

First Hearts

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Ruts

There have been many times when I was driving down a back country mountain road made of dirt. And dirt roads are interesting. If you are on one that is maintained by the county, there's usually no problem driving on them. The problem comes in when you're driving on one that has no maintenance.

These roads are usually quite rough because of what nature has done to them. They are often filled with washes, rocks, logs, and ruts, leaving you to do a lot of slow driving and maneuvering. Of all the things in the road, the one I least like is the "rut." These are deep tire tracks that have been made from many years of repeated use which have become water ways when it rains.

Some ruts are not too bad because they're not too deep. You can drive in them without much problem. Other ruts get so deep that you will scrape the underside of your vehicle and even get high centered if you try to drive in them. Such was the case with the women on Easter morning. They were stuck in a rut. No, they weren't there too long but it was nevertheless a very deep rut!

The rut they were stuck in was Good Friday. Because of this, they came to the tomb wearing mourning clothes and carrying spices. But why? Jesus told them plainly that He would rise on the third day! Even though He said this, they had trouble grasping it with their minds. The horror of Good Friday created a deep rut in the hearts and minds. How deep was it? Well, so deep that Mary was talking to the resurrected Jesus Himself, thinking all along that He was the gardener! That's a deep rut!

But with God "all things are possible." Remember? Even resurrection! Seeing her ruts, Jesus went into action. "Mary!" He said to her. It was a moment that jolted her for she suddenly heard a familiar voice – one that often taught, comforted, consoled, commanded, and encouraged her. It was a voice that belonged to Jesus. In that very moment her eyes were opened! Her heart leaped for joy! The Scriptures came true! He's alive! O blessed sign of Jonah!

Jesus took her out of her Good Friday ruts. Ruts filled with gloom and doom into a new light, a new day. One filled with forgiveness, hope and possibilities and joy! And so it is with us, for we too have our ruts in life. Some are shallow and don't hamper us too much. Others are deep and keep us from running in new tracks.

What I often did when I was in a deep rut on a mountain road was tug hard on the steering wheel and jump out. It was a bit of a jolt to jump out, but once out of the rut, you could maneuver again and your undercarriage didn't scrape. A good thing. Every system of man has ruts given enough time. The trick is seeing them and then giving the steering wheel a strong tug. The result is a jolt that is uncomfortable, but also a new and fresh road to drive on.

"Rabboni!" Mary exclaimed with excitement. that word was a confession of faith! A working of the Holy Spirit! Even more it was a sign that Mary was no longer in her Good Friday rut! She was jolted out of it and now on a new path. One that led to life and light, peace and joy. One that led to eternal bliss! Indeed, the best of news! Her Jesus was alive! And He gave her a jolt that would change her forever! No more ruts! *In Christ, Pastor Schmidt*

Worship This Month

I pledge allegiance to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the faith for which it stands, one Savior eternal with mercy and grace for all.

April 1 – Easter Sunday, The Resurrection of Our Lord: *Isaiah 25:6-9; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Mark 16:1-8.*

April 8 – 2nd Sunday of Easter: *Acts 4:32-35; 1 John 1:1-2:2; John 20:19-31.*

April 15 – 3rd Sunday of Easter: *Acts 3:11-21; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36-49.*

April 22 – 4th Sunday of Easter: *Acts 4:1-12; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18.*

April 29 – 5th Sunday of Easter: *Acts 8:26-40; 1 John 4:1-11; John 15:1-8.*

COMING UP FOR OUR SUNDAY SERVICES –

Several people have asked me about our Sunday morning worship service. How long are we going to use Divine Service Setting Three? Some have wanted to keep it. Some have wanted a change. As we look ahead, the plan was to use it through the season of Lent and then switch to

another Divine Service. Beginning with Holy Week, we will begin using Divine Service, Setting Four. It, too, is a beautiful service which has some different melodies for us to sing. In addition to this change, the overall approach is to change settings every quarter or so utilizing each of the services in our hymnal.

Also, during the months with a fifth Sunday, the plan is to use the Order of Matins with Holy Communion attached. It too has some wonderful canticles to sing, such as the Te Deum Laudamus which I personally have called the "Fourth Creed" of the Church. It and other pieces are a blessing from the fathers before us. Hopefully, this explanation will help you answer the question of what we will be doing for worship. Our services are rich and beautiful and we invite everyone to "tune in the heart" when using them, not just speaking them from a cold, rote memory. That's a rut and they're not always helpful!

WORSHIP SERVICE ETIQUETTE – Our worship service is a beautiful setting in which we come into the presence of God. We fully understand that God's people enjoy visiting with each other and that is a good thing. We would, however, like to request that the visiting and noise be subdued prior to the church service out of respect for God's presence and for those trying to prepare their hearts and minds to receive the Word. We ask that once the organ begins to play the congregation quiets and begins to focus on God's Divine Service. This will help us remain reverent and focused. Thank you!

CONFIRMATION NOTE – Confirmation in our Church body is a very important journey in which our students are carefully taught the Christian faith. It should not be taken lightly nor rushed through with haste. Because of this, we will not have a Confirmation Class this year. There simply was not enough time to cover all the material due to the vacancy at First Lutheran. This year's class of students are a fine class and will be confirmed next year.

Please keep them in your prayers as they grow in the Christian Faith!

Prayer List

HELP US WITH PRAYER REQUESTS! It's good that we submit prayer requests to the Church for Sunday mornings. As you submit a request, please help us out by keeping the following items in mind:

1. When submitting someone's name for public prayers on Sunday, please make sure you have the permission of that person to do so! Once in a while someone wants their situation to remain private. Please make sure it's okay to pray for them publically.
2. When submitting prayer requests, it's always helpful

to call them or e-mail them in to the church office before Sunday if possible. This helps us to place them into the bulletin and also enables the pastor to have them before service. Parishioners can also give them to the pastor before service. He will do his best to include it, but last minute requests can sometimes be forgotten.

3. ALSO! This is very important! Once in a while a prayer request is turned in and for some reason it was missed in the Sunday morning prayers. If this happens, please don't panic. It was a simple oversight. A gentle reminder would be helpful since we deal with a great deal of information during the course of the week. We never intend to miss a prayer request but once in a while it can happen.

4. When submitting a prayer request, please also let us know if someone has gotten better and the prayer request can be removed. Generally, we will pray for someone on Sunday morning for about three to four weeks unless the circumstances they are in continue. Let us know if the request can be removed or if it needs to be continued.

Thank you for your help with these prayer "protocols!" Keep praying!

OUR PRAYER LIST SHOULD INCLUDE:

Sick or Burdened Members:

General: Jim Beck, Don Weaver

Serving Our Country: Brett Anthonijs, Robert Boatman, Isaac Davis, Chad Kaiser, Adam Smith, Jeff Stone, Neil Whitehead

Other Prayer Requests:

MEMBERS WITH SICKNESS OR BURDENS:

Brion Bissell (needs kidney)	Blaine Smith
Margot Bridges (homebound)	Susan Spicer
Gladys Frankenberg (homebound)	Carl Testerman (cancer)
Gene Franklin	Judy Testerman (cancer)
Pat Hinds	the Varner family
Karla Hood	Don & Carolyn Weaver
Mike & Mary Jones	Kris Weaver
Dan Jordan	Harold & Katherine Whitaker (homebound)
Donna Korte	Mary Ann Wheat
Don Linde	Marilyn Wing (homebound)
Ralph & Dottie Mertz (homebound)	Darryl Wing (nursing home)
Sharon Mueller	the Wolford family

NON-MEMBERS WITH SICKNESS OR BURDENS:

Charlotte Brothers (wife of Carla Poore's co-worker), doing well; doctors believe they got all the cancer and she did not require chemotherapy. Praise God!

Julie Brummitt (Jim & Rosa Beck's daughter)

Jonathan Campbell (Diane Baum's co-worker's brother) fighting infection after an appendectomy to remove his ruptured appendix

Steven Dew (Carolyn Weaver's friend)

James Flanigan (Eric's brother)

Mary Ann Fowler (Mike Anderson's aunt) with cancer

and prognosis not good
 Andy Fultz (the Rodenbeck's relative) who is facing serious health issues
 Ken Hamilton (father of Anna Marie Hamilton, UT student from Alabama)
 Judy Hamrick (Shirley Watson's neighbor) with a tumor that is growing
 JoAnn Harbaugh (Kathleen Holliday's mother)
 Randy Hetzner (AnnMarie Bissell's father) with a broken foot and ankle
 Cheryl Hooks (Diane Baum's friend) undergoing months of chemotherapy after removal of part of her colon and intestines due to cancer
 Helen Linderfelt (Lynda Graves' friend)
 Joyce Lipscomb (Rick Elmore's friend)
 Annette Lotivio (Marc Blais's friend) with pancreatic cancer
 Landon Lutterman Wendy Slifka's friend) who has been hospitalized after medical tests
 Joanne Mattingly
 Joan Mincey (Shirley Watson's friend) with stage 4 COPD and breast cancer
 Karen Nall
 Mary Jane Nichols (Becky Marshall's sister) having open heart surgery
 Tom O'Brien (Marissa Wilson's co-worker's husband) with prostate cancer
 Travis Parrott (the Wolford's son-in-law) needing a kidney transplant
 Kallee Pittenger (mother of one of our 3rd grade students), having chemotherapy for breast cancer
 Tom Roberts (Sara's grandfather) with Alzheimer's
 Daniel Rule (the Slifkas' friend) suffering from RSD
 Jason Rutledge
 Kristy Shirk (Lynda Graves' friend) with cancer of the sinuses
 Connie Warren (Slifka family friend), undergoing breast cancer treatment
 Sam and Alex Weaver

Other News and Happenings

STEWARDSHIP – Our Father in heaven sent His Son, Jesus, to be our savior so that His perfect life and death count for all who believe in Him. He claimed us as His own children in Holy Baptism. He sustains and strengthens our faith with His Holy Word and His Body and Blood. As new creatures, who have put on Christ, we bear good fruit. We do the good works prepared for us, which He makes known to us in His Word.

By faith then, trusting in the Word of God, we do what he says because He does not lie and always keeps His promises. For “without faith it is impossible to please God,

because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him” (*Heb. 11:6*).

And so the Lord promises: “Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine” (*Prov. 3:9-10*).

How do we honor the Lord with the wealth that God has given us in His generosity? By giving it generously to those whom the Lord has called us to love and support: your family, your society, and your church. And His promise is that in so doing, you will never lack.

Some may say, “But that’s from the Old Testament!” But our Lord Jesus Himself gives us similar promises in the New Testament.

At the end of the parable of the dishonest manager, he says: “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money” (*Luke 16:10-13*).

And in His sermon on the mount, he says: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (*Matt. 6:19-21*).

We have become conditioned against these promises because of their misuse by the peddlers of the prosperity gospel – the guys on TV who say you get rich by putting God in your debt. And thus, we miss out on the fact that God does reward temporal faithfulness in temporal matters with temporal blessings.

It’s no quid pro quo. It’s all from God’s grace, His fatherly divine goodness and mercy. But those Bible passages just quoted do in fact say what they say! It’s not the Old Testament’s problem. It’s ours. It is almost as if we have become so jaded against this that we think it a virtue to be stingy with our offerings.

And so, while we don’t give so that we would get, we do receive from the Lord in order to give, and He will bless your giving with more receiving. For “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things” (*Rom. 8:32*)?

DAY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING is 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 10.

BOARD OF ELDERS MEETING is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 10.

55 ALIVE is Thursday, April 12, with a luncheon at noon, \$7.00/person. We will have the great pleasure of another member of FLC to be our presenter, namely Edie Wadsworth. She is a national speaker, writer and faith blogger at life (in) grace. Edie has been featured in the magazine *Better Homes and Gardens*. Her first book, *All the Pretty Things*, was released with Tyndale in 2016. Edie is a physician and natural health enthusiast who left her medical practice in 2008 to raise her family and pursue her love of writing. She encourages women to live with passion and purpose, so they can impact families and communities with their unique gifts. Hope to see you there!

CELEBRATE! YOU ARE A PROMISE – Come join us! The ladies of the East Tennessee Zone Lutheran Women's Missionary League invite you to our annual Christian Life Workshop on Saturday, April 14, 2018, 8:30-2:00, at Grace Lutheran Church in Knoxville, TN. For more information, contact Angela Lukens. We hope to see you there!

BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP will meet at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 17.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES meeting and workday at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 21.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL is June 11-14. Join us from 9:00-12:00 in Splash Canyon to learn about God's Promise on Life's Wild Ride!

PRINCIPAL UPDATE – We thank everyone for their prayers in behalf of the principal that was called by First Lutheran. We received notification this week, however, that Mr. Joel Rachow has declined our call to serve as principal. Please continue to pray for our school and principal position. Thank you!

A BIG THANK YOU!! We extend a big thank you to Shellia Byrd and Sherrill Smithey and all who helped them in preparing our Lenten Soup Suppers! They were a treat at the end of a busy day! Thank you, as well, to all who joined us for the suppers!

DO YOU ENJOY cooking, meeting newborn babies, or helping those in need? Then LEGS would love your help! We routinely provide meals for families who could use some short-term help, and are looking for others who share

our excitement for service so we can provide for more families. Please contact Angela at angela.m.lukens@gmail.com to be added to our meal train's email list and receive details about meal schedules as they come up. Thank you!

School News and Happenings

CALENDAR

- 6 – No UniDay – theme: Polka Dots & Stripes
- 8 – 4th - 8th grades sing at FLC
- 9-30 – Read-A-thon
- 16-20 – National Week of the Young Child
- 20 – No UniDay – theme: favorite book character
- 27 – Spring Musical

NEWS FROM FIRST LUTHERAN SCHOOL

Dear Friends,

It's that time again. Lent. During Lent I always enjoy listening to the sound track of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Jesus Christ Superstar*. This brings back memories of riding in the car with my parents and remembering when we first got a CD player and my dad bought the two disk set that led to my brother and I listening to it over and over again. It was the perfect blend of Bible and rock and roll for our house. The other day when I was listening to this old familiar record I noticed something I hadn't paid attention to before. Caiaphas was talking with his posse and was really unhappy with how Jesus was changing things, changing people, and challenging the status quo.

Fast forward a couple of thousand years and things haven't really changed all that much. People change, but human nature doesn't. We love being in our comfort zone. It feels safe and secure there. I sometimes wonder if I'm so comfortable I'm not allowing Christ to change me into the friend, servant, or church member he desires me to be. Are we inhibiting the Holy Spirit when we refuse to notice the work being done in unlikely places or in different ways? This is a struggle for me as I like things the way I like them, but I'm trying to learn and understand that my ways are not God's ways.

The month of March will hold our spring break, and the beginning of the final marking period. This time of year always seems to go by so quickly as you realize how little time we have left with our students. We will practice for our spring musical, and begin preparations for next school year. Most importantly we will enter Holy Week and Celebrate Easter in early April. Thank you for your prayers for FLS. It is a blessing to work in such a loving environment!

In Christ, Lindsey Hofman

Birthdays and Anniversaries

BIRTHDAYS

1 – Christopher Dalton, Ralph Mertz
5 – Becky Hodson
7 – Brion Bissell, Louise Hodson
8 – Steve Keyes
9 – Carolyn Milligan
10 – Church Baum, Jason Collver, Jackson Killian
12 – Ingrid Capparelli
14 – Mekenzie Day, Gerene Jones
15 – Ed Niedens
16 – Jennifer Hodson
18 – Tonya Knopps, Mary McKenzie
19 – Mary Acuff Croes, Judy Testerman, Brandy
Warwick, Rebekah Parrott
22 – Kelsie Reed
23 – Alexander Blais, Stephanie McKenzie
25 – Larry Farris
26 – Jeff McKenzie
28 – Isaac Davis, Shannon Milbourn
30 – Lois Blais, Jeremiah Davis, Brittany Johnson,
Gene Stern

ANNIVERSARIES

1 – Steve & Shellia Byrd
2 – Harold & Katherine Whitaker
5 – Carlyle & Dolly Roth
6 – Bill & Rosie Rosen
15 – Barry & Melissa Lyke
24 – Doug & Wendy Slifka
29 – David & Susan Rodenbeck

**DEADLINE FOR THE MAY
NEWSLETTER IS FRIDAY, APRIL 20**

Edward H. Schmidt, Pastor; Ceci Steele, Editor.
Worship Services are held Sundays at 10:30 a.m. and
Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. Children's Sunday School and
Adult Bible Classes are held on Sundays at 9:15 a.m.

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<h1>April 2018</h1>						
1 EASTER SUNDAY 7:00 Sunrise Service 8:00 Breakfast 8:45 First Bells Rehearsal 9:15 SS & Bible Classes 10:30 Worship Service	2 EASTER MONDAY 6:00 New Testament Books NO SCHOOL / NO ECE	3	4 8:30 School Chapel 5:30 Lutheran Ring. Rehears. 6:30 Worship Service 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	5	6	7
8 8:45 First Bells Rehearsal 9:15 SS & Bible Classes 10:30 Worship Service 12:30 Confirmation Class	9 9:30 Quilting 6:00 New Testament Books	10 6:00 Day School Board 7:00 Board of Elders	11 8:30 School Chapel 5:30 Lutheran Ring. Rehears. 6:00 Worship Service 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	13 12:00 55 Alive	13	14
15 MITEBOX SUNDAY 7:00 Sunrise Service 8:00 Breakfast 8:45 First Bells Rehearsal 9:15 SS & Bible Classes 10:30 Worship Service	16 6:00 New Testament Books	17 7:00 Board of Stewardship	19 8:30 School Chapel 5:30 Lutheran Ring. Rehears. 6:30 Worship Service 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	19	20 DEADLINE FOR MAY NEWSLETTER	21 9:00 Workday
22 8:45 First Bells Rehearsal 9:00 Fellowship 9:15 SS & Bible Classes 10:30 Worship Service 12:30 Confirmation Class	23 9:30 Quilting 6:00 New Testament Books	24	25 8:30 School Chapel 5:30 Lutheran Ring. Rehears. 6:30 Worship Service 7:30 Choir Rehearsal	26	27	28
29 8:45 First Bells Rehearsal 9:15 SS & Bible Classes 10:30 Worship Service	30 6:00 New Testament Books				6:00 Spring Musical	