

First Lutheran Church



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Worship 10:00 am

Weekly Newsletter

2.12.26

Pastor's Ponderings

I don't recycle sermons, but I ran out of time this week and am recycling a pondering from October 26, 2022. (Minor, more "grace-centered" revised ending—the revision is in bold.)

Paul declares that he was sent "to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power." (1 Corinthians 1:17) What I think Paul is saying here is that he did not come to the Corinthians to dazzle them with human wisdom. How could human wisdom explain and grasp the cross anyhow? Instead, Paul is telling the Corinthians that, in his role as Apostle, he has come to point them to the cross. This is his simple proclamation.

Upon hearing this gospel proclaimed, there are those that simply won't believe. They, the ones who are perishing, will look at this cross and regard it for what it is by human standards: foolishness and σκάνδαλον (more on this word in a moment). It is foolishness to think that God would fulfill God's purpose for the entire creation through the suffering and humiliating death of God, in Jesus, on a cross. It is σκάνδαλον, skandalon, (scandalous?), translated as "stumbling block" (1 Cor 1:23) in the NRSV, to think that the cross was the means of salvation, the way in which God would usher in a new age. The cross is scandalous; it rivals all human values and norms. To those that have been grasped by the cross (notice that it is not we who grasp

but the cross that grasps us), the foolishness of the cross is understood as the Wisdom of God, and God's "foolishness" has both confounded and surpassed the wisdom of this world. But there is a problem.

The problem for the Corinthians—and us—is that even though Christ's death, resurrection, and sending of the Spirit has ushered a new age into this world, this age has not yet come to its fullness. We are still humans living in the sinful world of the here and now. There is still, as we see in the case of the Corinthian church (and every other church that has ever existed) jealousy, quarrelling, division, alignment with various leadership factions; the Body of Christ is divided. As Christians, even if we have been grasped by the cross, we are still of this world, and though the cross tries to pull us away, we still cling to the ways of the world. Anyone remember Stretch Armstrong? That is how I envision us. The cross clinging to one arm and the world to the other. The cross won't let go, and we won't let go of the world. We are stretched beyond belief!

We boast in human things: our denominations, our congregations within our denominations, and even our preferred leaders within our congregations within our denominations. (To say nothing of everything beyond the "church" of which we boast.) But Paul emphatically says "Stop!" "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord," (1 Cor 1:31) as if to say, "why are you, who have been claimed by the cross, still boasting about human things?"

The Corinthians were struggling in this already -but-not-yet age to reject the wisdom of this world. Just as we do. **But even when we do our best Stretch Armstrong—clinging to our own wisdom and the wisdom of this world—the cross will not let us go. Thanks be to God.**

If you have comments or questions, would like to talk, or desire a visit, please call or e-mail either me or the church office.

Peace,
Pastor Shawn Schneider
937-726-3831 or
pastor@flcgalion.com

This Week at First

Worship: Transfiguration of Our Lord

First Lesson: Exodus 24:12-18

Second Lesson: 2 Peter 1:16-21

Gospel Lesson: Matthew 17:1-9

In-Person Worship

Sunday – February 15, 2026

8:30pm - St. Paul Lutheran Worship

10:00am - First Lutheran Worship

11:15am - Shrove Sunday Breakfast

Tuesday - February 17, 2026

3:15pm - Prayer Shawl Outreach

Wednesday - February 18, 2026

7:00pm - Ash Wednesday Service at St. Paul



Prayer of the Day

O God, in the transfiguration of your Son you confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the witness of Moses and Elijah, and in the voice from the bright cloud declaring Jesus your beloved Son, you foreshadowed our adoption as your children. Make us heirs with Christ of your glory, and bring us to enjoy its fullness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.



We are praying for:

Clint & Barb Howe, Mary Lou Griebeling, Linda Kahler, Ed Naufzinger and Pastor Tim Keeler

Long Term Prayer List: Joe Beaty, Kyle Baughn, Marlene Leme, Chloe, Jeff Belding, Joyce Corwin, AJ Rinaldi, Kaden Allerding, Haylee Lilly, Scott, Sandy Alley, Jean Henry, Tina Fuson, Ed Smith and Bobbie Jo Seighman

Homebound, Assisted Living, or Limited

Mobility: Jack Harpst Jr, Chuck Robinson, Jay DeNise, Millie Haas, Brenda Haas, Janet Hammermiller, Phyllis Straka, Fred Watkins, Joyce Shearer and Patty Owen

To add someone to our prayer list or prayer chain, call the church office or email us at pastor@flcgalion.com



Andrea Schneider - February 17

