



# The Messenger

## December 2025

**MISSION: "As faithful disciples we serve God and welcome all people with open hearts."**

### CONTENTS

2

President Letter

3

Giving Tree  
Pastoral Care

4

Youth & Family  
Ministry

5

Children's  
Ministry

6

Book Study  
Advent Bible Study

7

WOW  
Outreach & Finance

8

Council Corner

9 WELCA

A publication of

First Lutheran Church  
ELCA

402 South Court Street

Fergus Falls, MN 56537

218-739-3348

office@flcff.org

www.firstlutheranchurchff.org

Dear People of FLC,

Have you heard of this term: "time sickness" or "time poverty"? The definition is the belief that many people have that time is always slipping away, that there is never enough of it, and that we must go faster and faster to keep up.

I read an anecdote about a man who immigrated to the United States and soon came to believe that the word "busy" meant "good" because when he asked people, "How are you doing?" they often responded, "Busy." Nora Rosendahl discovered the same thing when she conducted a small social experiment by documenting answers to the question "How are you?" over the course of a week. By her count, nearly eight out of 10 people said, "Busy."

In fact, this obsession with busy-ness has become such an issue that just being still with nothing to do is nearly intolerable for some. In one famous experiment, the psychologist Timothy Wilson and his colleagues found that 67% of men and 25% of women chose to press a button to electrically shock themselves rather than sit still with their own thoughts in a lab room. Before entering the room, participants had stated that they would pay money to avoid an electric shock, but once they were left alone, the inactivity became too much to bear, and people sought to fill the void.

Now might be a good time for us to remember that even in the midst of all the people needing Jesus desperately – crying out for him to heal their sicknesses and cast out demons, "*in the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.*" Jesus took time for quiet and to be alone. He knew his soul needed it. All of us need that.

If your life tends to be a little too busy, maybe especially as the holiday season arrives, where can you find moments of peace and quiet? If you don't already, perhaps Advent could be a good time to start a new practice of beginning the day with a devotion or some quiet time journaling. Maybe come to our Advent Bible study on Thursdays at noon! Or maybe there is some usual activity that you could remove from your schedule during Advent in order to make a little more space to breathe?

Time is so precious and valuable and none of us know how much we will get. I pray that this holiday season will be abundant for you in ways that matter – time with your loved ones, time to reflect on Jesus' love for us, & time to share generously with others.

I thank God for you – God bless you this December and always –

Pastor Ruth



**Dear Church Family,**

**As we near the end of this year, we find ourselves reflecting on a season that has stretched and shaped us in profound ways. It has been a tumultuous year for our church. We have navigated the loss of office staff, our visitation pastor, and our lead pastor—transitions that have touched every part of our life together and have hurt deeply.**

**Yet we still stand and even in the midst of uncertainty, we have witnessed God’s faithfulness again and again. New volunteers have stepped into roles with generous hearts. Ministries have continued because of your commitment. We have seen new faces join us in worship, celebrations of life and faith that have reminded us of God’s presence, and countless moments of grace that have encouraged us along the way. We have received many gifts—some expected, some surprising, all reminders that God is still at work among us.**

**With that same spirit of openness, we want to share with you our current financial reality. As of today, we are facing a \$150,000 shortfall in our annual budget. This is a challenge we have encountered in previous years, and though it is not easy to bring it before you again, we do so with honesty and hope. We believe in the mission of this church, we believe in the faithfulness of this congregation and we believe that God is at work here.**

**We ask you to prayerfully consider how you might help us close this gap as the year draws to a close—whether through a special year-end gift, an increase in your regular giving, or by establishing recurring giving if you have not yet done so. Every contribution, no matter the size, helps sustain the ministries, staff, and outreach efforts that continue to make a meaningful difference.**

**Thank you for the grace, patience, resilience, and faith you have shown this year. Thank you for being a community that walks through challenges together and celebrates the blessings along the way. We trust that God will continue to guide us, provide for us, and lead us into a new year with renewed strength and purpose.**

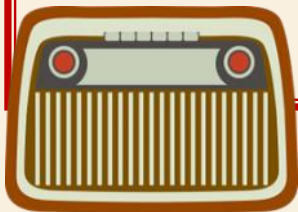
**With gratitude,**

**Jeani Trosvig, Council President**

Each week there is an opportunity to remember a special person or honor a special event by sponsoring the altar flowers and the radio broadcast.

**The sign-up sheet for 2026 is in the Narthex.** Cost is \$45 for altar flowers and \$100 for radio broadcast.

Please plan to make your payment at the time of sign up.



# Pastoral CARE

If you or someone you know is in need of a pastoral visit, feel free to call the office and let us know. If a hospital stay occurs, please note that hospitals do not typically notify churches or pastors due to HIPPA regulations. Should the need for an immediate emergency visit arise, please call our office at 218-739-3348, or Pastor Ruth's cell number is (254) 265-5349

## 2025 Giving Tree

Christmas is a time of giving. A tradition of giving is a part of the history of First Lutheran Church. We are partnering with a Place to Belong to bring the joy of Christmas to its clients. A giving tree is located in the Narthex displaying ornaments with gift requests. Please consider choosing one of the ornaments and fulfilling the wish indicated. Directions will be printed on the back of the ornament. Gifts need to be wrapped with the gift tag attached and brought to the church office by December 12.



God bless you and thank you for your generosity,

Outreach Committee of First Lutheran Church



First Lutheran Church is looking to provide an additional wheel chair for persons attending services or events in our building. If you have a

gently used wheel chair that could be donated please contact the office to arrange for drop off. Thank you for your consideration!



## Ways to Worship with Us

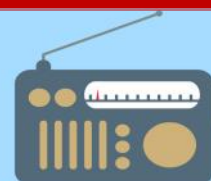


Sundays  
9:00 am

Wednesdays  
5:30 pm



[www.firstlutheranchurchff.org](http://www.firstlutheranchurchff.org)



AM 1020  
FM 97.7  
Channel 977

# Children, Youth, & Family Ministries

## Sunday School Christmas Program

Join us on December 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am to hear how three wise men, a star, and a wish brought to light God's love for us and how he sent his only son to save us all.

Following the program we will have hot chocolate and Christmas cookies to enjoy.

FLC presents the Sunday School  
Christmas Program  
"The Wish"  
December 14th at 9:00am



### DRESS UP DAYS

#### FOR CHRISTMAS PROGRAM PRACTICE DAYS

DEC. 7



**Pajama  
Day**

Wear some  
cozy pjs.

A promotional graphic for a Christmas event. It features a light blue background with a border of yellow popcorn. At the top, there are four cartoon characters: two Santa Claus figures and two penguins wearing red hats. The text "CHRISTMAS MOVIE &amp; PAJAMA PARTY" is written in a green, stylized font. Below this, in smaller red text, it says "BRING YOUR HOLIDAY SPIRIT AND YOUR COZIEST SLEEPWEAR FOR A HOLIDAY MOVIE &amp; YUMMIES!". At the bottom, a red banner contains the date and time: "7 | DEC | 11:30 AM-1:30 PM" and the location: "REC ROOM FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH".



## Sundays

This month during **Sunday School & Butterflies**, we will be working on our Christmas program and learning:

- God sent his only son to earth to save us.

**Youth Connect** will be digging into how the Sunday's gospel of "John Baptist prepares the way"- Matthew 3:1-12 speaks to us in our current lives. Some of the youth will also be helping with the Christmas Program.

### No Sunday Children & Youth Programs

- Dec. 14 (instead come attend our Christmas Program at 9:00am and drink hot cocoa with us!)
- Dec. 21
- Dec. 28



## Wednesdays

This month during **F3 & Elevate**, we will hop ahead to the Gospel of Luke

with the story of Jesus' birth. We will have our F3 & Elevate Christmas party on Dec. 17.

NO F3 or Elevate on Dec. 24 & 31

**Confirmation**- We will moving through the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Commandments, and then having a Christmas Celebration on Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>. Prayer Partners and families are invited to attend.

Important dates: Dec. 17- Christmas Celebration  
Dec. 24 & 31- No Confirmation

**EPIC (Encouraging People In Christ)**- is for students grades 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Christmas Celebration December 10 6:30-7:30pm.**

JOIN US FOR A

# HIGH SCHOOL LOCK-IN

**\$15**

ACTIVITIES-FOOD- FRIENDS  
DEVOTIONS-GAMES

**DEC 21-22** | **8 PM- 8AM**

All 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders are welcome to join us for one exciting evening filled with activities, food, friends, devotions, and other fun activities! The lock-in will take place at First and Bethlehem Lutheran churches and the NEW Arcadium in town! More info will be coming out to you. Talk to Ken Dessellier or Kristy Wicklund if you have any questions.  
Sign up here: 



**Kristy Wicklund**  
Director of Children, Youth, & Family's Ministries

Contact Me:  
Call or Text: (218) 531-9544  
Email: kristy@flcff.org

## Advent Bible Study: Love, Hope, Peace & Joy

Join us each Thursday at noon during Advent for a time of study, reflection, and fellowship as we explore the timeless themes of the season. Together we'll dive into what Scripture reveals about Love, Hope, Peace, and Joy—the themes we remember each week as we light the Advent wreath. Lunch will be provided, so come ready to be nourished in body and spirit. Whether you're looking to deepen your understanding of Advent or simply seeking meaningful community during this busy season, all are welcome at the table.

**When:** Thursdays at Noon throughout Advent

**What to Expect:** Scripture study, thoughtful discussion, and warm fellowship

**Lunch provided**

Come as you are, and let's prepare our hearts together for the coming of Christ.



## Need Some Support?

The First Lutheran Support Group meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 10:30 am in the conference room. This group is for anyone who has lost and misses a loved one. Please come join us for supportive conversation and loving comradery. If you have any questions, feel free to call Terry Gervais at: 952-250-0432.

# thrivent

Have you thought about FLC for your Thrivent Financial CHOICE DOLLARS or your ACTION TEAM directed dollars? If you don't know what they are or how to use them, call your local Thrivent Representative!

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
DECEMBER BOOK STUDY

JAMES PATTERSON  
and TAD SAFRAN

The **TWELVE**  
Days of  
**CHRISTMAS**

Topsy-Turvy,  
Very Messy

DECEMBER 15, 11:45-1:00  
LUNCH, DISCUSSION AND FELLOWSHIP  
BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE FOR FREE CHECK-OUT IN  
THE CHURCH LIBRARY.



WOW presents



# Make-it Merry

Monday Dec. 8

Time: 6:30pm

- Design Wood Slice Ornaments
- Create Custom Gift Tags
- Hot Cider
- Rosettes & Krumkake

Frist Lutheran Church  
Narthex  
402 S Court St

# Save The Date

Sunday February 15, 2026

## Valentines Dinner at First Lutheran

Funds raised go to support primary school children's lunches through Operation Bootstrap Africa

**We are Requesting donations to auction for this OBA fundraiser,  
Thank you- from the Outreach Team**

### First Lutheran Church profit/loss cash flow year to date

Month	Revenue	Expenses	Profit/Loss
January	\$ 32,910.24	\$ (41,173.00)	\$ (8,262.76)
February	\$ 29,819.44	\$ (40,146.00)	\$ (10,326.56)
March	\$ 45,038.88	\$ (65,682.00)	\$ (20,643.12)
April	\$ 39,387.75	\$ (37,059.00)	\$ 2,328.75
May	\$ 32,368.10	\$ (42,543.00)	\$ (10,174.90)
June	\$ 27,980.47	\$ (40,808.00)	\$ (12,827.53)
July	\$ 26,367.41	\$ (52,111.00)	\$ (25,743.59)
August	\$ 35,491.75	\$ (50,522.00)	\$ (15,030.25)
September	\$ 43,493.78	\$ (38,067.00)	\$ 5,426.78
October	\$ 35,237.27	\$ (39,985.31)	\$ (4,748.04)
November			\$ -
December			\$ -
	\$ 348,095.09	\$ (448,096.31)	\$ (100,001.22)



### Officers

Jeani Trosvig, President  
Wade Jyrkas, VP  
Cathy Neuman, Secretary  
Leonard Hatzenbuhler, Treasurer

### Council Members

Darren Krein, Thane Schmidt-  
Adult Ed  
Kristi Dinsmore-Children, Youth, &  
Families  
Sue Toso-Community Life  
Ann Mathison-Mission  
Kari Vaughn-Worship  
John Demuth-Personnel  
Kristi Goos-Stewardship  
Dale & Jody Hanson-Property



## Ways to give:

### In Person

Whether it's cash or check, we appreciate your kindness. Please place your offerings in an envelope and drop them in the offering plate.

### Online

Visit [firstlutheranchurchff.org](http://firstlutheranchurchff.org) and click Offering to set up a one-time or recurring donation.

### Mobile App

Download the Vanco Mobile app from your app store to set up a one-time or recurring donation. **Search Fergus Falls** and then choose **First Lutheran Church**.

### QR CODE

Scan the QR code to visit our online giving page.



**Monday to Friday  
8:00 am to 4:00 pm**

The Church office will close at noon on December 24th and will be closed December 25 and 26

The office will also be closed on January 1st in observance of the New Year Holiday



I haven't always been God's biggest fan. Much of my young life was spent being very angry at Him; hating Him sometimes. Maybe a lot of the time. You see, my father died not that long after he came back from Vietnam when I was just little. I blamed God for that and I spent much of my youth missing someone I never knew but KNEW my life would have been better had he been in it. I couldn't understand how God could allow that to happen? I questioned that often, even into my early 20s. I didn't look around and realize the many gifts God HAD brought into my life; a loving and devoted mother, a stepfather who provided and taught me what hard work was, the many wonderful friends and family members surrounding me. I often chose to look at what was missing or lacking rather than what was given and standing right in front of me. It wasn't until I had a child of my own, feeling that overwhelming love for her and realizing that God felt that way about ME, even more so. My anger at God and the world...the world I had no control over but darn it I was trying to control...I slowly was able to let go. I once believed anger was useful, it was motivating, it was better than feeling pain and hurt. I was wrong. I eventually forgave God and began to accept life on life's terms. I began to feel gratitude for all the gifts He gave me and continues to give. I consider serving as your Council president one of these gifts.

Jeani Trosvig



# Women of the ELCA



Love Day Quilters continue to meet each Monday from 9am-3pm. Stop by and see our mission work in action when you are available! The quilters will be meeting the first three weeks in December and then will be taking a break from quilting in January and February.



WELCA Executive Board Meeting

Tuesday December 2nd at 10:00am in the Narthex.

Join us for a

## Christmas PARTY

DECEMBER | 9 | AT 1:00PM

HANNAH CIRCLE CHRISTMAS GATHERING  
JOIN US FOR REFRESHMENTS AND  
CELEBRATION! DEVOTIONS AND POEMS BY  
PASTOR RUTH. LIVE MUSIC AND A BRIEF  
PROGRAM!

*Bring A Friend*



There will be no regular Hannah Circle meeting in the month of December



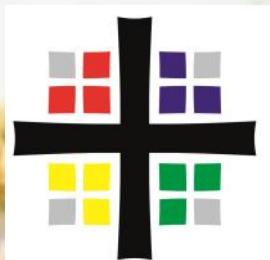
After 5 days return to  
**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
402 South Court Street  
Fergus Falls MN 56537  
Address Service Requested

## Staff Directory

Interim Pastor	Pr. Ruth Hetland	PastorRuth@flcff.org
Director Children, Youth & Families Ministries	Kristy Wicklund	Kristy@flcff.org
Organist	Keith Melberg	Melberke@prtcl.com
Choir Director	Harriet Wicklund	Wicklund@charter.net
Hosanna Handbells Director	Linda Mellon	LindaMellon@mac.com
Worship Team Director	Anne Taylor	AnnemITaylor@gmail.com
Office Manager	Vicki Ray	Office@flcff.org
Office Assistant	Mary Johnson	MaryJ@flcff.org

### First Lutheran Church

402 S Court Street  
Fergus Falls, MN 56537  
218-739-3348  
[www.firstlutheranchurchff.org](http://www.firstlutheranchurchff.org)



**Worship Times**  
Sundays at 9:00 am  
Wednesdays at 5:30 pm

**Office Hours**  
Mon–Fri, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm