



THE Branch

THE NEWSLETTER OF FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

AUGUST 2023

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Cass County Fair Stand

A final opportunity to sign-up and help during our first year with the Cass County Fair food stand (August 8th-12th). We need many helping hands to make this endeavor successful. Please sign-up, and bring along a friend, to help with the set-up, food prep, serving food, and other activities within the fair stand. We would love your involvement if you are able. Use the Sign Up Genius link below (also found on our website) to sign up for a shift. Contact Cathy Callaway at 402-580-7781 with any questions.



Use this link to sign up:
www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0845AEAA22A46-cass/49217693

If you are unable to volunteer, be sure to come to the fair and support the food stand!



Beloved Body of Christ,

Greetings to you and peace in the name of the One who was, who is, and who is to come, Christ Jesus Our Lord.

JoDee, William, Henry, Mary, and I have just returned from eight restful, relaxing days in two of our favorite places: Fort Robinson in the northwestern corner of Nebraska, and Copper Mountain, roughly 10,000 feet up in the Colorado Rockies. Thank you all for this time of respite and rejuvenation.

Every morning in the mountains, I looked high up on a peak populated by a stand of aspen trees most of which, at 80 feet tall or more, contrasted elegantly with the nearby evergreens. Though appearing as individual trees, aspen stands all spring from a single rhizome, making each tree part of a larger organism. The trees themselves can flourish for up to 150 years, but the rhizome beneath the ground can live for tens of thousands of years and is believed to be, essentially, an eternally living organism, and one of the largest on earth.

The aspen serves as a good metaphor of our lives as the church, the Body of Christ. We are many distinct members who live and move and have our being, and we have all that living, moving, and being as the eternally living, ever-resurrecting Body of Christ Jesus. We are that which is seen, even as Christ himself is yet unseen. He is seen as our hands, our feet, our work in the world. While the church daily wears away, Jesus lives eternally and he grows new members every day.

This month, as the church here in this place, North Branch, we embark upon a new mission as the Body of Christ this month: our operation of a food stand at the Cass County Fair. I give thanks to God for the diligent service of those members of the fair stand committee who have been so dedicatedly working these past months. Now the adventure begins. For those who have already given so much, thank you. For those who are preparing to serve, good courage to you. If you are still waiting to see how you can serve, we welcome anything you can give. For all of us, may good bless this endeavor as, rooted in faith, we reach out in love.

School also goes back in session this month, and we pray for all our students returning to the classroom. As the fall progresses, as Sunday School returns, and as youth events start coming around again, we will have more information on all our youth programming. July 10-14, we had a great indication of the health of our youth and education programs here at North Branch as more than 70 children participated in Vacation Bible School. Thanks be to God for all the parents who brought children and for all the volunteers who helped teach and lead children in the way of Christ!

Pastor's note continued on page 2

For fourth- through twelfth-grade youth, we will kickoff off the new Order of St. John organization with a pie-making day, followed by supper and an activity on Saturday, Aug. 5. Lunch will be served at noon, followed by making pies for the fair stand under the tutelage of our congregational experts, followed by fun and fellowship. More information will be forthcoming soon.

Rally Day also approaches on Sept. 10, when we will also return to our two-service schedule with worship at 8:15 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. We will also reconvene our weekly Bible studies and the congregational catechism class, looking at Daniel Erlander's book, *Baptized We Live*. Join us when the opportunities come around this fall!

For now, again, good courage to all who are working at the Cass County Fair. We'll see you out there!

Shalom,

Little Red Wagon

August: Syracuse Food Pantry

Below is a list of current needs for the food pantry.

- Canned fruit (peaches, pears, fruit cocktail)
- Creamed soup (chicken, mushroom)
- Cereal
- Toilet Paper
- Helpers
- Kleenexes
- Mac & cheese
- Toothpaste
- Pasta
- Shampoo
- Instant potatoes
- Dish detergent



Thanks so much for the support you all give!

Garden Produce Table

There is a table set-up in the narthex for extra produce. Give what you don't need.

Take what you need.

Share with those in need.

All monetary donations will be given to **ELCA World Hunger**.



A Note of Thanks

Thank you, friends at First Lutheran for all the cards of sympathy on the passing of my sister and sister-in-law. Your words of comfort made this great loss much easier to bear.

Thank you again, Gerri Stubbendick & family

Thank you so much for the scholarship! It is really appreciated and will help me with my college journey. Being a part of the church has been a big part of my life and I am so thankful for it.

Sincerely, Sawyer Brammier

Dear First Lutheran Members,

On behalf of the Bess Streeter Aldrich Foundation, I would like to thank you for your recent donation of the beautiful silver tea set. Originally donated to your church by the late Wayne Maddock family, the tea set is a wonderful period piece that will add to the beauty of our 1922 Prairie Mansion. I can just see Mrs. Aldrich serving guests with the set.

Sincerely, Kurk Shrader, Executive Director

First Lutheran Church Congregation,

Thank you so much for your recent generous donation to the Murdock Fire Department. This is much appreciated and will be used for continuous updating of our equipment used to serve our community.

Thanks again! Murdock Volunteer Fire Dept.

Dear First Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your donation of quilts and blankets! My people appreciate it! May God richly bless you all!



Baptisms

Clara Jean & Wesley Deane Nutzman were baptized Sunday, July 9th. Their parents are Kent & Luran Nutzman, sponsors are Kate & Jerod Nieveen and Logan Wilsey & Mallory Osen.

Nora June Behling was baptized on Sunday, July 16th. Their parents are Ray & Kaylyn Behling, sponsors are Cody Behling and Sam Nielsen.



Highlights / June 2023 Meeting

New Business:

Board Reports

Treasurer:

- o Move Camp CD at First Nebraska Bank to Riverstone Bank for higher interest earnings

Pastor's Report:

- o Preliminary church directory was received and reviewed for editing before printing.
- o Deacon Timothy Siburg from the Nebraska Synod will be joining us August 20th for a Stewardship conversation.

Education

- o Vacation Bible School held July 10-14 with plans to provide a sack lunch this year

Property

- o New shed bid discussed and \$20,000 approved to cover the cost of materials.

A complete set of minutes is available at the Kiosk in the Narthex.

Giving Opportunities

2nd Mile Giving		
Project	Estimated Cost	To Date
Kiruweni Dispensary	On Going	\$30,300
Global Health Ministries	On Going	\$19,870
Peru Missionaries	On Going	\$16,735
2nd Mile / Shed	\$20,000	\$8,801

Treasurer's Report —

Received through June 30: \$97,203.70
 Expenses through June 30: \$104,864.80
 Budgeted through June 30: \$116,021.06

Giving Online

Thank you for your generosity! Giving is a part of our worship which makes the ministries of this church possible. If you would like the convenience of giving online you can do that by using the website:

<https://onrealm.org/firstlutheranavoca/>
 Give or Text NORTHBRANCH to 73256 or
 Scan the QR code.



Deacons Board

By: Gary Wockenfuss



With August upon us, summer is on a downhill slide which brings education and activities, and the balance of school and church continues to be as strong as ever. While sitting in church before, during, and after the service there is laughter and chatter with soft and loud talking, just like in all of our schools, and much of that talk is our children. Two places run a town, schools and churches and our church has done a great job of making that happen with all the activities, events and "pay it forward" stewardship that we have.

Those voices are also the future of our churches which bring back so many fond memories of my home church with my 6 brothers, yes, I said 6; we all had the opportunity to experience learning about God, through songs, games, and Sunday school! We enjoyed learning about God, playing religious games, and many more events we did in our little town in South Dakota. We always volunteered to help with any and all church activities as we knew the future was built on us children in the church.

We know Pastor Klinker, the Church Council, the Sunday School Superintendent, and all Sunday School Teachers continue to spread the word of God through hearing, listening, and understanding. My parents always said, "God only asks you to spend 1 hour per week in church, what is keeping you back?" That was a very powerful statement and has stayed with all 7 of us brothers through all seasons of the year. The road to our future lies in these little voices we hear each Sunday in church, and I just love hearing them, as one time each one of us were that age with those 'church voices.'

God leads us daily with new journeys, experiences and adventures. Next time you hear those voices, smile and enjoy the future of our church.





Church News and Events

Monthly Afternoon Bible Study

The monthly afternoon Bible study was rescheduled from July and will meet Tuesday, August 22nd at 1 p.m. in the Parish Hall. All are welcome!

Girl's Night Out

On Sunday, August 20th we will be hosting a freezer meal party at the church parish hall. If you're interested in joining us for girl time and a chance to stock your freezer before fall, let Amanda Stubbendick or Marci Gardner know. More information to come!!



Youth Events and Activities Volunteers Needed!

August 5 - Pie Baking and Outing

Update to August 5th!! Meet at the church at 1 p.m. (come at Noon if you'd like to have lunch) to bake pies. This event will help get ready for the fair stand and pie sales.

We will then have a meeting at 4 p.m. before heading to Lincoln for supper and a fun activity!! This event is for incoming 4th-12th graders. We will plan a lock-in for a future date.

August 9 and 12 - Cass County Fair Stand

We are in need of many volunteers from our youth to help at the fair stand. It's a great way to show the youth support within our church and work together in the new food stand!

We need six (6) volunteers on August 9th from 11 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. and eight (8) volunteers on August 12th from 11 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. to work in the Cass county food stand. Please text Kelly Stephenson at 402-639-1043 if you are able to sign up.



Save the Date

Rally Sunday is September 10th during the Sunday school hour at 9:30 a.m. Join us for fun and fellowship as we get ready for a great new year of Christian education!



Blessing of all the back to school stuff!
Bring Backpacks, Sports Equipment, Band Instrument, etc. to be blessed



**Sunday August
13th**



Sunday School Teacher Training

We will have Sunday School Teacher Training on Sunday, August 20th, right after church, to prepare us for our next year of Christian Education.



North Branch Facebook Page has Changed

The Facebook page for First Lutheran has changed. Please "unlike" and "unfollow" the old page, which has been hacked, and go to <https://www.facebook.com/FirstLutheranNorthBranch/> to like and follow the new page. Thank you and sorry for the inconvenience!

VBS wants to say THANK YOU!



VBS was another huge success this year, we had over 70 youth attend throughout the week! And none of that would have been possible without the amazing people who gave of their time to teach and lead those little ones.

It was also made possible by the generous donations of our church family. Thank you so much for your help and your support of this vital program of our church. It helps plant God's truths in the hearts of our youth and also is a great opportunity to open our doors to the surrounding communities.

We also raised almost \$300 for our missionaries, Jared and Emma, and had a number of donations for Tabitha's Thread. Thank you!

We are looking forward to next year already! (Please start saving those 2L bottles!)

OSJ Still Seeking Sponsors, Looking ahead to August 20 Initiation

The Order of St. John at First Lutheran continues to seek more adult sponsors. The OSJ initiation of members and installation of officers will take place during worship on Sunday, August 20th.

Back to College Addresses

August is here, and back to college has arrived. College students' addresses often change, and the church office would like to stay up-to-date with any changes and verify all our college student addresses that we already have in our system. Please email the church at office@firstlutheranavoca.org with your college student's address for the upcoming school year.



Go and...

At Nebraska Synod Assembly they launched a year-long focus to "Go And..." Be part of this call to GO! During

Synod Assembly, they leaned in as God's people called, gathered, and sent to "Go And..." and created a year of intentional themes. August's is Go And...Share Your Story.



GO AND...SHARE YOUR STORY

Children freely share their stories – often full of actions, sound effects, and details (sometimes minute) that bring a story to life. We all have a story to share: stories of families, friendships, histories, and faith. We connect the dots and see our connections.

Questions to Consider:

- When was the last time you listened to a child tell a story? What did you hear?
- What is a biblical story that connects with your own story?
- What is your story? Where are you GOING to share your story?

Prayer: Creator God, our story starts and ends with you. Give us the wisdom to see where and how we might share our stories and the courage to share them. Amen.

Suggested Song: Jesus Loves Me (ELW 595)

Learn More at nebraskasynod.org/go-and/

Lutheran World Relief Kits of Care

A meaningful way to make a difference

In 2022 through the generosity and caring of our brothers and sisters in Christ members of First Lutheran donated to LWR:

- 30 Personal Care Kits
- 51 School Kits

There were also 121 quilts made and donated to several shelters and LWR.

Let's make it a personal challenge to better these numbers for this year! Now is a good time to make purchases since school supplies sales are now going on as well as frequent bath towel sales.

This project is a great opportunity to count our blessings and share with those who have so little! Please drop off kit supplies in the clear tote located in the Narthex.

The deadline to donate items is October 22nd



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF



Personal Care Kits

Provide much-needed self-care and critical germ fighting tools.

School Kits

Equip a child with the supplies they need to keep learning even in a crisis



Mission Quilts

Express love to those who are driven from their homes from disasters or war.

Personal Care Kits

"When LWR distributes Personal Care Kits, it's often to people who have lost everything. In the wake of an earthquake or having fled from violence as their homes were overtaken, they clasp a towel from a faraway place, with a bar of soap, a toothbrush...and washing up, they know that they have not been forsaken by the world. The simple gesture of giving a Personal Care Kit can give someone the encouragement to start anew, starting with a bath!" What to include:

- 1 light-weight bath-size towel (between 20" x 40" and 52" x 27"), dark color
- 2 bath-size bars of soap
- 1 adult-size toothbrush
- 1 sturdy comb (remove packaging)
- 1 metal nail clippers

School Kits

"Why school supplies? To the children who receive School Kits, these supplies mean the difference between getting an education or not. Public school is usually free, but in the places where LWR works, even a few required supplies, like pens and paper, may be more than many families can afford. And when parents can only afford to send one of their children to school, girls rarely get priority...yet the education level of mothers has the biggest impact on development." What to include:

- 4 70-sheet notebooks (8" x 10 1/2") No loose-leaf paper
- 1 30-centimeter ruler, or a ruler with centimeters on one side and inches on the other
- 1 pencil sharpener
- 1 pair of blunt scissors
- 5 unsharpened #2 pencils with erasers
- 5 black or blue ballpoint pens (no gel ink)
- 1 box of 16 or 24 crayons
- 1 2 1/2" eraser