

# DECEMBER 2015

**First Lutheran Church  
Fergus Falls, MN**

402 South Court Street  
Fergus Falls, MN 56537  
Phone: 218-739-3348  
Fax: 218-739-0916

E-mail: [firstlc@live.com](mailto:firstlc@live.com)  
[www.firstlutheranchurchff.org](http://www.firstlutheranchurchff.org)

## A NOTE FROM PASTOR SAUL STENSVAAAG

### THE LIGHT IS STILL SHINING

With the coming of the Advent, Christmas and epiphany season, church and Community related activities have certainly picked up. I know that our Outreach committee has put out "Giving Trees" to gather gifts for needy children and families, and are gathering names of families wanting to receive Christmas Boxes towards the end of the month. And members have been signing up to join the OWLS for their annual trip to Moorhead for dinner and the Concordia Christmas Concert.

It is tempting to rush from event to event without taking the time to slow down and reflect upon the deeper meanings of the season. This is especially so when you add the tragic events and terrorist acts that have taken place abroad and the chill that has been cast upon this time of the year. The many activities and the festive decorations can serve as a distraction from darker reflections.

But a more careful look at the events that we are celebrating – the Birth of Our Savior to a young couple far from home, who soon found themselves to be Refugees fleeing from the Terrorist Acts of a Ruthless Tyrant named Herod – these things remind us that the World into which Jesus was born 2000 years ago has not changed as much as we might think. Still, I wonder what kind of reception the Holy Family would receive here if they had fled from the Middle East today?

The Good News is that the Light that Jesus brings still shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it (John 1:5). The challenge for us as Christians is to reflect that light in our lives and not let the darkness of our world or our own fears overcome it.

A pastor friend of mine, Jennifer Shimota Krushas, of North Carolina, posted the following reflections immediately after the Paris

attacks. I think her words are appropriate for us as children of the light in any season. She says:

*Terror would very much like you to believe that darkness is winning.*

*Terror would very much like you to lie in your bed today and sigh at the deep sadness you feel.*

*Terror would very much like you to root around in your doubts about love winning.*

*Terror would very much NOT like you to  
+ get up  
+ and sit in a pew  
+ and kneel at the cross upon which darkness hanged the Light of the World*

*+ and proclaim with your other scared sisters and brothers that the Light is still shining... in you.*

Remember; the child born at Bethlehem tells us: You are the light of the world.



May the Season of Peace and Good Will proclaimed by the Christmas Angels be a blessing that you can share with neighbors, friends, and even (and perhaps especially) strangers.

In Christ,

*Pastor Saul*

Saul Stensvaag

### Inside this issue:

FLY News	2
Worship Themes	3
Service Unites	3
Outreach	4
Sunday School News	5
WELCA	6
Concordia Concert	7
Thankoffering	7
Church Library	7
New Members	8
Advent & Christmas	9
Important Announcements	10



## FLY CALENDAR DECEMBER 2015

### Fly K-4 and Fly 57

December 2: Fly 57  
(4:30-5:15)

December 9: Fly K4  
(4:30-5:15)

December 16:  
Fly K7  
Advent and Christmas Party!  
(4:30-5:15)

### Senior Fly:

December 2: Senior  
Fly Cookies & Games  
(7:45-8:30)

December 9: Superfly  
Dessert

December 16: Senior  
Fly Cookies & Games  
(7:45-8:30)

# FLY News

FIRST LUTHERAN

DECEMBER 2015

## Glory, Glory

We've got a world that is fixated on glory. Sports stars, famous musicians, actors and actresses are idolized and adored. It seems like we can never know enough about them, and the paparazzi and celebrity magazines make a fortune giving us every detail. We give kudos to those who have earned millions, put them on a pedestal as an example of what hard work and wisdom can get you.

And we want the glory things: that perfect pair of jeans, perfect car, perfect phone... we want to be recognized as important people and given respect and honor. In short, we want health and wealth.

There are some Christian churches that teach the cross as the beginning of this kind of life. Once you have Jesus, all will go

right in your world. If it's not all going right, you need more faith, to try harder, or to pray more. It's called a theology of glory. We want the happy news, the easy-life, the "blessed" way. We want a God who steps into our lives and brings us the good stuff. We want God to bring us glory,

But this just isn't how God operates. He doesn't show up on the red carpet or in a mansion, doesn't have a crew of scribes writing down his life story or a load of cash to show for his work. God shows up namelessly, in poverty, in a barn. God does his work in the outskirts of towns, among the marginalized and diseased.

It's called a theology of the cross. God shows up in the things that are weak, foolish and insignificant to human eyes to show us that glory isn't in the things of this-

world — glory belongs only to God.

What does that mean in the month of December? It means that God shows up, not in shopping deals or piles of cookies and treats, God shows up in the places we don't expect. Instead of the things the world glorifies God is in the places where there is need, emptiness, and brokenness. God shows up in a barn, and on a cross.

So if you're looking for meaning in your Christmas, look there first. God is glorified when the needs of others are met.

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth!

Merry Christmas,

## Senior Fly in December (8th-12th grades)

Senior Fly will be a little different in the month of December since we have Advent Vespers those evenings. We will still meet though—after Vespers. On December 2 and 16,

we will meet in the youth room, following vespers, from 7:45-8:30 for games and Christmas cookies. It will be really fun and I know you won't want to miss out! On December

9th, we'll go to a restaurant in Fergus Falls for dessert following vespers. I KNOW you won't want to miss out on that. Join us for some casual, good times, with lots of laughs!

## DECEMBER WORSHIP THEMES

### **December 2**

Text: Luke 21:25-36

### **December 6**

#### **"A New Creation"**

Text: Philippians 1:3-11

Paul expresses his confidence that God, "the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." ELW Hymn #631 asks Christ to enter our hearts and "finish then thy new creation," that we might be restored in Christ.

### **December 9**

Text: Luke 3:1-6

### **December 13**

#### **"God's Victory Dance"**

Text: Zephaniah 3:14-20

In the midst of all our talk about waiting and preparing in the darkness, comes a wonderful prophecy: God will rejoice over us with gladness. He'll sing and dance a victory dance when our salvation is won. Can we join in the dance?

### **December 16**

Text: Luke 3:7-18

### **December 20**

#### **"Calm, Cool, and Collected"**

Text: Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

According to scripture, when Mary learns that she is carrying the son of God, she isn't angry. She isn't mad. She's calm, cool, and collected. How can she be so peaceful with this news? Today we join with Mary in thanksgiving and gratitude for the gift of Jesus, who is coming soon.

### **December 24**

Christmas Eve

3 & 5 pm Candlelight Service & Family Blessing

11 pm Candlelight Service & Holy Communion

#### **"For All People - No Exceptions"**

Text: Luke 2:1-20

While "all the world" is rushing around to comply with Augustus demand for a census, the shepherds are "living in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night." Like migrant workers or the

newly homeless family who live in their car, they are unnoticed by the bureaucracy. They are, quite literally, not worth counting. And yet, they are the ones to whom the angels come with the good news of the birth of a savior. Why?

### **December 25—10 am Only**

*The traditional service of Nine Lessons and Carols from King's College Chapel, Cambridge, England, brings Christmas Day to life with rich music. We hear the Christmas story in the regal language of the King James, sing some of our favorite carols, and break bread together.*

### **December 27—10 am Only**

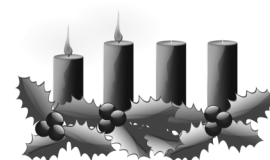
#### **"Clothed in Love"**

Text: Colossians 3:12-17

In Colossians, God declares the amazing truth that you and I are "God's chosen ones, holy and beloved." And he urges us to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. And, above all, we are to clothe ourselves in love. How can we do this?

## DECEMBER SERVICE UNITS

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE PEOPLE IN THIS UNIT  
PLEASE SAY "YES" WHEN YOU ARE CALLED TO HELP!



Derek & Elizabeth Abrahams

John & Beverly Aune

Bob & Vonnie Baker

Burnette Bordson

Steve & Kathy Emerson

Robert & Mary Gaabo

Larry Greenquist

Donna Ketterling

Darlyne Knutson

Dan & Abbey Kwapinski

Steve & Susan Leitte

Kim Lindgren

Linda Neese

Sherry Nettestad

Greg Noren

Matt Olson

Don & Helen Pederson

Helen Peterson

Paul & Carol Sanderson

Delores Shelley

Elaine Solee

Ron Sr. & Teri Spangler

Justin Stock

Jane Thompson

Francine Torgerson

Keary & Sue Toso

Dennis & Jan Trosvig

### **Council**

### **Minutes**

#### **November 10th**

Council minutes in their entirety are posted on the kiosk in the narthex. These minutes will be approved or amended at the next Council meeting.

### **First Lutheran Church Foundation is accepting requests for 2016:**

The requests should be approved by the Church Council. The written request for funds should be sent to Orrie Leabo, Foundation President, before December 14th, 2015. This will help the Foundation Board to prepare for the Foundation's Annual Meeting. Any questions or comments, please contact the board members: Chad Felstul, Vicki Hanneman, Leonard Hatzenbuehler, Tim Johnson, Orrie Leabo, Missy Mattson and Linda Mellon.



## CHRISTMAS FOOD BASKETS

The First Lutheran church council will deliver Christmas Food Baskets to community members on the morning of Saturday, December 19th. Food items include a frozen turkey breast, bread,

fruit cocktail, margarine, jello, cranberries, potatoes, etc. If you or someone you know could benefit from a Christmas Food Basket, contact the church by Monday, December 7. Please include

their name, number of children and ages (if applicable), phone number and address. If you are interested in helping pack the food baskets on the evening of Friday, December 18, please contact Rick at 205-6963.



## CHRISTMAS GIVING TREES



Christmas Giving Trees are up and ready for you! Please take an ornament (or more!) from the trees, purchase the item listed on the ornament and return them to church, unwrapped, by Tuesday, December 15. The organizations benefiting from the Giving Trees this year are A Place to

Belong and Someplace Safe.

NOTE: Each member from A Place to Belong has one ornament on the Giving Tree that lists their "wish list" for Christmas. You can purchase one of the items or multiple items. If you purchase more than one of the items listed on

the ornament, please keep the items together.

If you are interested in delivering the gifts to A Place to Belong and/or Someplace Safe, please contact Rick at 205-6963. Deliveries will take place between Wednesday, December 16 and Friday, December 18.

## RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

First Lutheran Church hosted another Blood Drive on November 12th with the help of some great volunteers from our church. The Outreach Committee would like to thank each one of you for your help

and dedication to these events. Thank you Marjean Hanson, Allegra Anderson, Dolores Simdorn, Wendy Anderson, Sandy Kvern, Ashley Shuck, and Judy Werner for your time and effort. The Red Cross had a goal

of collecting 30 units and exceeded that by collecting 54 units!! We are excited to continue hosting the Red Cross at our church in the future. The next blood drive is scheduled for March 29, 2016. If you are available to vol-

unteer to help with snacks, check-in, set-up and/or clean-up, please call Rick West at 218-205-6963.



## CHRISTMAS COOKIES FOR SPECIAL FRIENDS - CALLING ALL COOKIE BAKERS!



On Tuesday, December 15, First Lutheran Church will be delivering plates of holiday cookies to shut-ins and members

unable to bake anymore. We need help from those of you who enjoy baking to spread Christmas joy in this way. Cookies should be dropped off in the church kitchen on Tuesday (Dec 15) by 9 am. You can also

leave them in the church kitchen on Sunday (Dec. 13) and label them for "Cookie Plates for Special Friends". We are looking for additional drivers to help deliver the cookies later that morning. Previous drivers have found it

to be a very rewarding experience. Please call the church office at 218-739-3348 if you can help in this way, or if you have questions. Together we can spread lots of Christmas love and cheer!



# Sunday School News

Cindy Larson,  
Sunday School Superintendent

## First Lutheran Church

402 S. Court Street  
Fergus Falls, MN

### December Happenings

7th grade Milestone Blessing	Dec. 6
Christmas Program practice during S.S.	Dec. 6
"Butterflies" age 0-4 at 9:45 with parents	Dec. 13
Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal	Dec. 13
Regular Sunday School and party	Dec. 20
Christmas Program at 11:00 a.m. wor-	Dec. 20
No Sunday School	Dec. 27

## "SHINE" First Lutheran Sunday School Christmas

**"Oh, What a Special Night"**  
The 2015 Sunday School Christmas Program. Please be sure to reserve the date for the Children's Program, here are some words from this years Director:

**"Let the Sunday School students help you kick off**

**your Christmas season with their presentation of "Oh, What a Special Night"! The students will share the great news of Jesus' birth through singing, reading, and re-enactment. Join us Sunday, December 20 at the 11:00 service to hear about that**

**special night!**  
The Sunday School children will be so excited to see you there!



www.shutterstock.com - 65299744

### \* Sunday School

resumes on  
January 10



## Our Sunday School Christmas Giving Project:

Our Sunday School students will celebrate Jesus' birthday by sharing what we have with others. All through the month we will collect new or used winter jackets and winter accessories like mittens and hats. This kids' project will be a way for kids to help

other kids keep warm on the cold, snowy playgrounds and backyards. This winter gear will be donated to the United Way of Ottertail County. It will be a way for us to "Shine" our light on others :)





Invitation to the Women of First Lutheran

## Christmas Tea

Tuesday, Dec. 8th at 2:00 p.m.

Pioneer Pointe Dining Room

*Come and share the Christmas spirit with our*

*Sarah and Hannah Circles!*



Your

*Giving*

Makes a Difference

Electronic Giving!



Come join us in the Narthex for a

## Soup Lunch

Following the Noon Advent Worship

**December 2nd, 9th, and 16th**

Everyone is welcome to come and enjoy a delicious bowl of soup or grab a lunch bag to-go following the Noon Advent Worship services.

(There will be no lunch served in the Fellowship Hall)

### Love Days Quilters

Every Monday

9:00-3:00

JOIN US!

### WELCA Board Meetings

Executive Board Meeting

Tues., Dec. 1 at

10 am in Kairos Room

WELCA Board Meeting

Tues., Dec. 8 at

10 am in Kairos Room

### CIRCLES

Sarah—No meeting  
in December

Hannah—Watch the Sunday  
bulletins for December plan

### Parents of college students!

We would love to have your child's college mailing address. Please fill out one of the postcards sent to you, or you can find them at the info desk.

Turn them in to the church office.



## CONCORDIA CHRISTMAS CONCERT

For over 80 years, church groups have attended the Concordia Christmas Concert as an event to kick off the Advent Season. Over a million have attended these concerts and this year it features 450 student musicians in five choral ensembles and a 72-piece symphony orchestra to present the Christmas story through song, narration and artwork—professionally staged to illuminate the birth of Jesus. Theme this year is “Let Every Heart Awake and Sing.”

We'll travel with OtterTail Coaches to the 2 p.m. concert on **Sunday, December 6**. Coach will load in lower level parking lot at 12:05 and leave **promptly at 12:15**.

Sign-up sheet is on the Info Counter. Please pay \$15 (group rate) by check when you sign up. Payable to First Lutheran Church—Concordia Concert on the Memo line. Deadline to sign up and pay is Wednesday, Nov 25. Individual tickets are \$19 this year. First Lutheran Foundation is again sponsoring the coach. Thank Foundation Board Members when you see them.

If you've never attended or haven't for a long time, join us—we know you'll be impressed!

**All ages and guests are welcome—this is not strictly an OWL event!**

Leave First Lutheran parking lot --  
Concert  
Supper (on your own)  
Return to Fergus Falls

**12:15 Sunday, Dec. 6**  
2 p.m.  
Village Inn, Moorhead  
7:30 p.m.

## THANKOFFERING—2015

Lutheran women have given thanks to God and dollars to mission through Thankofferings for more than 100 years. Last year, Thankofferings totaled over \$900,000 to support Women of the ELCA church-wide ministries, with offerings coming from 2,450 congregations. We'd be happy to reach a goal of \$900 from First Lutheran in 2015.

Thankofferings are sent in full to the church-wide women's organization and help do mission and address concerns of women and children in crisis—especially the crisis related to poverty, health, AIDS and domestic violence.

The blue offering envelope you received in the Nov Messenger may be placed in the Sunday offering plate anytime in November or bring it to the office. If you receive your Messenger e-mail, there are envelopes on the Info counter for your use. Questions? Call Margaret Kratzke

## CHURCH LIBRARY

“Love the Lord your God with all your mind.”



### **New Books for the Church Library!! Come check out the latest selections!**

—Several books for children that explain and provide comfort when a loved one suffers from Alzheimer's disease or dies.

—Lots of new DVDs for children and for families

—Not just new, but a large collection of Christmas-related stories and DVDs for your family's holiday entertainment.

#### **For adults:**

- The newest books in the No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency series
- Several nonfiction books by popular authors including Barbara Brown Taylor and Anne LaMott

#### **For children:**

- The Mandie Collection Volumes 1 and 2—10 chapter novels in two books
- “Icky Sticky, Hairy Scary Bible Stories” - 60 entertaining poems for kids
- A number of Junie B. Jones books by Barbara Park



**NEW MEMBERS WHO JOINED FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH NOVEMBER 22, 2015**



Andru Nelson & Amy Baldwin;  
Oscar & Hattie Nelson  
612-270-6897



Lewis Roers & Jolene Hansen  
218-736-5068



Michael & Dawn;  
Emily, Hailey, and Callie Knudson  
701-403-9513



Richard & Leslie Hemmingsen  
218-531-1181



Kristopher & Robin;  
Alise & Emily Werner  
218-736-6015



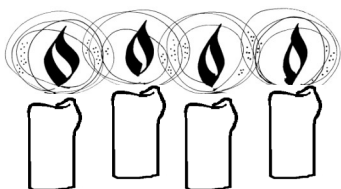
Dick & Judy Werner  
218-736-7897





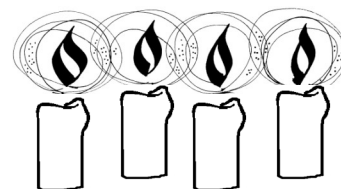
## **WEDNESDAY**

### **ADVENT SERVICES**



at 12:10 & 7 p.m

December 2, 9 & 16



Soup Lunch in the Narthex

Following the 12:10 service

---

## **WE CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS**

### **Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24th**

Sermon: *“For All People - No Exceptions”*

While “all the world” is rushing around to comply with Augustus demand for a census, the shepherds are “living in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night.” Like migrant workers or the newly homeless family who live in their car, they are unnoticed by the bureaucracy. They are, quite literally, not worth counting. And yet, they are the ones to whom the angels come with the good news of the birth of a savior. Why?

### **3 & 5 p.m. Candlelight Services**

### **The Blessing of the Family of God**

### **11 p.m. Candlelight Service**

### **Holy Communion**

### **Christmas Day – One service at 10 a.m.**

The traditional service of Nine Lessons and Carols from King’s College Chapel, Cambridge, England, brings Christmas Day to life with rich music. We hear the Christmas story in the regal language of the King James, sing some of our favorite carols, and break bread together. (There is no sermon.)



## ADVENT COIN FOLDERS

**A**dvent Coin Folders were distributed on Sunday, November 29 after worship. If you did not receive one

and would like to participate you can pick yours up at the church office or at the info counter. The offering

from these envelopes this year will go towards two of our many benevolences: ELCA Disaster Relief Fund and

Meal by Wheels.

**Thank you for your generosity.**

## FLOWER CHARTS & RADIO BROADCAST SING-UPS

**T**he Altar flower chart and Radio Broadcast sign-up are up! They are located on the kiosk in the narthex. Sign up early to get the dates that you want!!!

Please consider signing up for a radio broadcast if you haven't before... we have many shut-ins that utilize this gift that we provide. The radio broadcast cost \$100.00.

Altar flowers are ordered from The Flower Mill, and they send a bill to the address we have on file for whomever signs up. Thank you!



## 2015 DONATIONS

**I**n order to claim a charitable contribution deduction for 2015, checks must be mailed to the church by

no later than December 31. Checks must be written, postmarked, and mailed in 2015 to qualify for a 2015 de-

duction. All other contributions will not qualify for this year, even if the check was actually written in 2015. Please

keep this in mind when making your year-end donations.

Thank you.

## WINTER WEATHER INFORMATION

Winter Weather Information: If Fergus Falls school close due to bad weather, the activities at the church that day will be cancelled and the church office will be

closed. (If a leader of an evening activity, such as the adult choir, decides they **WILL HOLD THEIR EVENT**, they should contact the members. Sunday

morning worship will never be cancelled, but please use your good judgment when deciding if you should come to worship or not, **RE-MEMBER**, you can al-

ways listen at home to the 8:30 a.m. worship on KJJK AM 1020.

