



# THE FIRST PERSPECTIVE

March 2022  
First Lutheran Church, Stephen, MN

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***Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,***

The season of Lent is upon us. Lent is a season of repentance, turning to God and asking for God's goodness to wipe away our sins and show us how to live anew. Lent also turns us toward Easter and the abundant life God will offer through the Three Days.

The Lenten series for this year is "journey of stones". We will begin our journey through Lent beginning March 2nd with the Ash Wednesday service at 7:00 PM. This service will include communion and the imposition of ashes.

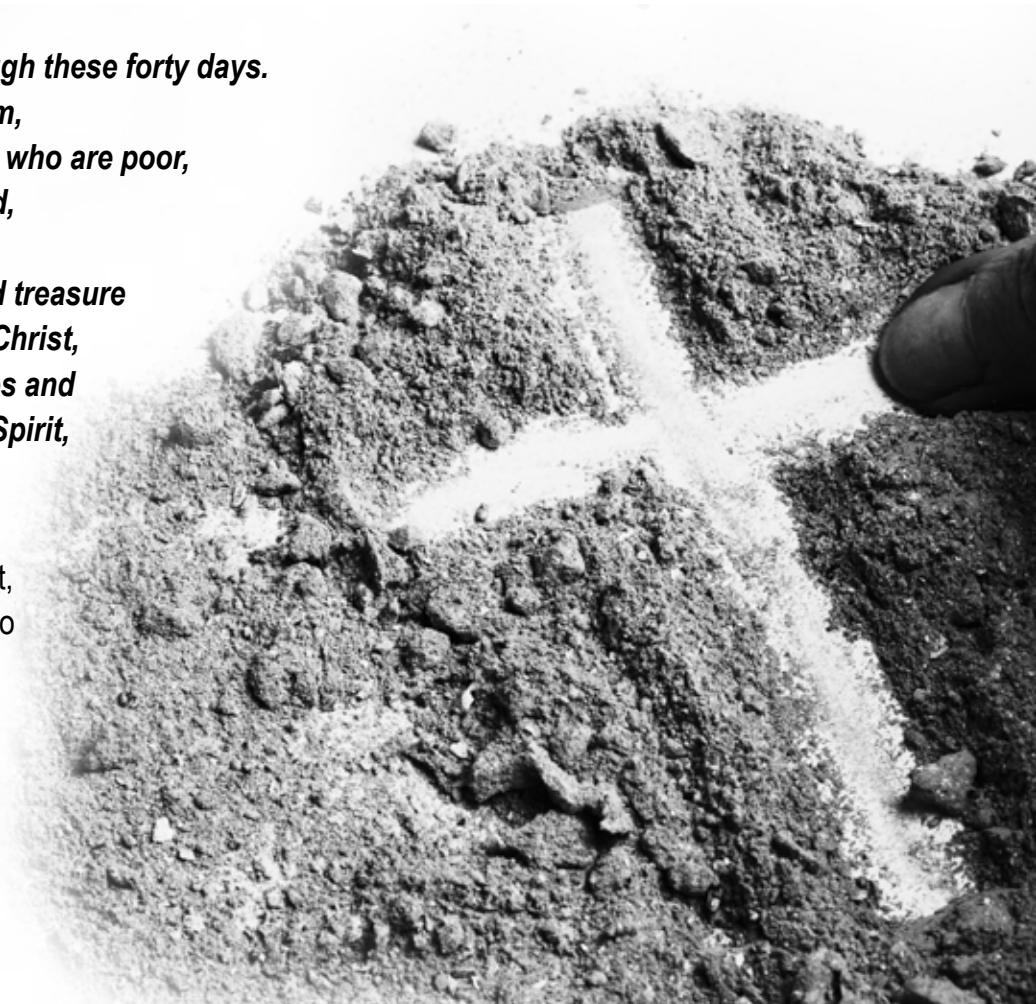
The remaining 5 Wednesdays of Lent will include a Soup & Sandwich Supper which will be served by the confirmation class. Soup and sandwiches will be served from 5:30 to 6:30 and worship will begin at 7:00 PM. There will be time for reflection before the service. Please plan to join us during this Lenten season.

Please pray with me:

***Merciful God,  
Accompany our journey through these forty days.  
Renew in us the gift of baptism,  
that we may provide for those who are poor,  
pray for those who are in need,  
fast from self-indulgence,  
and above all that we may find treasure  
in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ,  
our Savior and Lord, who lives and  
reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever.  
Amen.***

If you haven't done so in years past,  
why not make a Lenten resolution to  
attend services this year?

God bless you and yours,  
Marilyn



# CALL COMMITTEE BEGINS THE SEARCH FOR A PASTOR, ASKS FOR THE CONGREGATION'S PARTICIPATION



As the congregation moves forward in finding a Pastor, a Call Committee has been formed. The Call Committee was strategically chosen to represent different ages, genders and experiences. Call Committee members are Shawna Peterson, Marilee Marty, Gannon Nelson, Deanna Swend-seid, Korey Sundby and Connie Troska. Below are the highlights of what is happening so far.

After several postponed meetings (thanks to the weather and COVID), the Call Committee met with a Synod representative on February 10th via Zoom instead of in person (again...weather).

The Synod representative explained that there are 10 steps for the Committee to follow and that we have already completed several of the preliminary steps.

On February 15th, the Call Committee met to continue the process. This included creating an online profile for our congregation and developing a Congregational Study Questionnaire. This Questionnaire is part of the search process and can be found in the center of this newsletter. We encourage every voting member to fill out the Questionnaire. You can either fill it out and return it to the church, or you can go to [www.stephenflc.com](http://www.stephenflc.com) and click on the link to the Questionnaire online.

Either way, you choose. We ask that you fill it out ASAP so that we can move forward with the next step. Deadline to fill out the questionnaire is March 15th.

Thank you,

Call Committee Members

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## NOTICES

### **Ash Wednesday**

Services March 2 at 7 pm.

### **Lenten Soup & Sandwich**

Confirmation students will be hosting a Soup & Sandwich meal each Wednesday before Lenten services. 5:30 to 6:30 pm.

### **Church Council Meeting**

Wednesday, March 2 following Ash Wednesday Services.

### **Celebrating Baby!**

A Baby Shower will be held for Moriah (Nelson) Bickel on March 12 from 10 am to 2 pm.

### **Martha-Ruth Circle**

The Martha-Ruth Circle will hold their first meeting of the year on Monday, March 14 at 7 pm at First Lutheran Church. Penny Jensen will be the hostess.

### **Do You Have News To Share?**

Is something exciting happening in your life? Do you have an announcement you would like to share? Send your items for the newsletter to [firstl@wiktel.com](mailto:firstl@wiktel.com) by the 20th of each month.

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### **SYNODIAL APPROVED MINISTER OFFICE & CONTACT INFORMATION:**

SAM - Marilyn Grandstrand: Tuesday & Friday 9am - 4 pm  
Email: [flcpastor@wiktel.com](mailto:flcpastor@wiktel.com) | Phone 763-258-9217

### **CHURCH OFFICE INFORMATION:**

Email: [firstl@wiktel.com](mailto:firstl@wiktel.com) | Phone 218-478-3895 | [www.stephenflc.com](http://www.stephenflc.com)

# "JOURNEY OF STONES" - LENTEN FOCUS: OUR WALK WITH GOD

*"like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."* | Peter 2:5

This month marks the beginning of Lent, the season of the church year where we focus on our walk with God. Our theme for Lent comes from the verse listed above, we are living stones being built into a spiritual house.

**Each week please take a stone from the basket into worship with you.**

March 2 – Ash Wednesday: Written in Stone – Exodus 32: 1-24

March 9 – Week 2: Rejected Stones – Psalm 118, Mark 12:1-2

March 16 – Week 3: Sticks and Stones – John 8:1-12

March 23 – Week 4: Hearts of Stone – Luke 11:37-52

March 30 – Week 5: Upon this Rock – Matthew 16:13-20

April 6 – Week 6: Crying Stones – Luke 19:29-40

April 14 – Maundy Thursday: Stones to Bread – Matthew 4:1-11

April 15 – Good Friday: The Final Stone – Matthew 27:60

April 17 – Easter Sunday: He's Alive! – John 20:1-18



## THIS LENT, PUT GOD'S LOVE IN ACTION



This Lent, we're putting God's love in action by making Lutheran World Relief Personal Care Kits. The loss and uncertainty of COVID-19 continues to hit our poorest neighbors around the world even harder. And we ourselves are restless after two years of wandering in the wilderness of a pandemic. We want to announce to the world that Christ makes a new season possible: a Season of Hope. We're excited to engage in this project as a community during our Lenten journey this year.

### HERE'S OUR COLLECTION SCHEDULE:

#### WEEK 1

**Bars of Soap**  
(2-3 bars,  
4 to 5 oz.,  
any brand,  
in original wrapping)



#### WEEK 2

**Bath Towels**  
(light-weight,  
maximum  
52" x 27",  
dark color  
recommended)



#### WEEK 3

**Toothbrushes**  
(adult size,  
in original  
packaging)



#### WEEK 4 Combs



#### WEEK 5 Nail Clippers (metal, attached file optional)



**LUTHERAN  
WORLD RELIEF**

LWR.ORG/HOPE | 800 597 5972

**Please put items in the basket  
in the back of the church.**

# THANK YOU NOTES



Thank you to everyone who shoveled the church sidewalks for Myron. It's the first time that he signed up to help with the shoveling for the church, and unfortunately, he injured his shoulder 4 days before his week started, playing with the puppy outside. So, of course during his scheduled week, we ended up with multiple days of blizzard/blowing conditions, so we couldn't even get to town to try to clear it. Several people shoveled for him and several more volunteered to help. We so appreciate all the assistance to keep the church sidewalks clean.

Thank you!

Kris Ann and Myron Pietruszewski

Dear First Lutheran Church,

We hope you all are staying safe and warm this winter! Thank you for your faithful and generous contribution to Pathways! With your help, we can share God's love at camp and beyond!

Peace and Gratitude  
The Pathways Staff

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## PRAYERS FOR THOSE IN THE MILITARY

Please remember all our service men and women in prayer, especially:

- John Hendricks, son of Brian & Jean Hendricks, Travis Air Force Base
- Todd Jensen, son of David & Penny Jensen
- John Johnson, son of Roger & Jane Smidt
- William Kotts, brother of Garry Kotts
- Luke Thompson, son-in-law of Garry & Sharon Kotts
- Kelsey Schendel, niece of Pastor Mike



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### Ink & Toner Recycle Program/Cell Phone Recycle Program

Drop off your used printer cartridges at First Lutheran.

Cell Phones can also be recycled. Accepted are: **Smartphones, cell phones, iPads, tablets, Kindles, iPods, Apple Watches and MacBooks**, regardless of their age or condition are accepted. You can put them in the cupboard in the church's front entry. Questions? Call Michelle Weberg at 218-478-4543.

Proceeds from both Recycling Programs will go to FLC Youth Programs.





# SERVENT LISTS

Please note the dates that you are scheduled to acolyte/usher for Sunday Worship. If you are not able to serve that Sunday, please find a substitute. Then, notify the church the the bulletin can be printed correctly.

## ACOLYTES

3/6	Ty Winge, Mason Smith
3/12	Charlotte Rogus, Mia Curry
3/20	Nick Winge, Anders Thompson
3/27	Abby McMahan, Brynn Benitt

## USHERS

3/6	Ken & Pat Heggen, Matt Kroulik & Whitney Weisenberger
3/12	Mark & Beth Kroulik, Garry & Sharon Kotts
3/20	Geoff & Deanna Swendseid, Brandee Kuznia
3/27	Mark & Beth Kroulik, Kelly & Kristen Clausen

## COFFEE SERVERS -- Leaders: Mark & Beth Kroulik

3/6	Chrissy & Gannon Nelson, Ann & Tom Woinarowicz
3/12	Betsy & Brian Jensen
3/20	Krissy & Justin McMahon, Tim & Jody Paulson
3/27	Lon & Melissa Woinarowicz

### Bulletin Sponsors

If you would like to honor or remember a family member, you can sponsor a bulletin. Sponsorships are \$20. Please contact the office with your request.

### Loose Change

Loose Change Sunday will be the 3rd Sunday of each month. This month's Loose Change is Area Food Shelf.

### Altar Committee

Reminder to change the paraments and fill the candles. Communion is served the 1st & 3rd Sundays. Committee members prepare the altar.

### Lay Readers

Please consider signing up to read during services. If you haven't been a lay reader before, contact Marilyn to find out more.

Thank you **Ava Weisenberger**, for reading this past month.

### Thrivent Members

Are you throwing away \$500 a year? You have the opportunity to use this money to help causes of your choice. Contact Ellen Anton for more information.



# SACRED SOUNDS CONCERT

The Sacred Sounds Concert will be held on Wednesday, March 30th at 7:00 pm at St. Stephen's Catholic Church.

Sacred Sounds is an ecumenical event presented by Stephen Argyle Central students.

Everyone welcome!





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## 2022 ELCA “Boundless” Youth Gathering Cancelled

Information from the ELCA website:

*“After much prayer, conversation and tears, we have made the difficult decision to cancel the 2022 Gathering, MYLE and the tAble due to the ongoing pandemic, the recent COVID-19 surge and public health considerations*

*We know there are thousands of young people who will not get to experience the Gathering, and our hearts break for them. This was not an easy decision, and we ask for your prayers and your grace. We understand the impact this decision will have on our youth, volunteers and planning teams, and we hope to return to Minneapolis for a future Gathering.”*

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## Soup and Sandwich During Lent



The Confirmation students will be serving a Soup and Sandwich meal each Wednesday prior to Lenten Services. Serving will be from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm. There will be time for reflection between the meal and the service. Please join the students for a meal and fellowship.

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## Pathways Summer Camp Registration Open!

Registration is now open for Pathways summer camp! Discounts for early bird registration ends April 1st. Informational flyers have been sent home with First Lutheran students. Camp is available for all ages K-12. Contact the church office for scholarship assistance.

For more information go to [pathwaysbiblecamp.org](http://pathwaysbiblecamp.org).



# FIRST LUTHERAN YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Luke  
Kuznia



Cayson  
Clausen



Madilyn  
Anderson



Bowen  
Anderson



*Preschool & Kindergarten students while they were painting during Wednesday School class*

## Important Dates for Upcoming FLC Activities

**Beginning March 2nd**, Wednesday School will be held from 6:00-6:50pm. We are ending 10 minutes early so that we can be done before the Lenten service begins at 7:00pm.

**Sunday, March 13th**, Wednesday School students will sing during worship services.

**Sunday, April 10th Palm Sunday**, Wednesday School students will sing during worship services.

**Wednesday, April 27th**, Last day of Wednesday School for the school year.

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## Mark Your Calendar! Vacation Bible School Dates

Monday, August 1st - Wednesday, August 3rd - Vacation Bible School will be held at FLC from 4:30-7:30pm. Students that are currently in Preschool - 5th grade are eligible to attend. We will send more information to families as the dates get closer.





# MARCH MEMORIALS

In Memory Of	Given By	Designated Fund
Gary Hoper	Ken & Patsy Hegen	Door Fund
	Ron Jensen	St. Petri Cemetery
	Kathy and Charles Labine	Door Fund
	John and Shawna Peterson	Door Fund
	Mike and Cheri Douglas	Door Fund
Arden Sustad	Mike and Cheri Douglas	Door Fund
John Szklarski	Mike and Cheri Douglas	Door Fund
Vi Larson	Mike and Cheri Douglas	Door Fund

## OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE

### NEW LIGHTED SIGN

A fund has been started for a lighted/electronic sign, to replace the current church sign in gratitude for Pastor Mike's 36 years of service to First Lutheran Church. Donations and memorials can be made to this fund.

### FREE NOTES HARMONY PARK

Three instruments have arrived. They will be stored until the spring. They will be placed on the south side of the church and will be available for the community to use.

### SNOWBIRDS

Please remember to send your pledge to your home church. See you when you return!



### Congregational Questionnaire

You will find in the center of this newsletter a Questionnaire. The Call Committee is requesting the assistance of the congregation in filling out the Questionnaire as the search for a new pastor begins.

Please take the time to fill it out.

**One Questionnaire per person. More Questionnaires will be available at the church or you can fill out the Questionnaire online by visiting [www.stephenflc.com](http://www.stephenflc.com) and clicking on the link.**



- 3rd .....Shirley Soderlund
- 7th..... Ron Donarski
- 12th.....Neil Anderson
- 13th..... Pat Grabowska
- 13th..... Roger Smidt
- 16th..... Isaac Mills
- 18th.....Zachary McGlynn
- 18th..... Clara Sundby
- 19th.....Bethany Ness
- 19th..... Carson Pagnac
- 19th..... Karen Schendel
- 19th..... Mary Thorkildson
- 21st..... Gustaf Douglas
- 21st.....Carrie Jensen
- 26th..... Madlyn Anderson
- 26th.....Al Anton
- 29th..... Myron Danielson



- 8th ..... Jan and Lee Bukowski
- 19th.....Audrey and Ralph Swendseid
- 22th..... Betty Pikop and John Jensen
- 30th..... Diane and Jim Klitzke



## First Lutheran Church Council Minutes February 2, 2022

Member Present: Deanna Swendseid, Connie Troska, Al Anton, Kelsey Anderson, Krissy McMahon, Jessica Rogus, Kristin Clausen, Betsy Jensen, and Melanie McGlynn.

Also in attendance, S.A.M. Marilyn Grandstrand and Ellen Anton

President Connie called the meeting to order.

Betsy read devotions.

New council members were welcomed and introduced.

Secretary's report: Motion by Deanna to accept the January 7, 2022 minutes, second by Jess. All in favor, motion carried.

Treasurer's report: All bills have been paid. Motion made by Kelsey to accept the Treasurer's report as printed, second by Betsy. All in favor, motion carried.

It was discussed to use some of our savings to pay off our parsonage repair balance. Motion made by Krissy to use a portion of our savings to pay off the parsonage repair, second by Deanna.

Membership changes: None

### Committee reports

**Deacons:** Nothing to report.

**Trustees:** The lock on the kitchen door is currently not working. It locks just fine, just doesn't unlock reliably. The trustees will look into getting it fixed.

**Parish Education:** If school is 2 hours late or called off, there will not be Wednesday School. Bible camp dates are in the process of being set.

**Trust Fund:** The Trust Fund Committee won't meet until July.

**Stewardship:** No report.

### Old Business:

- We have found someone to install the Free Notes Harmony Park. As of right now, Larry G. from North Dakota will be in touch with Betsy this spring to set a date for installation.

### New Business:

- Deanna Swendseid & Al Anton will represent the council on the nominating committee
- Loose Change designations for 2022 was finalized.
- During Lent, Wednesday School will still start at the same time but end a little earlier. The confirmation kids will be doing soup & sandwich during Lent.
- We will be meeting on February 13th after church to discuss what to post for our secretary's position.
- Al Anton will be getting the church's mail until we hire a secretary. Ellen will go through the mail to get the bills. She will put other mail in council members' mailboxes.
- Bulk mailing costs were discussed. We need 200 to qualify for bulk mailing, and there may be a way to mail fewer for the same price without going with bulk mailing. Also, the newsletter can be linked to our Facebook page, where people can access reading it whenever they want. We will talk more next month.
- Kelsey made a motion to adjourn, second by Al. All in favor, motion carried.

The next meeting will be March 2nd after the Lenten Worship Service.

Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Melanie McGlynn  
Church Council Secretary

# NORTHWEST MINNESOTA SYNOD NEWS



## Great Northwestern Minnesota Synod Get-Together

Dear Beloved in Christ,

It gives me great pleasure to invite you to the first-ever Great Northwestern Minnesota Synod Get-Together, held in Detroit Lakes on March 12 from 10 am to 3 pm (registration will begin at 9 am).

Yes, we shamelessly borrowed the title from the Minnesota State Fair! We thought it was the ideal title for a longed for gathering involving fun activities, inspiration, and information. For over two years, we've longed to gather as a whole Synod to worship, learn together, and grow in our shared mission to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is our opportunity!

In his explanation to the third article of the Apostle's Creed (I believe in the Holy Spirit...), Martin Luther explains that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to call and gather us together around God's holy word and sacraments. So, we are praying for a powerful movement of God's Spirit to gather us in from across the Northwestern Minnesota Synod for this day of worship, equipping and dreaming of our future together!

What will happen?

- We'll worship together, lifting up the theme All for Love, using Ephesians 3:7-13 as our inspiration.
- We'll learn together with:

Our gifted keynote speaker will be Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda, Ph.D. Professor of Theological and Social Ethics, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary of California Lutheran University

There will be workshops for leaders

We'll plan and organize ourselves for mission by holding all eight of our conference gatherings at this event.

Who should attend?

- Those elected to serve as Synod Assembly Voting Members
- Elected leaders of the congregation, especially presidents, treasurers, and secretaries
- Anyone interested in what God is doing through our partnership with each other in the NW MN Synod!

Register now: <https://nwmnsynod.regfox.com/great-nw-mn-synod-get-together>

**Registration will close March 1.**

I look forward to seeing you in Detroit Lakes on March 12 for the first-ever Great Northwestern Minnesota Synod Get-Together! See you there!

In Christ,  
Bishop Bill Tesch

## Virtual Synod Assembly

May 21 @ 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Theme: All for Love: set free by the boundless love of Jesus Saturday, May 21st online A day of tending to synod business, with a short worship and a keynote speaker. Pre-Assembly Information Meetings, Sunday, May 15th at 7:00pm and Monday, May 16th at 1:00pm – to discuss the resolutions, elections, the budget, and answer questions. Voting Member Orientation, Friday, May 20th at 7:00pm

# DEAR PARTNERS IN MISSION,

*I hope this message finds you well. Below, you will find information related to our forthcoming home assignment. It has been four years since we have been able to visit congregations in the U.S., so we are chomping at the bit! Your help is greatly appreciated.*

*Warm regards, and hopefully warm temperatures as well!*

*Jackie and Patrick Bencke*

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Dear Sponsoring Congregations,

February 14th, 2022

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

It is official! Our home assignment will be taking place this coming summer in conjunction with the ELCA Summer Missionary Conference. This is our opportunity to come and share with you some of the exciting things that God has been doing in Japan and in our lives. As we find our way back home, please remember there are a limited number of Sundays available during our home-assignment time and I strongly encourage you to consider a weekday visit opportunity. Requests will be taken until April 1st.

Here are a few of the ways we will be prepared to serve during a visit.

- Offer a message during worship in lieu of the sermon.
- Provide a 15-30 minute presentation about mission in Japan, plus Q & A time
- Teach a Japanese hymn
- Teach origami or how to write a few Japanese characters (good for youth gatherings, confirmation class, Vacation Bible School, etc.)
- A special mission event (mixer/potluck/tea/social gathering/Mission Sunday, etc.)
- BBQ/Picnic with focus on 'getting to know you' and building relationships

**Availability:** One or both of us will be available between July 21th to September 16th.

**Cost:** As indicated in the ELCA covenants, the expenses we incur need to be covered by the congregations we visit. Because the costs vary for travel to different areas, the most equitable way to manage expenses is to divide the total cost among all the congregations we visit. This fee will help us offset our costs for car rental, fuel, and lodging en route.

It saves considerable expense and travel time if geographically connected sponsors coordinate their visit invitations. As in the past, Hastings, Minnesota will be our home base during our visits. Please scan the list of cities where our sponsoring ELCA congregations are located to see if there are logical connections to explore.

**Minnesota Congregations:** Aitkin, Alexandria, Ashby, Barnesville, Bemidji, Benson, Center City, Chisholm, Dalbo, Duluth, Eagle Bend, Elkton, Forest Lake, Grygla, Hinckley, Kenyon, Lake Park-Cormorant, LeRoy, Maplewood, Moorhead, Paynesville, Rogers, Stephen.

**How to schedule a visit:** If you are considering having us visit, even if you haven't decided to make an official invitation, please send me a short email at [jacqueline.bencke@gmail.com](mailto:jacqueline.bencke@gmail.com) by April 1st. and include the following information:

1. Church name and full address and phone number
2. First, second and third choices of dates that will work for you. One date should be a non-Sunday.
3. START TIMES of the church service(s) you would like us to attend
4. What you would like us to do during our visit (e.g. provide a message in lieu of the sermon, power point presentation during coffee hour, Japanese activity). Be as specific as possible.

***It is very important when communicating by email that you specify BOTH the name of the congregation and the city in the subject heading of your message.***

As always, we are grateful for your prayers, communication, and financial support!

Blessings,

Patrick and Jackie Bencke

THE FIRST PERSPECTIVE  
 FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
 PO BOX 72  
 STEPHEN, MN 56757

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
 US POSTAGE PAID  
 STEPHEN, MN 56757  
 PERMIT NO. 1

## MARCH 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
All Sunday Services are celebrated in-person or on Facebook Live		1	2 7 pm Ash Wednesday Serv. 8 pm - Church Council	3	4	5
6 9 am Worship w/Holy Communion	7	8 9:30 am Quilting	9 5:30 pm - Soup/ Sandwich Supper 7 pm Lenten Service	10	11	12 Baby Shower: Moriah Bickel 10 am - 2 pm
13 9 am Worship	14 7 pm Martha Ruth Circle	15	16 5:30 pm - Soup/ Sandwich Supper 7 pm Lenten Service	17	18	19
20 9 am Worship w/Holy Communion - Loose Change: Area Food Shelf	21	22 9:30 am Quilting	23 5:30 pm - Soup/ Sandwich Supper 7 pm Lenten Service	24	25	26
27 9 am Worship	28	29	30 5:30 pm - Soup/ Sandwich Supper 7 pm Lenten Service	31		