
Mid-week worship services continue to rotate for Lent, with supper at 5:30pm and worship at 7:00pm.
Maundy Thursday will be April 18th with the Living Last Supper at 7:00pm at Zion Lutheran. There will be a free-will donation meal at 5:30pm.
Good Friday service will be held on April 19th at 7:00pm at Zion Methodist in Buffalo Lake.

**Property Committee:**
Electric Sanctuary Lamp (Eternal Flame) – has arrived.
Ongoing: Looking into quotes for Social Hall drywall and plaster and looking into new door sweeps.

**Personnel Committee:**
This group is working on defining the Personnel Committee Role.
Will meet in the near future and finish up with evaluations.
Job Descriptions are done and on the jump drive. Each committee will have the job description for the department that they are responsible for, especially during transitions.

**Mission & Outreach Committee**
Local & Global Recommendations for April were approved:
- Local: Renville County Food Shelf
- Global: Red Cross of MN

**Old and New Business:**
Katie Rudeen is working on collecting emails and preferences for Electronic Spirelights.
February 23rd was “Equipping Congregations Day” in Willmar. Pastor Amy and Tina both attended. They each went to different sessions and learned a lot of information. “Hospitality”, “Abundant Aging” and “Effective Leadership in Anxious Times” are the 3 sessions that Pastor Amy attended.
Council Retreat is scheduled for Sunday, March 31st at Max’s Grill in Olivia. New members will meet at 11:45am and the full council will meet from 1-5pm.
2 volunteers are needed to do the gift policy questionnaire by March 26th. Katie Ovitt, Ryan Johnson, Dick Scheel and Pastor Amy will do the questionnaire to lead us to a draft to work on at the Council Retreat.
Reminder: Committee chairs please send agenda items to Pastor Amy or Katie Ovitt, President, in advance of council meeting, preferably by the Monday before Council meets.
Mike Ovitt has accepted the position of the Financial Treasurer. M/S/C carried by Ryan Johnson/Todd Kramer to accept Mike Ovitt as the Financial Treasurer.
M/S/C by Luke Krueger/Heather VanderVoort to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michelle Paulson, Council Secretary
The Women of the ELCA Minnesota Valley Spring Gathering will meet at Christ Lutheran Church in Glencoe on Tuesday, April 9th. Our registration and meal begin at 5:30pm, followed by our meeting at 6:30pm. The cost for the evening will be $10.00. The theme of our Gathering this year is “We are called to serve.”

May 3rd and 4th is our Annual Southwest MN Synod Convention at First Lutheran Church in Marshall. The In-Kind offering for the convention is school kits. A display will be in the Social Hall of what goes into a kit.

Joyce Olinger
W/ELCA President

The Local Mission dollars for April will be sent to the Renville County Food Shelf. This helps provide food and supplies for families in need residing in Renville County. Many families are in need and look to go to the food shelf for help in making ends meet.

Global Mission for April is American Red Cross – Minnesota Region. As a community-based humanitarian organization, the American Red Cross Minnesota Region prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors. By helping people learn how to take care of their families and neighbors, the Red Cross strengthens communities and readies them for all types of disasters, including home fires, tornadoes, winter storms and health emergencies. First Lutheran is glad to send it’s mission dollars to the American Red Cross.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please see one of the committee members, Chad Paulson, Michelle Melberg, Dan Rettmann, and Tammy Radloff. The Mission and Outreach Committee is looking for new members; please feel free to volunteer.

The Women of the ELCA

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Family Fun Fest

Palm Sunday, April 14th

Worship at 10:00am followed by meal & raffle.

Items to donate for the raffle can be brought to First Lutheran starting anytime.

Raffle tickets will be sold during coffee time on Sundays prior to April 14th as well as on Family Fun Fest day.
If you have a prayer request, either for the prayers made by the congregation on Sunday morning, or by the Prayer Chain any day of the week, please call the church office or any member of the Prayer Chain. If you would like to become a member of the Prayer Chain, please e-mail or call the church office.

Hannah Circle
Wednesday, April 17
9:00am
Dorothy Johnson’s home

Sarah Circle
Thursday, April 25
5:00pm
at church

Psalters
(1st & 3rd Wednesdays of the month)
Wednesday, April 3
&
Wednesday, April 17
10:00am
Prairie View
2019 Mid-Week Lenten Series:
The Sermon on the Mount

A Series of Services for the Season of Lent

This series for Lent takes parishioners through some of the most familiar teachings of Jesus from his Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 and relates them to the events surrounding Christ’s life, death and resurrection. In the process, the services will powerfully reveal that the cross itself is the ultimate sermon on the mount for our journey of faith in this sacred season. We will hear about different themes that arise in the Sermon on the Mount, including: Blessed Are You; Salt and Light; Prayer and Fasting; Do Not Worry; Judge Not; and Build on Rock.

2019 Mid-Week Lent Schedule

Meal 5:30-6:45 pm, Worship 7:00 pm

Zion Lutheran, Buffalo Lake; St. Paul’s, Hector; and First, Hector will rotate hosting the Lent service and meal. Fellowship and light meal from 5:30-6:45. Soup, sandwiches and bars served by the Confirmation parents and youth. Worship services will be at 7pm.

Lenten Supper & Worship Rotation

Wednesday, April 3 ........ Zion Lutheran, BL......... Judge Not
Wednesday, April 10 ...... St. Paul’s, Hector .......... Build on Rock
Sunday April 14 .......... at each congregation..... Palm Sunday

Holy Week

Thursday, April 18 ........ Maundy Thursday .......... Living Last Supper at Zion Lutheran, BL
Friday, April 19 ........... Good Friday................. Zion Methodist, Buffalo Lake
Sunday, April 21 .......... Easter Sunday.............. 7:00 am Sunrise Easter Worship
................................................................. 8:00 am Easter Breakfast
................................................................. 9:30 am Easter Worship

Living Last Supper: Disciples needed!

During Holy Week, a Maundy Thursday worship, open to all and put on by folks from the various area churches, will be held at Zion Lutheran Church in Buffalo Lake on Thursday, April 18th at 7:00pm. As part of that worship, the “Living Last Supper” will come to life once again -- a theatrical portrayal of Jesus and his 12 disciples at the moment that Jesus declares that one of them will betray him. We are looking for people to volunteer to be a part of that Living Last Supper -- each character has a one-page monologue to share (No memorization required!) The plan is to have one rehearsal ahead of time, and then to meet to run through it before worship on that Thursday. If you are willing or interested, contact Pastor Dave Drager at 320-905-4060.
Confirmation Sunday is April 29th

Our 9th graders are:

Gavin Bergsma  Emilie Hable  Madison Hansen
Mercedes Herning  Emma Radloff  Jaxon Watkins
Madison Wulkan

Please keep them and their families in your prayers as they prepare for this important step in their faith journey.

NEW: Confirmation Recognition will be ON Confirmation Sunday this year.

On Sunday, April 28th, Sunday School will be at 9am, along with Confirmation pictures. We gather for worship at 10am, with the Confirmation Recognition time following worship. After that, some of the Confirmation families will be using the Fellowship Hall for their own family gatherings for their noon meal. Please join us in celebrating and recognizing our 9th graders in worship and at the Recognition that same day.

Easter Garden

If you wish to share Easter flowers with us, please have them in the sanctuary by noon on Saturday, April 20. If they are in honor or memory of someone, please fill out a slip and return it to the office by Wednesday, April 17. Slips can be found in the narthex.

Wild Game Feed

Sunday, April 7
6:00 pm
There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board if you would like to bring food to share.
Offering Collectors

April:
7 Piper Milbrandt
14 Dylan Schanil
21 No Sunday School
28 Malaya Stark

Sunday, April 14
Both Preschool—1st grade AND 2nd-7th Grade Choir will be singing on Palm Sunday, April 24 during worship. Since worship is at 10:00am that day, please have your child in the chapel by 9:30am so we can go through both songs all together.

Sunday School Schedule
April 7—10:15am Sunday School
April 14—NO Sunday School...have your child in the chapel at 9:30 to practice songs
April 21—No Sunday School
April 28—9:00am Sunday School Worship with Confirmation is at 10:00am

Upcoming Important Dates:
April 28 - Confirmation Worship & Confirmation Recognition
May 12 - Senior Recognition
May 19 - Last Day of Sunday School
May 29 - Baccalaureate at St. Paul’s, Stewart, 7:00pm

April Confirmation Schedule

Wednesday, April 3
5:30-8:00
As scheduled at Zion (serve/plan/lead worship)

Wednesday, April 10
5:30-8:00
As scheduled at St. Paul’s (serve/plan/lead worship)
Also: Consider attending
Maundy Thursday worship (7pm at Zion Lutheran, Buffalo Lake) and
Good Friday worship (7pm, at Zion Methodist, Buffalo Lake)

Wednesday, April 17
3:30-5:30
First Lutheran 9th graders only – Stole-making and Confirmation Rehearsal and planning (must attend!)

Wednesday, April 24
3:30-5:15
Confirmation Class at Zion

Wednesday, May 1
3:30-5:15
Confirmation Class at Zion

Senior High Youth Gathering
This year’s gathering will be held April 5-6 at the Lake Geneva Christian Center, Alexandria, MN. The theme this year is “Walk Humbly” based on Micah 6:8: “Do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God.”

The following students will be attending this year’s synod gathering. Please keep them in your prayers as they travel and embark on this faith-filled experience together: Jadah Borth, Emilie Hable, Madison Hansen, Mercedes Herning, Sara Kottke, Cale Peterson. Pastor Amy and Pastor Jackie will be the adult leaders.
**Worship Assistants**

**Head Usher:** Gary Rippentrop  
**Financial Helpers:** Gary Rippentrop, Chad Paulson  
**Sound Tech:** Chad Paulson, Gary Rippentrop (alt)  
**Altar Guild:** Vicky Novotny, Gail Roebke

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### Ushers & Greeters

#### Ushers

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#### Greeters

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### Lay Readers

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### Acolytes

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