

FIRST HAND

First Lutheran Church
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2024

*Mission Statement:
Sharing God's grace through prayer, witness,
and service.*

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OUR WELCOME STATEMENT

At First Lutheran, all means all, and the gifts of God are free. We welcome, love, affirm, and include everyone in our faith community regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Here in this place, you will find a warm, loving Christian family which strives to faithfully proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to all of God's children. We renounce racism, discrimination, and persecution in any form, in faithfulness to the gospel, and to the best of our ability, we promise to provide ministries and pastoral care to all who seek God in this place.

GOD WELCOMES ALL, AND SO DO WE

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The deadline for
newsletter articles for
February is
January 20th

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Are you the sort of person who makes New Years resolutions? I confess I gave up doing that a long time ago, because I would always become discouraged when I found that by mid-January, my resolution would already be broken. Every January, people pledge to start losing weight, exercise regularly, or quit smoking, only to realize by January 15 that it is not going to happen. Last December, I remember seeing a funny Facebook post about someone saying that their resolution for 2022 was to read the Bible in a year, and now, with one week to go, all they had to do was read from Leviticus through Revelation!

The first Sunday in the season of Epiphany is always the celebration of the baptism of our Lord. This year, it will fall on January 7. It is a time when we remember our own baptism as well. Baptism is not simply a nice little ceremony where we get sprinkled with water and officially made a member of the church. It is a recognition of the fact that because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we die to the old life of sin, and then are resurrected to a new life in Christ.

Paul writes in his letter to the Romans:

What then are we to say? Shall we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore, we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his." (Romans 6:1-5).

While baptism itself is a one-time action, the struggle with sin is so great that we need to return to the waters of baptism every day, as we remember that God has made us God's own.

I recently read about a megachurch in South Carolina where 141 people were baptized in a single day. Eighty-six (86) of them had made the decision to be baptized weeks in advance, but another fifty-five (55) spontaneously decided to be baptized that same day. I am not sure what to make of such an event; especially about those fifty-five. While I would never say no to anyone wanting to be baptized, it seems to me that the decision to follow Christ is one that requires a period of study and reflection. It is a serious commitment to live in a way differently than the way the world tells us to live. It is not to be seen as a Willie Wonka-style "golden ticket" to heaven. Will these instantaneous decisions to be baptized result in a commitment to follow Christ? Or will it be a feel-good moment that, like a spur-of-the-moment New Year's resolution, will quickly fade within a few weeks?

Our commitment to live into our baptism is not one to be made lightly. It is not a pledge we are to make once in our lifetime at our confirmation, nor even once a year like a New Years resolution, but indeed every day. Like New Years resolutions, we strive to live into our baptism, knowing that we often fail. Thankfully, our salvation is not dependent upon us being perfect.

May 2024 be a year of joy and blessings. May it also be a year where we all commit ourselves to living into our baptism, knowing that we are beloved children of God.

In the abiding hope of the empty tomb,

Pastor Larry

Financial Secretary January 2024



The Bible is a book about giving – with more promises related to giving than to any other subject! For example, the subject of “believing” appears 272 times, “prayer” 371 times, and “love” 714 times, while “giving” is mentioned 2,162 times! Jesus talked more about giving than anything else; more than half of the parables have to do with money and worldly goods.



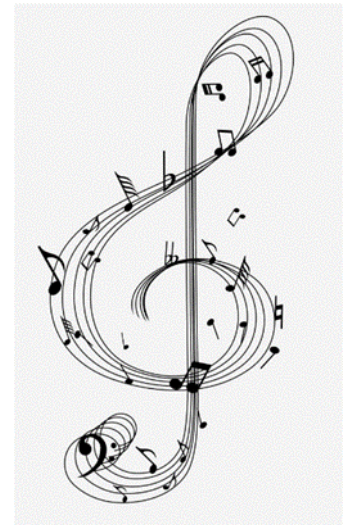
January 2024

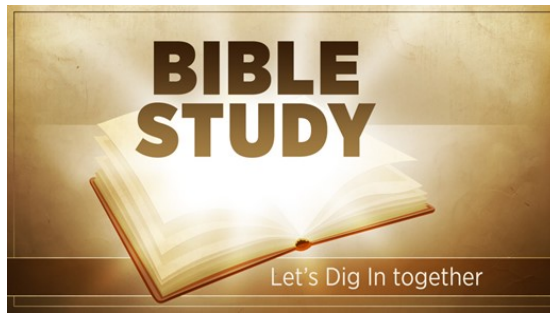
Director of Music

I want to thank all of those who made the Christmas Eve services special. Your efforts are so appreciated. Now off to the 2024 year .

Keep the smiles,
Walk past the tears,
Forget your worries,
And look forward to the coming year,
A very Happy New Year To You!

With the new calendar year of 2024, you can jump right into a new choir year too. Come see what fun we have.





A NEW BIBLE CLASS-CIVIC LIFE AND FAITH

(postponed from December)

Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's. And render unto God that which is God's.

Luke 20:25.

Should congregations take a stand for or against political issues? Should churches be in the business of political advocacy? How do we discuss political issues in ways that build up, and not tear down, the Body of Christ?

The ELCA is developing a social statement on **Civic Life and Faith**, the relationship of church and state and related matters, as called for by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

Social statements are the ELCA's primary documents to address significant social issues. They are intended to aid reflection and shape conscience and to set forth the ELCA's teaching and policy on the major social issues and questions of contemporary life.

An ELCA task force provides primary leadership for the statement's development over a five-year period, using an established process of study and widespread participation in theological and moral deliberation.

The task force is now offering a six-session study curriculum for use throughout our church. It provides a guide into the issues and invites participant feedback for the task force.

The six sessions delve into these questions:

How is God's invitation to discipleship lived out in a democracy?

How do Christians address controversial civic issues?

What are Lutheran views on civic life?

What are the objectives of Democracy in the United States?

What's faith-based living got to do with civic life?

How do we go in peace to love and serve the Lord in civic life?

Two opportunities to participate: Monday afternoon at 1:30 p.m., beginning Monday, January 8 and Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m., beginning Tuesday, January 9. I hope you can join us!



MITTEN TREE REPORT 2023

Gloves	98
Hats & Stockings	62
Hat & glove sets	19
Socks	74
Homemade mittens	40
Homemade blankets	20
Ball caps	3
Scarfs	16
Mittens	21
Ear muffs	1
Toys	2
Homemade caps	<u>11</u>
TOTAL	367



First Lutheran Church is scheduled to help on Monday, January 15th at 4:15pm.

If you cannot help but would like to provide a dessert of cookies, cupcakes or brownies that would be very helpful. They can either be taken to Daily Bread or to the church and we will see they get to Daily Bread.



The Annual Church Meeting for First Lutheran Church is Sunday, January 21st, 2024 after worship service.

The main topics will be approval of the ministry plan, election of new council members, rental of the LCS building, repairs to the roof and sanctuary, new roof air conditioning unit and approval of the amended church constitution.

Please plan to attend.

Reports for the annual report need to be to the office manager by 1/8/24.



TUESDAY LUNCH

TUESDAY LUNCH IN THE COURTYARD/LOUNGE WILL MEET AT NOON ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 2ND AND JANUARY 16TH.

BRING YOUR LUNCH AND JOIN US FOR FELLOWSHIP AND FUN.

+++++

FAITH CIRCLE WILL MEET TUESDAY, JANUARY 16TH IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE TUESDAY LUNCH.

THE MISSION PROJECT FOR JANUARY IS TO COLLECT SLEEPERS AND PJ'S FOR BABIES AND TODDLERS (SIZES 6 MONTHS TO 5 YEARS) FOR THE WIC PROGRAM.

A BIN WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE LOWER NARTHEX THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF JANUARY TO COLLECT THE SLEEPERS.

BRING YOUR LUNCH AND JOIN IN THE MISSION WITH THE WOMEN OF FIRST LUTHERAN.

SAVE THE DATE



SOUPER BOWL

LUNCHEON!

FEBRUARY 11, 2024

FOLLOWING WORSHIP SERVICE

SPONSORED BY FAITH CIRCLE

**A VARIETY OF SOUPS AND SALADS AND, OF COURSE, A DESSERT
BAR WILL BE SERVED.**

**YOUR ADMISSION: CANNED SOUPS/CANNED FOODS/NON-
PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS FOR THE LCS FOOD PANTRY.**

**CASH DONATION WILL BE ACCEPTED WHICH WILL BE GIVEN TO THE
FOOD PANTRY.**

**COME ENJOY GOOD SOUP, GOOD FOOD, GOOD FELLOWSHIP...AND
GET READY TO CHEER ON YOUR FAVORITE SUPER BOWL TEAM!**

2023 Church Council

President- Chris Hildreth Blair

Vice-President- John Bodin

Secretary- Carolyn Novak

Financial Secretary-Judy Vassar

Treasurer – John Belser

Members- Ray Kramer, Judy Lunz, Brittany Porter,

Liz Rose, Kris Shannon, Benda Shively, Ray Swisher

(2024 WILL BE ELECTED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING)



MINISTRY TEAMS

Fellowship & Christian Service & Mission Ministry Tea

Worship Ministry Team

Property Ministry Team

Finance Ministry Team

FLIRT

Outreach

Copies of reports from the monthly meetings of each ministry team is available for you to view in the Partners In Ministry Book located in the lower narthex.

January Ministry Team Meeting Date:

1/2 7:00 pm Church Council Meeting

1/16 7:00 pm FLIRT

1/24 7:00 pm Worship Team Meeting

Sunday Attendance for November



Saturday, January 6, 2024

The Day when Jesus was revealed as the Saviour of the world!

	On Site	Online
November 6	80	27
November 13	64	18
November 20	52	17
November 22	49	
(Thanksgiving Community Service)		
November 27	46	18
Average	291	16



During the past month we have remembered many in prayer. We remember in prayer all who are in need of God's presence and care ... especially:

HEALTH ISSUES

Sally Stephan

Walt Stephan

Don Voorhies

Susan Wyckoff

Ray Kramer

Cheryl Kramer

Chris Hildreth Blair

Liz Rose

Kevin Shannon

Gloria Kipker

Lisa Jordan

Jordan Banks

ENTERED THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT

Phyllis Gronberg

Cortez Anderson

Nolan Perk

Wendy Rodenberger

Loran Kipker



- 01/02 William Heintz
- 01/02 Jinny Fergus
- 01/03 Chuck Bingaman
- 01/03 Christian Miller
- 01/04 Matthew Manahan
- 01/08 Ted Hoy
- 01/11 Marge MacGillivray
- 01/11 Mike Zoldak
- 01/12 Brent Smith
- 01/16 Dan Shively
- 01/27 Don Voorhies
- 01/28 Kevin Miller
- 01/29 Gary Shields





Worship Assistant

1/7 Chris Hildreth Blair
1/14 Kris Swisher
1/21 Brenda Shively
1/28 Dave Vassar

Communion Assistant

1/7 Jean Wright
1/14 Jinny Fergus
1/21 Jan VanHoose
1/28 Dave Comstock

Reader

1/7 Carolyn Novak
1/14 Margie Bixler
1/21 Susan Wyckoff
1/28 Chris Hildreth Blair

Altar Guild

Cindy Weikart

Communion Bread

Chris Hildreth Blair

Greeter(s)

1/7 Connie Regula
1/14 Max & Margie Bixler
1/21 Barb Triplett
1/28 Chris & Jennifer McKenrick

Ushers

1/7 Susan Wyckoff
1/14 Carl Gillespie
1/21 Dave Comstock
1/28 Susan Wyckoff



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>31</p> <p>9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service 2:30pm Green Hills Service</p>	<p>1</p> <p>HAPPY NEW YEAR! Office Closed 12:00pm AA (RH)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>9:00am Quilters 10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm Lunch in the Courtyard 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting 7:00pm Council</p>	<p>3</p> <p>9:30am Cluster Meeting 3:00pm NA (RH)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>10:00am Homeless Point-in-time Webinar 3:00pm NA (RH) 7:00pm Choir 8:00pm Bells</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Office Closed 10:00am Extending the Branch</p>
<p>7</p> <p>9:00am Confirmation Class 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Committee reports for Annual Report are due 10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA (RH)</p>	<p>9</p> <p>9:00am Quilters 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting</p>	<p>10</p> <p>10:30am CORE Meeting 3:00pm NA (RH)</p>	<p>11</p> <p>3:00pm NA (RH) 7:00pm Choir Practice 8:00pm Bell Practice</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Office Closed 9:00am Property Meeting [Lounge] 10:00am Extending the Branch 11:30am Extending the Branch</p>
<p>14</p> <p>9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service 4:00pm Extending the Branch</p>	<p>15</p> <p>10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA (RH) 4:15pm Our Daily Bread 5:00pm Homeless Board/Strategic Planning Meeting</p>	<p>16</p> <p>9:00am Quilters 12:00pm Lunch in the Courtyard & Faith Circle 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting 7:00pm FLIRT Meeting [Lounge]</p>	<p>17</p> <p>8:00am Logan County Pastor's Association Breakfast 3:00pm NA (RH)</p>	<p>18</p> <p>3:00pm NA (RH) 7:00pm Choir Practice 8:00pm Bell Practice</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Deadline for February newsletter articles Office Closed</p>
<p>21</p> <p>ANNUAL MEETING following the Worship Service 9:00am Confirmation Class 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service</p>	<p>22</p> <p>10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA (RH) 7:00pm Worship Ministry Team Meeting</p>	<p>23</p> <p>9:00am Quilters 3:00pm Pastor's Meeting</p>	<p>24</p> <p>3:00pm NA (RH)</p>	<p>25</p> <p>3:00pm NA (RH) 7:00pm Choir Practice 8:00pm Bell Practice</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Office Closed 1:00pm Extending the Branch</p>
<p>28</p> <p>Snow date for the Annual Meeting 9:00am Confirmation Class 9:00am Fellowship Time 10:00am Communion Worship Service</p>	<p>29</p> <p>10:00am Staff Meeting 12:00pm AA (RH)</p>	<p>30</p> <p>3:00am Pastor's Meeting 9:00am Quilters</p>	<p>31</p> <p>3:00pm NA (RH)</p>	<p>1</p> <p>3:00pm NA (RH) 7:00pm Choir Practice 8:00pm Bell Practice</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>