When I was in school, I remember that our first day back after Christmas break we all told our friends everything we got for Christmas. It was a time-honored tradition of proudly telling your friends how many Star Wars action figures you got, and also enviously hearing what awesome presents your friends received. The Church has a season for doing just this same sort of thing, it’s called Epiphany. Epiphany is a season for us to show off our Christmas presents. Or, to put it another way, Epiphany is the season to “show off” the good news of Jesus Christ to our neighbors and the world.

You might be thinking that telling others what I got for Christmas is one thing, but sharing God’s love with others is completely different. If you’re wondering how you might do this, I’ve got a couple ideas to get you rolling. First, start with gratitude. If we are able to see all the gifts in our own lives, we can be grateful for all that we have. Living in an attitude of gratefulness, we stop our neediness, and instead turn and become someone who can offer care and love to others. It is this awareness of God’s blessings and love for us that can spark our outreach to the world.

The second idea is what I call “Epiphany Plants.” Let me explain, in worship sometime in January or February, we’ll have a bunch of little plants available for people. Each family or person would take two plants: one to keep and one to give away. The idea here is that you would bring the plant to a friend or neighbor as a gift. In doing so, you would be sharing the love of God found in the beauty of creation with them. Pretty easy, right? Just be on the lookout for the Epiphany Plants announcement. And, over the coming days and weeks, I encourage you to notice how God has been gracious to you, and how you have been blessed. God’s call to us to be good news for others will seem so easy once we remember how wonderfully gifted we actually are.

Peace,

Pastor Erick Thompson
NEW IN THE LIBRARY

The library has a new TABLE and CHAIRS given in memory of Val Wollan whose family generously donated the proceeds from her son’s musical performance at First Lutheran following her death in 2015. Val was an avid reader and devoted member and leader of the library committee until her death. Her leadership is dearly missed. Thank you to the Wollan family.

Also new, are books for adults and children suggested by users of the library: Books dealing with grief, depression and bullying; books on Martin Luther; the newest book in the No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency series; and 8 Magic Tree House books. They will be on the shelves as soon as they are cataloged and cards put in them. We hope you check them out.

The Library Committee

MAKE 'EM SMILE

"Even a short note can bring a smile."

Pastor Stan Satre, Visitation Pastor, is looking for a few folks to organize an outreach to our older members and friends who are living alone. As holiday greetings came to us we realized how important a single contact is. Even a short note can bring a smile. If you can take some time to help, call the church at 218-739-3348, and let him know. It should be fun!

TRANSITION UPDATE

The transition process is moving forward, with a Transition Team to be chosen by the council, hopefully by its January meeting. Once the Transition Team is assembled, they will host Listening Forums for people to come and share their views on a variety of topics. (Watch for more information on the Listening Forums in later January and early February.)

From these listening forums, the Transition Team hopes to have a better idea of where we are as a congregation around five focus points: Heritage, Leadership, Connections, Mission, and Future. These five focus points will help the Transition Team to understand when it would be appropriate to officially assemble a call committee and begin the call process.

If you are interested in being a part of the Transition Team, or would like to nominate someone for the Team, please contact Pastor Erick Thompson at the church office, or by email: revdocerick@gmail.com. If you have any other questions about the process, please contact me. I would love to discuss further any questions or concerns you may have.

Peace,
Pastor Erick

Watch for more information on the Listening Forums in later January and early February
The Outreach Committee would like to thank everyone who supported our Giving Trees this year. The gifts were given to two of our local benevolences: Someplace Safe and A Place To Belong. We are excited to continue this important ministry next year with your help.

On December 17th, The Outreach Committee, with the help of Council members, delivered 40 Christmas food baskets to families in need in our community. We want to say Thank you to LeAnne Jaenisch, Kile & Tonya Bergren, Duane Gran, Rick West and Ashley Shuck for delivering the baskets. Also, thank you to Tim Johnson for delivering the food from Service Foods.

We plan to continue this exciting ministry in the coming year. If you know of someone who would appreciate a basket, please contact the church office each year.

“…there have been times our members have been moved to tears by the gifts they received from the church. Also, because of your partnership with us, we can freely discuss Jesus at our club even if some people are opposed to it. When local churches give to AP2B we believe we have a responsibility to let Jesus in the door.”

Sue Wilken, E D
A Place To Belong

GIVING TREES: THANK YOU!

FERGUS FALLS FOOD SHELF

Over Thanksgiving, our congregation participated in our processional food offering. The Outreach Committee would like to share our appreciation with you! Thank you so much. We were able to give 390 lbs. of food to our local Fergus Falls Food Shelf and even more was brought to the Salvation Army to help families in need.

First Lutheran is proud to give to our local benevolences and share the good news of God’s love to each and every one.

A special thank you to Sandy Kvern for helping deliver all of those groceries!

CHRISTMAS FOOD BASKETS
**Upcoming Events:**

* January 22nd, 8-12th Grades Summer Trip Informational Meeting, 12:00 Noon

* January 25, 6:30-7:30 PM Superfly Minute to Win It night for 8-12th grades!

* February 5—Luther Crest Camp Promo Sunday!

**Senior Fly Schedule:**

(8:00-9:00 PM)

January 4

January 11

January 18

(Minute to Win It)

January 25

Fly K4 and Fly 57

Schedule:

(4:30-5:15)

January 4 Fly 57

January 11 Fly K4

January 18 Fly 57

January 25 Fly K4

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**January FLY News**

**Turning the Lights on!**

In the month of January, after the 12 days of Christmas, we celebrate the season of Epiphany in the church.

Epiphany is basically an "AHA" moment—or like any epiphany you might have—suddenly you realize that you want to be a doctor when you grow up, or suddenly you realize that your shoes are on the wrong feet. Simply put, an epiphany is a sudden realization of something.

In the church, the Epiphany (or AHA!) is about Jesus. It is the season when we celebrate the wise men coming to see the newborn baby Jesus. And yet, they had an Epiphany or an “AHA” about who Jesus is and why Jesus had come.

Epiphany is also known as a season of light—Jesus our Savior, illuminated in the light, has come for you. It’s like someone has turned the lights on in your brain so that you can see, too.

So what AHA moments are you experiencing in this season? Where have the lights turned on where you can see Jesus among you?

I just saw a neat youtube video of a group of students at a high school who gave a gift to one of their classmates—a new pair of shoes! His classmates noticed that he was trying to squeeze his feet into shoes that just didn’t fit. So everyone chipped in to get him a new pair of Nike’s in his favorite color.

God was present in this action of these students. God notices when we are dealing with something difficult. That gift of noticing is so important.

Jesus came to us in the form of an innocent, tiny baby, and grew up experiencing the aches and pains of life, and has come for you! So in this season of epiphany, watch for those "aha" moments where you see Jesus working out in the world. You might be surprised at how many of these things you notice when you are looking for them.

In Christ,

*Pastor Judi*

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**SuperFLY 2nd Annual Minute to Win It Night, Wednesday Jan 25**

Are you fast? Come and test your reflexes as we enjoy a SUPER FLY Minute to Win It night on Wednesday, January 25th from 6:30-7:30 PM. (This event is required for confirmation students.) Join us for some fun and lots of laughs!
First Lutheran Church

Sunday School News

Jesus is our Superhero!

Thank you to all of our SOUPer Workshop Leaders and Shepherds for helping our students learn all semester about Jesus’ love and for helping them present the story of His birth at Christmas! We want all of these helpers in our Sunday school program to pick up a Soup mix from the Education office in appreciation for your dedication to our Youth! Of course we want to thank our director, Kelsey Felstul, and accompanist, Joyce Perez, for sharing their enthusiasm and musical talent by directing another fun Christmas Program.

Thank you to all of the students who bundled up on that FRIGID day to present the Christmas story in song! Your effort was remarkable!

“I can do all things in Him who strengthens me.”
Philippians 4:13

Cindy Larson
2017
Sunday School Superintendent

January Happenings

No Sunday School Jan.1
“Butterflies” for 0-3 yr. olds and parent
Sunday School resumes Jan. 8
Preschool 2 Milestone Class with parents Jan. 22
Preschool 2 Milestone Blessing during worship Jan. 29

Helping hands ;)

One of the things we try to help our First Lutheran students learn is; thinking of others. In December, our congregation and Sunday School students collected many items to assemble personal care packages. These “Blessing Bags” will be packaged in January by the 7th-8th graders and given to Salvation Army for people who need them. We are always looking for ways to be God’s hands.

If you have an idea for our Sunday school, please let me know!
2017 Offering envelopes are here!
Stop by the table in the Narthex and find your envelopes in alphabetical order. If you cannot find yours, please call the church office at 218-739-3348 and talk to Katrina.

WELCA

Women of the ELCA

"Love Days" Quilters
Meets every Monday
9:00 am– 3:00 pm
Hope you'll join us!

WELCA Board Meeting
Tuesday, Jan. 10th
10:00 am
Kairos Room

Circles
Sarah: Wed., Jan. 25th
9:30 am at Pioneer Pointe

Hannah: Wed., Jan. 25th
1:00 pm at First Lutheran Church

The First Lutheran Nursery is a Food Free Zone...
First Lutheran asks that our children and nursery attendants do not have treats while they are in the nursery in order to protect our children from food allergies, incidents and other emergencies. Thank You!

A Big Thank-You
To everyone who helped with the Special Friends' cookie project for shut-ins and others on Wed., Dec. 14th.
75 plates of beautiful Christmas cookies were delivered to shut-ins and families that no longer bake!