



JANUARY 2018

**First Lutheran Church
Fergus Falls, MN**

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Thank you for being the Church!

"Is it okay to say that I am proud of our church?" This is what one member of First Lutheran said to me last week as we were talking about the prayer service the day after the death of Sarah and Ryan Cheshire and the memorial service for Ryan Cheshire. My immediate response was to say "yes of course it is okay to say you are proud of our church". Dealing with this terrible reality has been difficult for the entire community. It has been a challenge to figure out how to be helpful, to know what is needed and to sort out so many confusing and conflicting feelings. However, amid all the chaos, you have been the Church! You have come together to support each other, the emergency and law enforcement officers, the Cheshire and Benson families and their coworkers and neighbors. You have come together to worship and pray, to offer hugs and friendship, to make coffee and to serve in so many ways. You have expressed your concern, you have shared your feelings, you have grieved, and you have found ways to assist our little ones as they navigate the difficulty of this news. You have offered kind words of affirmation and appreciation to staff, musicians and Pastor Marcus and myself. Thank you for being the Church! Thank you for showing up to support and to sing and pray at the prayer service and the memorial service even when you did not know the Cheshire family. I am proud of you and grateful to you for being the Church. I am glad we don't have to walk alone in times like this!

Actually, I don't like walking alone in challenging, sorrow filled days, routine and uneventful days or in joyful days. I need other people. I need you. Yes, of course, I am happy to know that you pray for me and I appreciate knowing that I am in your

thoughts. But I long for you to be physically present to be the Church with me. I don't think I am unique in this longing. In fact, I am pretty confident that God intends for us to walk hand in hand to meet the challenges and joys of life. When we were baptized we became part of this lovely, gigantic and imperfect family of God. Like most families we drive each other crazy, we disagree about important and not so important things, we get angry with each other, we disappoint each other and we find fault with each other. However, our reason for being together, our reason for showing up at worship as well as the sad and joyful events is so much bigger than our reasons for staying away. We are family because of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus. God's love and forgiveness is the heart and soul of this family, the glue that holds us together and the fuel that powers our commitment to love and serve each other.

The truth is, when you are not here, I miss you. I miss the gifts that God has given you, I miss your point of view, I miss your ideas, I miss not being able to sing and pray with you, I miss your strength, I miss your questions, I miss hearing about your life, I miss being able to care for you. When you are not here, it is so much harder to be the Church.

So, thanks for showing up even when it is difficult. Thanks for being the Church, for me, for members and friends of First Lutheran, for the community and for the world. I am proud of First Lutheran Church!

Looking forward to seeing you soon,

Pastor Martha Halls

WITH HEARTS & HANDS & VOICES YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN SOMEONE'S LIFE



Driving Miss Daisy? Maybe not Daisy, but there are people looking for rides to worship. Call the office!

You light up my life! 5th— 9th graders are reminded to **sign up in the Narthex to acolyte.**

We Love children! Get to know our kids Wednesdays after school. People who like fun and games needed. Contact Pastor Martha for more details.

Welcome wagon. We don't have a wagon, but we do have worship. Stop in the Narthex to sign up for worship participation! All Ages are encouraged and welcome!

The Sound of Music. Do you find yourself singing or whistling as you go through your day? Do you like spending time with children? The Sunday school gathering – we call it Chapel time – is looking for an enthusiastic song leader who would lead the children in singing and prayer on Sunday mornings at the beginning of the Sunday school hour. Pastor Martha has been doing it this fall but she needs to have that time freed up to connect with others in the congregation and accomplish some of the work of the interim/ transition time. Can you help with this fun ministry? Contact Cindy Larson at cmlarson1111@msn.com or the church office.

Wednesday Supper Update

First Lutheran will NOT be hosting Wednesday suppers in January. A special thank you to everyone who served suppers this fall. Your participation and help with this ministry is greatly appreciated. Thanks to Katrina Johnson who organized the meals, did the shopping and filled in when servers were needed. Thanks also to those of you who came to eat and get to know your family of faith at First Lutheran.

PARENTS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS!

We would love to have your child's college mailing address so we can send an Epiphany care package! Please call the church office at 218-739-3348, email firstlutheranchurchff@gmail.com or place the information in the offering plate.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING



Sunday, January 28 2018
12 Noon followed by a
Potluck in
Fellowship Hall

Call Committee Update

The Call Committee continues to seek names of qualified candidates to be our new senior pastor. If you want to nominate someone, please contact Chad Felstul at **218-205-1216** or at c.felstul@pemlaw.com

The Call Committee has interviewed three candidates so far and decided that none of the three candidates were right for First Lutheran. We recently received another resume from an interested candidate. We are in the process of setting up an interview with this candidate and expect the interview to take place shortly after the first of the year.

**DEADLINE FOR THE
FEBRUARY MESSENGER
AND ANNUAL REPORT IS JAN. 16th**

**Senior coffee & Bible study
will resume Thursday January 4th at 10:30 am in the
Kairos Room**





Wednesdays at FLC

(Jan. 10, 17 & 24)

FLY 8 -12 Schedule:

Meet Ashley in the Youth Room
from 7:20-8:15 p.m.

FLY K7 Schedule:

Meet Pastor Martha & Maddy
in the Choir Room from 4:40-
5:15 p.m.

NO FLY January 3rd

Happy New Year! We're kicking off 2018 with our regular programming because it's been going so well!! Each Wednesday, after Confirmation or Vespers, an average of 18 kids join me in the Youth Room for hang out time, games, catch-up, updates on events, and brainstorming of what the youth of our church would like to participate in. We've had such a blast—Svea Smestad described it in one word, “exciting!”; and Matt Pajari said the one word he would use would have to be, “FUN”! I'm so impressed with how well the adults of our church have stepped up to graciously give their evenings to the youth. Thank you to everyone that has been involved, the future is bright for our youth here at First Lutheran Church! If you are interested in learning more about the FLY programming or getting involved, feel free to call/text me at 218-280-2608 or shoot me an email at als.2008@live.com.

Ashley Shuck
Adult Youth Leader

P.S. Have you missed invites or information about the Youth activities? Get on the list by calling the office or letting Ashley know so you don't miss a thing!

JANUARY 2018

TACO 'BOUT FAITH

@ Taco John's

FLY 10-12

Tues., Jan. 9 &

Tues., Jan. 23

FREE BREAKFAST!

**FRIENDS ARE ALWAYS
WELCOME TO COME!**

*Txt or call Ashley with
questions at 218-280-2608*



First Lutheran Church

Sunday School News

CINDY LARSON
2018

SUNDAY SCHOOL
SUPERINTENDENT

January **Happenings**

All creatures on earth, rejoice!!

Thank you to all of our caring adults and Youth who are in Workshop Leader and Shepherd roles. We have counted on you to make connections with the children and Youth. You have modeled, taught, listened, guided, helped... the list goes on and we are so grateful.

Lakeland Mental Health has offered to assist families or

anyone that needs to talk. You may let a Pastor know if this can be useful.

Thank you to our children! We never tire of hearing the story of Jesus' birth.

Thank you to our director, Kelsey Felstul, and accompanist, Joyce Perez, for sharing their enthusiasm, love of kids, and musical

talent by directing another fun Christmas Program.

These two are very busy ladies at this time of year and we are so happy they set the Children's program as a priority!

No Sunday School
Dec. 31

"Butterflies" for
0-3 yr. olds and parents
Sunday School resumes
Jan. 7

Preschool 2- Mile-
stone Class with parents
Jan.21

Preschool 2 Milestone
Blessing during worship
Jan.28



Helping hands :)

One of the things we try to help our First Lutheran students learn is; thinking of others. In December, our Sunday School students collected many stuffed animals to be given out in emergency situations by EMTs, police officers and firefighters. We decorated a small tag that was attached to the animal with an encouraging note. We are always looking for ways to be God's hands.

If you have an idea for our Sunday School, please let me know!

WELCA Board Meeting:
Tuesday, Jan. 9th at 10:00 am—
Kairos Room

Love Days Quilters meets every
Monday from 9 a.m.—3 p.m.
All are welcome!

CIRCLES
Wed, Jan. 24

Sarah: 9:30 am @ Pioneer
Pointe

Hannah: watch the bulletin for
info



Pictures from the
 Christmas Tea.



First Lutheran Church reaches out!

It's been busy around here!

- ◆ Socktober— 85 pairs of warm socks went to the Salvation Army
- ◆ About 200 lbs of food collected for the Fergus Falls Food Shelf
- ◆ The Giving Trees provided gifts to A Place to Belong, Someplace Safe and Lake Region Recovery Home.
- ◆ 54 food baskets went to families in need around the Fergus Falls area.

Thank you to all of you for your generosity and thank you to everyone that helped assemble and deliver these wonderful gifts.

Office Update

We are instituting new policies for how we meet members and visitors in the office in responsible ways during business hours. When you stop in during business hours you may be greeted with a new bell on the door to help us know you are here; we might be in the work room and don't want to miss you! On days when we have fewer staff members around, you may find the doors locked. There will be a bell on the counter in front of the patio door to let us know you are here and needing assistance. If you have questions or concerns about these updates, please feel free to speak with Council President Greg Peterson, Pastor Martha Halls, Pastor Marcus Kunz or Director of Operations Katrina Johnson.



THANK YOU!!! — THANK YOU!!! - THANK YOU!!!

Thank you!!! Thank you everyone who helped me with prayers and donations for my project. My heart is full with gratefulness for everyone at this church. In total, I was able to donate 422 diapers, 10 blankets, 25 deodorants, over 1000 baby wipes, 15 bags of cough drops and 4 tubs of baby formula. I thank you, and everyone at United Churches for the Homeless, thanks you.

—Madeline Trosvig



Thank you to everyone who helped make and deliver 75 plates of cookies to First Lutheran Friends this holiday season.



The Fellowship Committee did a wonderful job of hosting delicious soup lunches after the noon Advent Worship Services. It was a time of sharing tasty food and friendship in our beautiful narthex. Thanks to the Fellowship Committee and their helpers who planned, shopped, cooked, baked, and served with joy and love. Your ministry of generosity and hospitality is greatly appreciated!



A special thank you to the men and women who carried, fluffed, hung lights, gathered and brought lovely natural items to add to and create the beautiful Christmas decorations at our church. It looks so lovely! Another benefit was the fun, fellowship and pizza. Thank you!