

# DECEMBER 2016

**First Lutheran Church  
Fergus Falls, MN**

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## A NOTE FROM PASTOR JENNIFER ROSE

**D**ear Friends,  
This is a busy season. For people who are already very busy people, the pace becomes even quicker. It seems like there's always something going on. There's the Christmas shopping, the Christmas parties, the concerts, and the school events. The Christmas cards and letters and special meals, too. Sometimes it seems like something is on the calendar every day - how do we get it all done? We can feel very frenzied and hurried to keep the pace up - to try to meet the expectations of the season. We can sometimes have the sense that we'll never reach these expectations or match our experiences of the past.

During the season of advent we may feel a bit of a sense of dread because of the mixture of consumerism, fear, and personal longing. And yet - during this season, we have a wonderful opportunity to step out of the craziness of our busy lives and to pause from the hectic pace - and come together in worship each Wednesday at 12:10 PM or at 7:00 PM. Gathering under the promises of God in Christ,

we are summoned to hear God's word of hope and then to act as people possessed by that hope. And even if you aren't quite in the right spirit for it, the music of the season helps us get there.

One of the newer Advent hymns that I've been introduced to recently speaks honestly and powerfully about our human experience and the promise which keeps hope alive. "Each Winter As the Year Grows Older" (ELW 252) reads: *Each winter as the year grows older, we each grow older too. The chill sets in a little colder; the verities we knew seem shaken and untrue. When race and class cry out for treason, when sirens call for war, they over-shout the voice of reason and scream 'till we ignore all we held dear before. Yet I believe beyond believing, that life can spring from death; that growth can flower from our grieving; that we can catch our breath and turn trans-fixed by faith. So even as the sun is turning to journey to the north, the living flame, in secret burning, can kindle on the earth and bring Gods love to birth.*

**That "YET" at the beginning of the third verse is the most important word in the text of this hymn. The "Yet" is the important part of the text where the hymn changes direction - and I believe the "YET" is Christ.**

The world tells us that the present, as uncertain as it is, is more certain than the future; that the future is up for grabs; therefore, get all you can while the getting's good. (A very "me" centered way of life.) But our faith tells us that the future is held firmly in the grasp of the Lord of Love! Because of this, we can live each day of the present time (a time that can feel very volatile) fully and confidently in the light of Christ's coming reign. Placing our trust in the God of the future, we find our present, too, transformed; tentativeness and fear are changed into confidence, peace, and joy. Being grounded in such hope as this is the only real answer to today's anxiety.

As we make and carry out holiday plans and gather with family and

special friends, let us choose to keep Christ at the center of our Christmas celebrations, our eyes ever drawn to the mystery and wonder of the holy Child within the manger—God with us—now, and to the end of the ages.

Merry Christmas,  
**Pastor Jennifer**

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# Sunday School News

December 2016

Cindy Larson,  
Sunday School Superintendent

## First Lutheran Church

402 S. Court Street  
Fergus Falls, MN

### December Happenings

No Sunday School Thanksgiving	Nov. 27
Christmas Program practice during S.S.	Dec 4
"Butterflies" age 0-3 at 9:45 with parents	Dec 11
Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal during Sunday school	Dec. 11
Regular Sunday School and party	Dec 18
Christmas Program at 11:00 a.m. worship	Dec. 18
No Sunday School	Dec. 25

**Sunday School resumes on January 8**



## "Breaking News" First Lutheran Sunday School Christmas

The familiar story of Jesus' birth will be told through the eyes of the evening news reporters of Bethlehem. The amazing and unbelievable happenings in Bethlehem will be recounted as the key characters share what they have seen. The field reporters will be on site and

"live" as they report on the visit from the angel, the journey to Bethlehem, and the birth of the Savior. While the field reporters try to make sense of the extraordinary events, the news anchors realize the importance this birth signifies. In the end, they come to be-

lieve in the news of Jesus' birth at Christmas. Many songs will be included throughout!



### Sunday School Christmas Giving Project:

In honor of Jesus' birthday, our Sunday School students will be given an opportunity to serve by sharing with others. All through the month of December we will collect travel size hygiene items that will be donated to Salva-

tion Army. The items may be left in the Education Office (next to the library) to be assembled into Blessing Bags.

## DECEMBER WORSHIP THEMES

### TIDINGS OF COMFORT AND JOY – WEDNESDAYS IN ADVENT

The holiday season can stir deep emotions within each of us. Many children greet the advent of Christmas with joy and excitement, whereas those who have lost loved ones during the past year may find great sadness in the very same event. Our God meets us wherever we are, both physically and emotionally. This year's advent series gives voice to the complex situations and emotions of those who first received the news of Jesus' birth (Zechariah, Joseph, Mary, and the shepherds). How do we react to Jesus' coming? With fear, confusion, doubt, and curiosity? We know that Jesus promises comfort and joy for all of us.

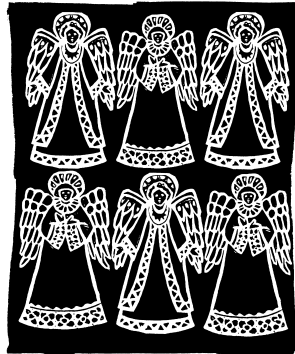
Join us for worship on Wednesdays during the season of Advent - at 12:10 with soup lunch following or at 7:00 PM for Evening Vespers with Holden Evening Prayer.

Week 1 – 11/30/16 - The Angel Speaks to Zechariah's **Fear**

Week 2 – 12/7/16 - The Angel Speaks to Joseph's **Confusion**

Week 3 – 12/14/16 - The Angel Speaks to Mary's **Doubt**

Week 4 – 12/21/16 - The Angel Speaks to the Shepherds' **Curiosity**



Rejoice! Rejoice!  
This happy morn

## JUST IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS

The many children and adult books and DVDs with a Christmas theme have been pulled off the shelves and displayed in the library for easy selection and checkout. Be sure to stop in the library any day the office is open. Items for children can be checked out any time also, not just on the Sundays the Sunday School classes are scheduled to come into the library.

Newer adult fiction and nonfic-

tion books are on the cart in the Narthex, but many more are on the shelves in the library. Suggestions for additional books are welcome.

*The Library Committee*



### Memorials February 2016-November 2016

<b>In Memory of Alva Stoa</b>	
Good Samaritan	\$ 50.00
Fellowship	\$ 35.00
<b>In Memory of Clara Hedin</b>	
Handbells	\$ 220.00
<b>In Memory of Irene Kraning</b>	
Handbells	\$ 810.00
Memorials	\$ 100.00
<b>In Memory of Jeanette Pattinson</b>	
Library	\$ 30.00
Memorials	\$ 10.00
Good Samaritan	\$ 10.00
<b>In Memory of Julie Jimmerson</b>	
Memorials	\$ 170.00
<b>In Memory of Mary Smith</b>	
Organ	\$ 50.00
Choir	\$ 50.00
<b>In Memory of Leland Bennett</b>	
Handbells	\$ 50.00
<b>In Memory of Agnes Jorgenson</b>	
Education	\$ 25.00
<b>In Memory of Harlan Ernst</b>	
Memorials	\$ 25.00
<b>In Memory of Arnold Kumm</b>	
Memorials	\$ 50.00
<b>In Memory of Luella Estenson</b>	
Memorials	\$ 50.00
<b>In Memory of Grace Long</b>	
Memorials	\$ 25.00
<b>In Memory of Doug Beckman</b>	
Good Samaritan	\$ 10.00
<b>In Memory of Bob Hemmingson</b>	
Memorials	\$ 100.00
Radio	\$ 100.00
Good Samaritan	\$ 50.00



## CHRISTMAS FOOD BASKETS

The First Lutheran church council will deliver Christmas Food Baskets to community members on the morning of Saturday, December 17th. Food items include a frozen turkey breast, bread, fruit cocktail, mar-

garine, jello, cranberries, potatoes, etc. If you or someone you know could benefit from a Christmas Food Basket, contact the church by Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup>. Please include their name, number of chil-

dren and ages (if applicable), phone number and address. If you are interested in helping pack the food baskets on the evening of Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 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 Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. 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 on Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup>.

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

On Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 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 Wednesday (Dec 14<sup>th</sup>) by 9 am. You can also leave them in the church kitchen on Sunday (Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>) and label them "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!



### First Lutheran Church Foundation is accepting requests for 2017:

The requests should be approved by the Church Council. The written request for funds should be sent to Orrie Leabo, Foundation President, before December 5th, 2016. 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 Hatzenbuhler, Tim Johnson, Orrie Leabo, Missy Mattson and Linda Mellon.



## December 2016 FLY News

Ready, Get Set..... Wait?!

### December FLY Activities:

- Fly K7 Advent/  
Christmas Party! December 21, 4:30-5:15
- NO FLY DEC. 28!
- Fly 10-12—special event for those in 10th-12th grades, December 11 (Sunday) from 5-7 PM. Watch your mail for a postcard with details!

### FLY K4 & FLY 57 Schedule:

Dec. 7: Fly 57 (4:30-5:15)

Dec 14: Fly K4 (4:30-5:15)

Dec 21: Fly K7 Advent & Christmas Party!

Dec 28: No Fly

We live right now in sort of this in-between time. By the time you are reading this note, the thanksgiving turkeys are already put away and the Christmas décor is coming out.

We hear Christmas songs on the radio, we try to get our Christmas shopping done, working up our music for concerts at school, and we are working at a frantic pace to get our homework done before winter break begins. I know this is a busy time for you.

Do you ever want to just hit pause on life for a little bit? Sorta like an extended mannequin challenge? Just so that you can breathe? Just so that you can look around at the world around you? Just so that you have a moment to just... be?

I know that many of you feel hyper-extended right now—pushed to

the edge. I know this because you've told me about your stress, about your crazy amount of homework, about the pressures that you have on you at home and at school.

If you are feeling like that today, I want to invite you to consider participating in the season of advent. Come to worship on Wednesdays at 7, and hear the beautiful music of Holden Evening prayer. Slide into the pew and let the texts of advent speak to you. Feel the rhythm of the congregation surrounding you. Take in the beautiful themes of light & darkness.

During the season of advent we have an opportunity to take a little time away—a little solitude—to break away from the frantic pace of life to focus on life with the God who loves you more than ANY-

THING—to spend time to think about the way that God came to earth in the form of a tiny, helpless little baby—so fresh and new—so small and vulnerable—to eventually die for you.

I encourage you to let the message of this season soak in. We wait in joyful anticipation of Jesus' birth. And when this miraculous event occurs, we receive the greatest news possible—this baby was born for you and for me! What great news!

May God bring you peace, love, and joy—during this season and always.

God's Peace,

*Pastor Jennifer*



Invitation to the Women of First Lutheran

## Christmas Tea

Tuesday, Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m.

Pioneer Pointe Dining Room

*Come and share the Christmas*

*spirit with our*

*Sarah and Hannah Circles!*



### Love Days Quilters

Every Monday

9:00-3:00

JOIN US!

### WELCA Board Meetings

Executive Board Meeting

Tues., Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> at

10 am in Kairos Room

WELCA Board Meeting

No meeting in December

### CIRCLES

Sarah—No meeting  
in December

Hannah—Watch the Sunday  
bulletins for December plan

Your **Giving** Electronic Giving!



Makes a Difference

Come join us in the Narthex for a

## Soup Lunch

Following the Noon Advent Worship on

**December 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>**

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 soup lunch served**

**after the 12:10 pm worship on December 21<sup>st</sup>.**

### Parents of college students!

We would love to have your child's college mailing address. Please call the church office at 218-739-3348 with addresses or fill out a postcard on the info counter. Turn them into the church office.





## ADVENT COIN FOLDERS

**A**dvent Coin Folders were distributed on Sunday, November 27<sup>th</sup> 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 is \$100.00. (We do not bill you for this, checks are payable to First Lutheran Church with

'radio broadcast' in the memo line) 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!

## 2016 DONATIONS

**I**n order to claim a charitable contribution deduction for 2016, checks must be mailed to the church by no later than December 31.

Checks must be written, postmarked, and mailed in 2016 to qualify for a 2016 deduction. All other contributions will not qualify for this year, even if the

check was actually written in 2016. Please keep this in mind when making your year-end donations. Thank you.

2016

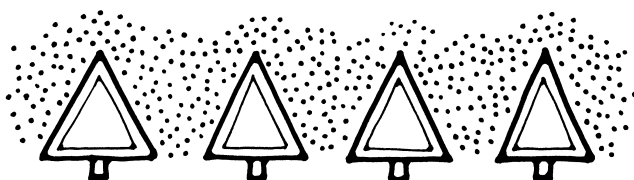
## WINTER WEATHER INFORMATION

If Fergus Falls schools 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. **REMEMBER**, you can always listen at home to the 8:30 a.m. worship on KJJK AM 1020.



## UPDATE ON THE INTERIM PERIOD

The transition process is moving quickly at First Lutheran Church. The Church Council and I are working to identify areas that need some attention as we work toward getting ready to establish a call committee. One method that has proved useful in other churches is forming a Transition Committee. This group of people works with the congregation and council, listening closely to the people's hopes and dreams, as well as concerns for the future of First Lutheran. During this process, the Transition Committee regularly reports on their progress to Council as well as with

the Church through newsletters and bulletins.

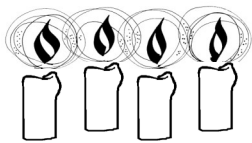
Church Council and I will also be exploring ways to do the governance task more efficiently. Currently, Church Council members are also Committee Chairpersons. Nominating Committees have observed that it's becoming more difficult to recruit folks for the Church Council. But, if the Church Council and Committee Chairperson roles were not linked together, it might be easier to find people willing to serve. An added benefit is that

more people will get involved in leadership. This change would not happen overnight, but it is something that the Council is considering as a way to help Council focus more on the Vision and Mission of the church.

There are a few other changes Church Council will be considering as it prepares to call a new Sr. Pastor. One of the other notable changes is that the Church Constitution needs to be brought up to date. Most likely, this will be done by Amendment by Substitution. The ELCA re-

quires churches to adopt certain language whenever a church changes its constitution. Because our constitution is from 2001, it may be simpler to replace ours with the current Model Constitution. We will be forming a task force to address this change. Please keep the Church Council and all leaders in your prayers as we move through this time of transition.

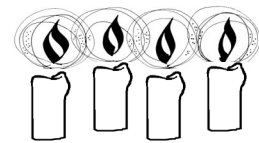
Peace,  
Pastor Erick  
Interim Sr. Pastor



### WEDNESDAY ADVENT SERVICES

at 12:10 & 7 p.m.  
December 7, 14 & 21

Soup Lunch in the Narthex  
Following the 12:10 service on December 7 & 14 only.



## Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24th



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 fa-