

FIRST

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Pastor: Beth Pottratz

Ministers:

All God's People at First Lutheran



“Servants of All”

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November 2021

November 29, 2021

JESUS SAID, GO AND DO LIKEWISE LUKE 10:37

Thanksgiving is a time for considering the ways that we can “go and do likewise” by serving those in need both near and far. Each year we meet for worship on Thanksgiving Eve and give God thanks for the many blessings he bestows. Your offering during the month to support ELCA World Hunger and other hunger needs is encouraged. Special envelopes are available on the greeters’ table, or you may note “Hunger” or “Disaster” on the memo line of your check. Thank you for your generous giving to those in need around the world. Give thanks with a grateful heart!

A few ways you can make a difference:

- ✦ Volunteer your time at the Morrison County Food Shelf to help distribute food, stock shelves, unload trucks, and pick up donations from local businesses. If you are interested in volunteering, contact 632-8304.
- ✦ Provide monetary donations or deliver items from church to the Morrison County Food Shelf. Please contact the church office, 632-6667.
- ✦ Provide a respite meal for fellow servants in need at First Lutheran. Contact Parish Nurse Tracy Moe for more information.
- ✦ Advocate for hunger issues around the world by joining the ONE campaign, a non-partisan effort to end global hunger, go to www.one.org for more information.
- ✦ Deliver meals to homebound persons in the community, contact Theresa at the Little Falls Senior Center, 320-632-8009, or Lutheran Social Services at 218-233-7521 to volunteer.
- ✦ Provide financial support to ELCA World Hunger Appeal.

Jesus said, “Go and do likewise!”

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Greetings From Your First Lutheran Church Council

Another month has gone by, and I want to bring you up to speed on some items we have been working on.

As some of you may know, I am a pilot and blessed that I often get the opportunity to see God's creation from a bird's eye view. I am amazed how beautiful our earth is and so thankful that I am able to see it firsthand. I often catch myself in awe of what I see. "God is Good!"

On October 15, I had another one of those "God is Good!" moments when I attended the Fall Sing, Pie Fling, and Silent Auction event at church. This event highlighted some of our outstanding talented musicians we are blessed with at First Lutheran. Those in attendance were able to see and hear the gifted men and women from our congregation perform. The event raised more than \$2500 which will go toward paying for sound system upgrades. A special thanks goes to the event organizers.

As I mentioned last month, the flat roof over the "old" part of the church is leaking and needs replacement. Good news, at the special congregational meeting held on October 17, the church members in attendance unanimously voted in favor of church leadership contracting with Herzog Roofing to complete the roof replacement. The estimated cost is \$86,000. It was to our advantage to secure a contract now as prices are expected to increase. It is possible that the roof replacement could occur this fall, but due to weather it is more likely to be completed in the spring.

The council continues to monitor the COVID trends and discusses them at every council meeting. Again, no changes to our protocol are planned but that could change. Masks and social distancing are encouraged.

The window that was purchased with funds received through the Pentecost offering has been installed. Members of the Building and Property Commission surveyed all the windows in the building and determined that the window in Pastor Beth's office was the one most in need of replacement. Thank you again for your generosity!

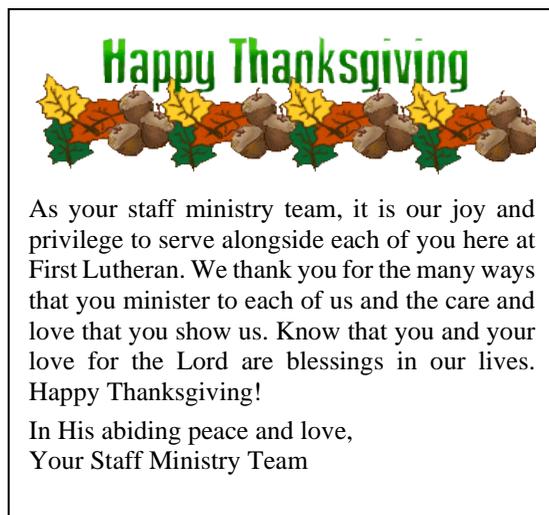
Our search continues for a Youth and Family Minister for our church. This is a full-time position, approved by the council in June. So far, interest in the position has been minimal, but we are receiving a few applications which is encouraging. If you know of an individual who may be interested, please let us know.

Ministry teams are starting to plan for next year. This involves looking at programs and their associated budgets. Please keep the ministry teams in your prayers during this important time.

With all the activities going on at church, there are many opportunities for people to help and volunteer. For those who are interested, these opportunities occur nearly every day regardless of your ability or experience. Are you looking for a family volunteer opportunity? That is available as well! If you are not sure and would like to follow along with another church member, that is available too. Please call the church office if you are interested or have any questions.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to serve as your council president.

Sincerely,
Carl Rydeen
320-630-9842



Psalm 100

¹ *Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.*

² *Worship the Lord with gladness;
come into the Lord's presence with singing.*

³ *Know that the Lord is God.*

*It is God that made us, and we are God's;
we are God's people,
and the sheep of his pasture.*

⁴ *Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise.*

Give thanks to God, bless God's name.

⁵ *For the Lord is good;*

*God's steadfast love endures forever,
and God's faithfulness to all generations.*

When my niece was about two years old, it came time for bedtime prayers. Just as they did every night, her parents asked, "what would you like to pray for tonight?" My niece's only prayer request that night was enthusiastically, "Butter!" So that night, her parents and their toddler prayed a prayer of thanksgiving for butter.

Researchers have studied gratitude. Their research has shown that gratitude isn't something that comes naturally, it is instead something that comes with practice. Gratitude isn't a feeling that we have. Gratitude is a practice we develop and inhabit. Gratitude is a learned skill.

Psalm 100 is all about ways to practice gratitude, and why we are grateful. The writer of the psalm encourages giving thanks through making joyful noises, worshipping God, singing song, and blessing God's name. This psalm tells us that the reasons we give thanks are because we are God's beloved people, made by God. We belong to God. And we give thanks for God's steadfast love, faithfulness to us, and goodness.

Psalm 100 is just one of many psalms, and just one of many verses in the Bible, that remind us to give thanks. To give thanks to God. To give thanks for the lives we have. To give thanks for all that God has provided to us through creation. To practice gratitude for all things.

The Thanksgiving season often prompts us to consider all of the things in our lives that we are thankful. Examples of giving thanks abound around us during November. From traditions of sharing things you are grateful on Thanksgiving Day, to social media challenges to share one thing that you are thankful for every day of the month of November.

Scripture challenges us to practice our gratitude year-round, through the difficult seasons of life and through the joy-filled seasons as well. We have whole Psalms dedicated to giving thanks and practicing gratitude towards God and all that God has given us. Even the lament Psalms end by practicing gratitude for God's faithfulness and steadfast love in the midst of life's trials and struggles.

Practicing gratitude and giving thanks doesn't have to be complicated or complex. Practicing gratitude starts very simple and can add up to very complex thank yous. The more we practice gratitude and give thanks, the more easily that gratitude becomes a part of our daily habits.

Practicing gratitude can be just as simple as a bedtime prayer saying, "Thank you God for butter!" Amen.

~ Pastor Beth Pottratz

Adult Opportunities

Men's Bible Study Breakfasts Wednesdays, November 3 and 17

All men of the congregation and friends are invited to a Men's Bible Breakfast study. The study meets for breakfast on designated Wednesdays of each month at 7:00 a.m. at the church. You are welcome to attend any time – come when you are able, leave when you must.



Caregiver Group

Thursdays, November 4 and 18

The Caregiver Support group is for those who are providing primary caregiving for a family member.

We will meet on Thursday, November 4 at Sprout Market, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (noon) for the “Soul Food-Cooking with Caregivers” This class is sponsored by Horizon Health and is offered for anyone. \$5.00 per person and includes all ingredients and containers for a dinner for two! Please RSVP to Horizon Health, 468-2788 or Tracy Moe, 320-282-5928 to claim your space.

If you are a caregiver, please come to the Little Falls Bakery, Thursday, November 18 at 10:00 a.m. for coffee and a little social time away. This group gives caregivers a safe and supportive environment to share thoughts, ideas, tears, and laughter. For more info, please contact Parish Nurse, Tracy Moe, 320-282-5928



Quilters Group

Meets every Thursday morning at 9:00 a.m. The group welcomes anyone (women or men) who would like to use their hands in service to others. You do not need to be skilled at sewing! We iron, cut, pattern, sew, tie, and fold. Some of the members sew at home. There are a variety of ways to serve, and we are open to new ideas. The group meets until 11:30 a.m. We share stories over coffee and treats and have a great time. We accept cotton sheets and cotton material in good condition. Questions? Contact Pat Moller, 320-630-4880.

Prayer Shawl Group

Do you enjoy knitting or crocheting? Come for fun and fellowship—bring a friend and your helping hands! We are making prayer shawls and baptismal shawls. We meet the second Monday of every month at 1:00 p.m. at the church – our next time is Monday, November 8. If someone you know could use the comforting hug of a prayer shawl, please contact the church office.

Thrivent Choice©

Many First Lutheran members are also members of Thrivent Financial and are eligible to designate Thrivent Choice dollars (contributed by Thrivent) to the non-profit organization of their choosing. Funds can be designated on-line or you can receive a form for designation and assistance in the church office. If you are unsure whether you are eligible to direct Choice dollars, please contact your Thrivent representative. First Lutheran Church and “Children First” Christian Preschool are able to receive designated Choice © dollars.

Thank you to all who have designated their Thrivent Choice dollars to First Lutheran Church and to “Children First” Christian Preschool.

Mission News



“Giving Thanks, Giving Back”

Help fight against hunger and put smiles on the faces of those in need this holiday season.

Please bring your donations of non-perishable, unexpired food items to church from November 1st through November 22nd. Items can be placed in the donation box located in the gathering space at church.

Some food items the Morrison County Food Shelf encourages are donations of real juice, cereal, raisins, Hamburger Helper or similar, canned meats, such as tuna and chicken, canned fruits and vegetables, instant oatmeal, pasta, macaroni and cheese, spaghetti sauce, canned beans, soups, peanut butter, and rice.

If you have any questions, please contact the church office, 320-632-6667. Thank you so much for your support!

Ministry Teams

We at First Lutheran have many different ministry leadership opportunities for you to partake in. Ministry teams always welcome new members and your ideas! Teams meet on the second Tuesday of every month from 6:15 – 7:00 p.m.

The teams are: Congregational Life, Education, Facilities and Property, Health, Mission and Worship and Music. If you are interested in signing up for one of the ministry teams or have questions, please contact the church office, (320) 632-6667.



Thanksgiving Eve Worship Wednesday, November 24 7:00 p.m.

Come to give thanks to the God who creates us and all that exists and gives us all that we have. We gather to worship with Holy Communion at 7:00 p.m. Following the service we share a delicious pie fellowship. The Pastor Parish Team will host the dessert time. If you would like to donate a pie, help serve or clean up, please contact the church office. Give thanks!

Thank you!

The Fall Sing, Pie Fling, and Silent Auctioning Committee would like to thank all who contributed to our event this past Friday. Because of your support, we raised **\$2836.00**, which will be applied toward music ministry in our church. Thank you to all of the wonderful musicians and singers for a beautiful and fun concert. The talent in this church is second to none. The outpouring of silent auction donations and pies for the auction was incredible and so very appreciated. Special thanks to our emcee Dave Buker and our pie auctioneer Darrell (Lars) Larsen. Also, to Dave Larson for running the sound system during the concert, and to Keith Nelson for recording it. Thanks again for a wonderful evening of fellowship, laughter, and fun.

Keeping Advent

Advent begins on November 28. Our culture will have surrounded us with the sounds and signs of Christmas long before that, but it is important for the Church to observe Advent in its richness. Advent is a time of waiting, preparing, and hoping.

Advent puts before us this great mystery: *we wait for what we already have*. We are invited to behold anew Christ coming again and again, day after day, not only in word and meal but in everyday life. Advent means “coming.” During Advent we wait, we hope, we prepare ourselves in anticipation of the coming Messiah:

- ⌚ We anticipate Jesus’ coming in Bethlehem.
- ⌚ We anticipate Christ’s coming daily into our lives.
- ⌚ We anticipate the coming of Christ at the end of the ages.

Advent, like Lent, provides an opportunity for examining our life of faith. How well do we prepare ourselves and our homes and families for the coming Christ? Advent is a good time to begin a worship practice in the home since the spirit of celebration in the air affects us all – older people, singles, middle-aged couples, busy young families, exuberant teens, and excited young children. And so, we invite you to keep Advent with:

Advent Wednesday Worship December 1, 8, 15, and 22 at 7:00 p.m.

In preparation for the coming of the Christ child we gather to worship each Wednesday during Advent using the service of Holden Evening Prayer. Let the quiet beauty of song prepare your heart for the real meaning of the season.



Christmas Wreath Fundraiser

Place your order for a fresh, fragrant balsam wreath for the holidays. The 25” wreaths are decorated with pinecones and ribbon and are \$25.00 each. Place your order on the order sheet in the gathering space, or in the church bulletin, or call the church office. Wreaths will be delivered to church for pickup by December 4. Proceeds support youth ministry programming at First. Thanks for your support!



Advent Craft and Bake Sale Saturday, December 4 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

The Advent Craft Sale and Luncheon will soon be here. We trust you are making plans to attend! We are looking for donations of craft and bake sale items. There will be a relaxing, delicious soup luncheon with dessert, musical entertainment and lots of treats and gift items to buy! The sale benefits youth ministry programming at First. Your support of this great annual event is appreciated.

"Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings!

Where has the Fall gone? October learning themes included Community Helpers and Transportation! We enjoyed visits with Jason Brown, Minnesota Highway Patrol and Fire Fighters from the Little Falls Fire Department. Thank you, visitors, for sharing with "Children First!" Please friend us on Facebook to see photos! November themes and activities will be Five Senses, Nutrition/Healthy Bodies, Thanksgiving and Pajama/Bed Time!

"Children First" continues to participate in the Coborn's More Rewards program. Purchases of store brand items will earn points which will translate into cash for our Preschool. Please sign up for the program under MoreRewards.com. Once a member, or if currently a member please click "Manage my Membership" and select or search "Children First" Christian Preschool and mark Done. Every time you visit the store they will ask if you are more rewards member, you say yes and enter your phone number/or give your number to the clerk at the checkout. Points earned will automatically go into our Preschool account. A fast and easy way to help us earn cash for our school!

Our main source of fundraising is our 2021-2022 Gifting Campaign. We will be sending letters home with our preschool families to forward to friends, family members or anyone who they feel would like to support "Children First" with a financial contribution. The money collected is used during our current preschool year. The contributions are used to purchase small and/or large learning tools, materials/supplies and assist with planned field trip costs.

If you are interested in supporting "Children First" with a monetary contribution please contact a current preschool family, Gail Hittesdorf, Director, or the First Lutheran Church office.

Registration continues at "Children First" Christian Preschool throughout the preschool year. We encourage families to check us out. Visits are welcomed! Also, current families are welcomed to add an additional preschool day/s to their current preschool attendance. Please contact Gail Hittesdorf, Director at 320-291-4698 or the First Lutheran church office, 632-6667, if you would like more information regarding preschool!

We graciously thank God for all of you, our Preschool supporters. We appreciate your kind words, your giving, your sharing of talents and your prayers. God has blessed us with wonderful families, an awesome staff and very supportive congregations. Thanks be to God!

Happy Thanksgiving!

Yours in Christ's Service,

Gail Hittesdorf, Director

"O Give thanks to the Lord for He is good! His steadfast love endures forever." Psalm 136:1





**Winter Youth Retreats
at Luther Crest Bible Camp:
“Build It Up”**

Come for a great weekend of winter fun with your friends and counselors at Luther Crest. We will lodge in cabins, dive into the Bible by looking deeper into what it means to build up our faith on our firm foundation in Christ, play outside, worship together, drink hot cocoa around a fire, and more! Don't miss this chance to be back at camp!

Grades 3-6 weekend is Friday-Sunday, January 14-16, 2022. Cost is \$150.00 per camper (\$50 non-refundable deposit).

Grades 6-9 weekend is Friday-Sunday, January 21-23, 2022. Cost is \$150.00 per camper (\$50 non-refundable deposit).

Watch for more information about these events!



“FLC Soul Squad”

Youth in Sixth through Twelfth grades come for a time of fun, games, fellowship, and be in God's presence with friends on Sunday, November 21 at 9:35 a.m.! We will meet in the Youth Room. Drinks and treats will be served. Watch for monthly gatherings throughout the year.

**Sunday School Ministry
each Sunday at 9:35 a.m.**

Sunday School Ministry continues each week at 9:35 a.m. All youth meet in a traditional classroom setting. We are using a new format that follows the church lectionary. Preschoolers meet in the Ruth/Naomi classroom. Children in Kindergarten and First grades will meet in Sarah Room. Second and Third graders will meet in Saul/Paul Room, and Fourth and Fifth grades will meet in Abraham Room.

Upcoming Sunday lectionary lessons

| | |
|-------------|----------------------|
| November 7 | The Widow's Offering |
| November 14 | Be Ready |
| November 21 | Christ the King |

Thank you to all who teach/lead in the classroom and all who have volunteered to teach or sub. Sharing your faith journey is important to children in the congregation. If you would like to volunteer your time to teach, sub, or assist, please contact the church office.

On Sunday, November 28, Thanksgiving weekend, we will not have regular Sunday School.

Thank you to all the children, parents and teachers who make Sunday School a priority each week!

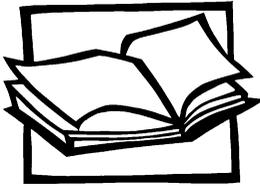
**Sunday School Christmas Program
Sunday, December 19**



All children are invited to participate in this year's Christmas program. We will learn the songs during Sunday School in December. Many helping hands are important in order to make the program shine. Most rehearsal time will take place during the Sunday School hour. With the spirit of Christmas in your heart, consider how you can share your gifts to assist with the program. For more info, contact the church office, 632-6667.



Confirmation Ministries



Second, Third, and Fourth Grades: Holy Communion confirmation is in the works for January! Watch for more details!

Third Grade: class on Devotions and the Bible ended on October 6. Thank you to Donalee Butler for teaching this class.

Fifth Grade: class on Stewardship meets Wednesdays, October 27, November 3, and 10 at 7:00 p.m. Thank you to Nancy Ratzloff for leading these sessions.

Sixth Grade: “Created in God’s Image” class for youth and parents meets for three weeks, Wednesdays, November 3, 10, and 17. Please prioritize these dates. Thank you to Annalee VanDenheuvell for teaching this class.

Seventh/Eighth Grade: Class time continues on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. through November 17. We will take a break and resume on January 5.

Confirmation Sunday October 31, 2021

Congratulations to the following youth who affirmed their Christian faith and became adult disciples (members) of First Lutheran:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Claire Anderson | Alayna Neu |
| Grace Cooper | Philo Rakow |
| Jake Dahlberg | Vincent Rakow |
| Olivia Dempsey | Isaac Ramos |
| Britton Glessing | Riley Rivetts |
| Berit Gustafson | Braxten Santala |
| Carter Gwost | Ethan Seurer |
| Siri Halvorson | Hayden Schott |
| Stormy Herman | Logan Schultz |
| Grace Kludt | Edward Sobiech |
| Hazel Kosek | Maya St George |
| Baylon Larsen | Lyndsey Strohmeier |
| Aden Larson | Hannah Strunk |
| Lillian Laubach | Vincent Strunk |
| Rylan Mikkelson | Mara VanDenheuvell |
| Olivia Miller | Ethan Walsh |
| Cullen Moe | Paige Zehr |
| Summer Nagorski | Marah Zehr |

Please keep these young people in your prayers as they affirmed their faith on Reformation Sunday, October 31. May they continue to walk in God’s love and grace.



News of the Family



Maya Lynn St George, daughter of Jamie and Mario Zapata, and Joseph Bruce was baptized on October 24.

Welcome to the Family of God!



Items for the **December NEWSLETTER** are due on **November 15, 2021!**

Daylight Savings Time ends. Remember to set your clocks *back* one hour on Saturday, November 6!

Can Care Collection

Keep saving those aluminum cans!
Save a can – Save the earth –
Save our youth budget!
Keep those cans coming!

If you can assist with taking cans to the local recycler on a Tuesday or Wednesday afternoon, please contact the church office. A trailer with sides is most useful for this project.

Thank you!

**First...
Servants of All!**

First Lutheran Church

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