



The Messenger

*Connected in Christ, we grow in faith, live with hope,
and reach out to share God's love with others.*

First English Lutheran Church

February 2023

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SUNDAY WORSHIP

9:30am Facebook Live, then
YouTube at 11:30am

TELEVISED...

Sunday @ 11am from the
previous Sunday
Wisconsin Rapids
Community Media,
Charter 985 &
Solarus Channel 3

FOR CHURCH CLOSINGS:
TV Channel 7 WSAW Wausau

What Matters Most?

What matters most *right now*? Priorities don't remain the same forever; they change as we change, as our culture and community change, as our families and friends change, and as our congregation changes.

We are living documents, and so are our lives. If we refuse to see what has changed and if we refuse to reorder our priorities accordingly, we will lose our relevance and vitality. We will cease to make a difference in this world.

So then, what matters most right now for us as a congregation?

1. Jesus Christ always matters most, and his priorities are always spot-on. It matters greatly that we pray for his guidance and learn to rely on the Holy Spirit so we can follow where Jesus is leading us.
2. It matters that we stay alert and open to change so we can recognize God's provision when people join the congregation or offer new ideas and enthusiasm.
3. When something we've always done is no longer effective, it matters that we acknowledge it and look for something better to take its place—something that will serve God's mission more fruitfully at this time.
4. It matters if we feel confused or unsettled, convicted or uncomfortable about who we are or what we should be doing. This kind of unease will motivate us to share with others, and we will probably find ourselves brainstorming forward in new directions.
5. Faith and fearlessness matter most right now. Faith in God's love and goodness, and fearlessness because we know that we are members of the Lord's church, and our Lord Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd who will lead us in the way we should go.

This seems so simple in writing. It's actually quite challenging in real time with real people and real logistics and financial considerations. But we are assured of God's presence and provision in Hebrews 13:20-21:



May the God of peace who...brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to God through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Sharing the journey,

Pastor Cheryl



February 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 10am Zoom Bible Study 6:30pm Praise Team 7pm Choir	2 7am Yoga	3	4
5 9:30am Worship w/SS 8am Confirmation Class Scout Sunday wear your uniform! Pastor's 7th Anniversary here with cake & coffee after Worship!	6 Pastor Off	7 7am Yoga 10am Staff Mtg	8 10am Zoom Bible Study 6:30pm Praise Team 7pm Choir	9 7am Yoga	10	11
12 9:30am Worship w/SS 8am Confirmation Class Souper Bowl of Caring THE FAMILY 88.5 FM	13 RADIO - HELP FOR Pastor Off	14 Happy Valentine's Day! 7am Yoga 10am Staff Mtg THE HOMELESS	15 10am Zoom Bible Study HYGIENE DRIVE ~ 6:30pm Praise Team 7pm Choir	16 7am Yoga MARCH 5TH	17	18
19 9:30am Worship w/SS 8am Confirmation Class	20 Pastor Off	21 7am Yoga 10am Staff Mtg 6:30pm Council Zoom Mtg	22 Ash Wednesday 10am Zoom Bible Study 1pm Worship 1pm Quilters 5:30pm Soup Supper 6:30pm Worship	23 7am Yoga	24	25
26 9:30am Worship w/SS 8am Confirmation Class	27 Pastor Off	28 7am Yoga 10am Staff Mtg	 Happy Valentines Day!			

Writer's Corner...

True Love

By Robyn Austin

I appreciate when Lent begins during Valentine's month because it really defines what true love is all about. Even better than a dozen roses or box of chocolates, Lent serves as reminder of God's ultimate sacrifice. That moment He proved beyond any measure that He loves us.

As parents, we learn quickly that love is no longer just another word for romance. It's a feeling we hold so deeply for our children that love is not a strong enough word, is it?

I always enjoyed getting the cute little valentines handmade by the much younger version of my 20-something son. When I was the "best mom ever" and he'd profess his love and appreciation for me – before he even knew what the words meant. (Thanks, teachers, for shepherding those precious messages from crayon to my heart.)

Instead of hugging him back with your own professions of loving him to the moon or some other distant place and back, can you imagine looking at your sweet, dimpled child and saying, "I love you, too. But... that's why I must let you go. Why I must let you die at the hands of evil... Let my heart shatter in a million pieces so you can counter that evil. And so those who come after you can live in my grace. Feel my love."

I couldn't do it. I couldn't stand by and just let that happen. Not if I could stop it. A tight lump forms in my throat just thinking about it.

But God did do it. And from that love and mercy, we are here today to spread that love—to our families, friends, loved ones, and yes, even those evil people. Are we doing it?

I'm no expert. But I'm pretty sure His ultimate gift of love was not meant to be a one-time occasion. Rather, a starting point. It's not easy. Just like I'm sure there were moments it was tough for my parents to love me unconditionally, they still did. And just like my child wasn't the perfect angel all the time, I still love him unconditionally. To any celestial being and back.

Frankly, none of us are deserving. But in God's eyes, we are. Let's celebrate—and share—that **true love** during Valentine's Day and throughout Lent.



For God so lo**V**ed the world
that he g**A**ve
His on**L**y begotten Son
that who**E**ver
believes i**N** him
shall no**T**
per**I**sh but have
everlasti**N**g
lif**E**.

John 3:16



Spotlight On...

FELC is set to host FOCUS Neighborhood Meal

Thursday, April 13th from 4:00pm - 6:30pm

At the Sparhawk Building, 2321 W Grand Ave, W.R.

We will be in need of volunteers for:

Plating & Clean-up - 3-4 people from 4-6:30pm

Fill plates and give them to the table servers and help with clean up of the serving area.

Dessert Table Workers - 2 people

Cut desserts, if necessary, and set on serving trays with clean up after.

Beverage Table Workers - 2 people

Pour a variety of hot & cold beverages with clean up after.

Door Greeter - 1 person

Greet guests at the door with a friendly smile and welcome them to the FOCUS Neighborhood Meal.

Thank guests for coming as they leave.

Dining Room Greeter - 1 person

Assist guests in finding an empty seat, get highchair if needed, make space for wheelchairs, etc.

Table Servers - 13 people

Serve beverages, meal plates, & desserts; visit with guest, bus tables for a second setting & clean-up.

Volunteers must sign the FNM Waiver & Release Form each time they volunteer.

The minimum age for volunteering is 14 years old, anyone age 14-17 years old must have a parent/guardian present to sign the waiver or bring a signed permission slip from the parent/guardian.

Appropriate serving attire is required - no tank tops, no mini-shorts/skirts, no flip flops, and no cell phone use during the meal. If you have long hair, please have it pulled back.

Please park in the East parking lot of the Sparhawk building that is marked for Volunteers. Also, please lock your purse/valuables in your vehicle.

It's important that you talk with the guests as much as you are comfortable, to create a friendly, caring, and comfortable environment for them. Talk about the weather, sports, their meal, or compliment their outfit or hairstyle, etc. If things are slow, grab a beverage and sit down with a group or family and chat, if you're comfortable with that.

F.O.C.U.S.



Feeding Our Communities w/United Services

Helping reduce hunger in our communities - Wisconsin Rapids, Nekoosa, Port Edwards, Grand Rapids, Kellner, Babcock, Biron, Vesper, & Rudolph.

FOCUS is a facility in Wisconsin Rapids that helps people in our area who are in need of food. The three primary services offered here are: FOCUS Food Pantry (formerly SWEPS), FOCUS Neighborhood Meals (formerly TNT), and FOCUS Family Backpacks (formerly Rapids Family Backpacks). The three former programs merged as one unified effort that is greater, more effective, and more convenient than any one program alone. People can come for a meal on Thursdays and then go to the food pantry for some groceries to take home all in one trip!

Their new location is at **2321 West Grand Ave, W.R. 54495** (Sparhawk Building)
Website: focusofswc.org ~ Hours for all 3 programs: M-F 8:00am - 4:00pm

Focus Food Pantry (SWEPS) - Groceries will be provided once every 30 days to eligible clients. The pantry also accepts donations of not only food, but also hygiene items: toilet paper, dish soap, laundry soap, shampoo/conditioner, hand soap, and tampons/pads - these hygiene products will also be given out as they are in stock.

Focus Neighborhood Meals (TNT) - A hot meal will be provided in-house every Thursday evening from 4:30pm - 6:30pm, which will be hosted by a church, business, family, school, club, etc. from the community.

Focus Family Backpacks (RFB) - The backpacks are given to children on Friday to assist children with food insecurity over the weekend, and are to be brought back to school on Mondays.

Donations: FOCUS accepts unused, unopened, non-expired food items, donations of your time and service, along with monetary donations as well. When you go to [smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) and pick Feeding Our Communities with United Services while logged into your Amazon account, .5% of your purchase price will be donated to FOCUS.

the Family **HELP** for the **HOMELESS** **Hygiene Drive**

February 12th ~ March 5th

Last year FELC was part of 27 Wisconsin Rapids area businesses, churches, and schools who collected **\$17,591** of supplies for the homeless. All items collected will stay in our area and we will be collecting for **The Family Center** and **FOCUS Food Pantry!** In these three weeks we will be collecting all items needed, with different items collected each week, see below. **We believe we all CAN afford to buy an extra bottle of shampoo or some toilet paper.** A collection box will be located in the entry area for your convenience.

Week 1 ~ 2/12-2/19

- Toilet Paper*
- Paper Towels*
- Tampons/Pads*
- Kleenex

- Laundry Soap*/Dryer Sheets
- Dish Soap*/Sponges
- Cleaning Sprays/Rubber Gloves
- Garbage Bags*
- Bleach/Disinfectants*
- Toilet Brush & Cleaner

Week 2 ~ 2/20-2/26

- Diapers & Pull-Ups*
- Baby Wipes*
- Baby Shampoo/Lotion
- Rash Ointment
- Bottles/Sippy Cups

- Shampoo*/Conditioner
- Brush/Comb
- Style Products/Clips/Elastic Bands
- Head Lice Treatment

- Soft Toothbrushes*/Toothpaste*
- Dental Floss
- Denture Care

Week 3 ~ 2/27-3/5

- Soft & Bar Soap*
- Deodorant*
- Hand, Foot, & Body Warmers*
- Razors*/Shave Cream
- Lotion/Lip Balm
- Q-tips/Cotton Balls

- Children's Pain Meds/Pedialyte
- Antibiotic Ointment/Band-Aids
- Rubbing Alcohol/Peroxide
- Cold & Allergy Meds
- Antacids
- Anti-Diarrheal Meds

*** Urgently Needed**

February 13th



"Lord, as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us to be mindful of those without even a bowl of soup to eat."

PLEASE help tackle hunger of people in the community as we demonstrate God's love by loving our neighbors through the *Souper Bowl of Caring*. It's simple, just bring in your spare change and add to the soup pot on February 13th, or bring in a can of soup! Donations go to FOCUS!



February Birthdays

- 2-1 Brandon Franz
- Bernice Ormstead Mark Stultz
- 2-5 David Laspa
- 2-6 Charles Wallen
- 2-7 Susan Fencil
- 2-8 Michael Schoenholz
- Eunice Matthews
- Tonya Manning
- 2-9 Alida Gross
- 2-11 Jessica Edwards
- 2-13 Gail Grzadziewski
- 2-14 Valerie Nygaard
- 2-16 Debra Franz
- Silas Manning
- 2-18 Jaxon Chambers
- 2-19 Corinne Klopotek
- Luke Fleischmann
- 2-21 Michelle Lipke
- 2-24 Jennifer Vetrone
- 2-25 Jayson Ross
- 2-27 Michael Schill

Happy Birthday!

February Anniversaries

- 2-7 Richard & Mary Bronson
- 2-14 Randy & Debra Franz
- 2-26 Patrick & Jodi Waltenberg

Happy Anniversary!

February Baptisms

- 2-8 Jacob Barnett
- 2-17 Nikki Ross
- 2-19 Maggie Dallman
- Cameron Mancl



What's happening at FELC...

February...

- 5 Scout Sunday - wear your uniforms
- 12 Souper Bowl of Caring - bring in a can of soup or your spare change
- The Family Radio 88.5FM - Help for the Homeless Hygiene Drive - today through March 5th
- 14 Happy Valentine's Day!
- 21 6:30pm Council Mtg
- 22 Ash Wednesday - Worship at 1 & 6:30pm

March...

- 1-29 Wednesdays - Lenten Worship at 6:30pm
- 17 Happy St. Patrick's Day!
- 20 Spring Begins!
- 21 6:30pm Council Mtg

April...

- 1 gam - Noon First Communion Festival
- 2 Palm Sunday Worship at 9:30am
- 6 Maundy Thursday Worship at 6:30pm
- 7 Good Friday Worship at 1pm
- 9 Happy Easter! Worship at 8:30 & 10:30am w/communion
- 13 FNM - FOCUS Neighborhood Meal (TNT) - watch for sign-up sheets
- 18 6:30pm Council Mtg

Happy Springtime!



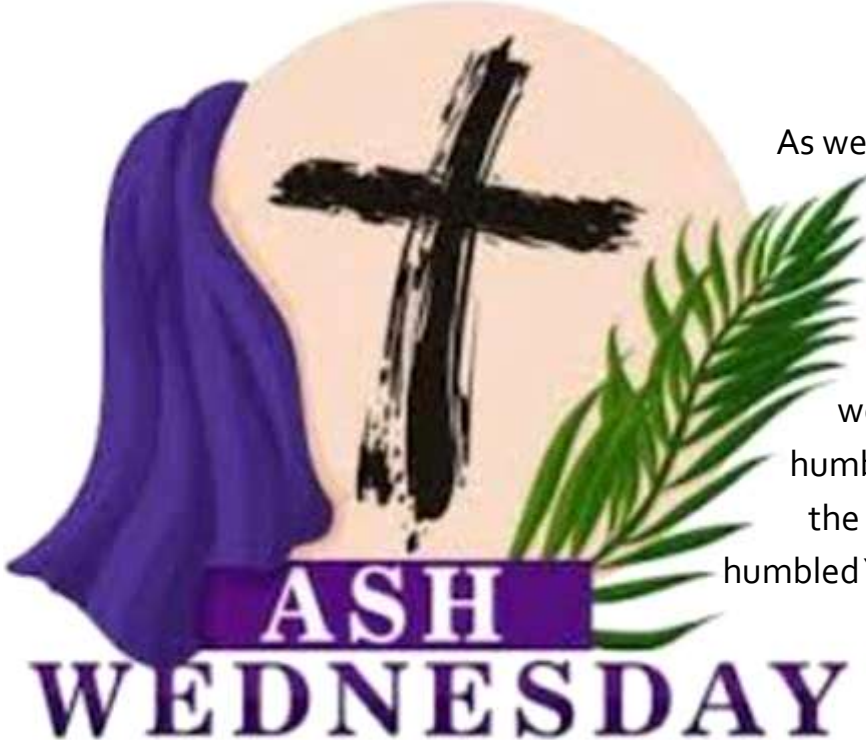
LENT

Preparing for Easter

- Soup Suppers
- Ash Wednesday
- Lenten Services
- Palm Sunday
- Maundy Thursday
- Good Friday
- Easter Sunday

Wednesdays at 5:30pm, Feb 22nd thru March 29th
 Worship @ 1pm & 6:30pm February 22nd
 Each Wednesday Evening at 6:30pm Worship
 Worship @ 9:30am April 2nd
 Worship @ 6:30pm April 6th
 Worship @ 1:00pm April 7th
 Worship @ 8:30 & 10:30am w/Communion April 9th

ALL ARE WELCOME!



Dear Lord,

As we enter this Solemn and Holy Season, we pray that you would send your Holy Spirit up on us that we might prepare ourselves for these coming 40 days of Lent. Even though we may no longer wear sack cloth and ashes, we do seek to humble ourselves so that we can understand the magnificence of Your love for us as You humbled Yourself and gave Your Life on the Cross that we might receive the gift of Eternal Glory with You. AMEN.