



First Lutheran Church **DECEMBER 2020**

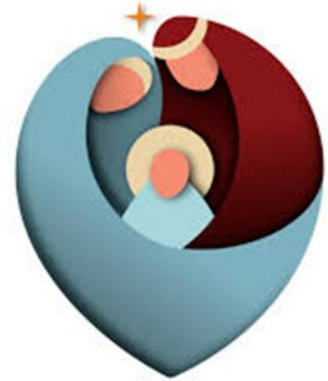
Worship Sun. 9:30 am on Radio & YouTube
Listen on the radio 1020 am or FM 97.7
www.channel977.com
Livestream on YouTube, link found on website

402 South Court Street
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
Phone: 218-739-3348
www.firstlutheranchurchff.org
office@flcff.org

Mission Statement: "As faithful disciples, we serve God and welcome all people with open hearts".

Psalm 130

- 1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.
- 2 Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!
- 3 If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?
- 4 But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered.
- 5 I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;
- 6 my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.
- 7 O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem.
- 8 It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.



In such a time as this...pre Advent pandemic 2020..I invite each of us to surrender to the Lord. I invite you to use Psalm 130 as a mantra, and a point of departure, for prayer and meditation these coming days. Recite, pray, sing and read Psalm 130, as though your life depends on it, as an active practice of surrendering to the Lord. You may want to keep a journal of your thoughts, hopes, and insights as you take time to delve into the heart of the message Psalm 130 has for you.

This Advent season is like no other, in that we are not encouraged to gather as people of faith to sing God praises and to be of service to the needy in group settings. So it is we are invited to be creative in our active response to the Gospel call to be of service, to love and be loved.

Please know that your are welcome to reach out to Vicar Lynn or myself and to let us know of special prayer requests or needs, as they arise.

God is with us today and always..

Lovingly,
Pastor Gretchen

Worship With Us on the Radio, YouTube and PEG Access

First Lutheran, along with Augustana Lutheran have put in-person on pause until December 18.

Services will continue to be live-streamed on YouTube and on-air on KJJK AM 1020 or Channel 977 FM97.7 at 9:30 am on Sundays. To access YouTube go to the First Lutheran website: www.firstlutheranchurchff.org. You can livestream or watch later. Our worship services are being aired on PEG Access Channel 8. The schedule does change, so be sure to check the website at <http://pegaccess.com/channel8programming.html> for current times.



Be the
Light

Matthew 5:14

First Lutheran Church

Sunday School

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS



It is time to prepare for the birth of Jesus. Join in the celebration with December's Sunday School kits. Kits will be delivered to your home for families that signed up at the beginning of the year for kits. If you didn't sign up, but want to receive a Sunday School kit, please contact Kristy. Kits are for children ages 1 year up through 6th grade.

Also, remember to check out the Sunday School December 2020 playlist on the First Lutheran YouTube Channel for stories and songs to go with the month's theme.

Kristy Wicklund

Director of Children's Ministry

Kristy@flcfl.org (218) 531-9544

Remind App: Sunday School-@flcss18

BO'S ADVENTURES

Bo is a little donkey that traveled far and wide to be at the stable where Jesus was born. You might have seen him in the movie *The Star* (2017). Bo is on the move again and this time he is visiting some of our little ones on his way to the stable for Jesus' birth. During our Advent and Christmas season, Bo will be having some new adventures with some friends from First as he gets ready to celebrate Jesus' birth.

Bo →



WHERE IS BO?

At the stable, Bo learned that Jesus is the light. He is now on the search for how Jesus shines through us. Keep a look out as Bo travels around Fergus Falls looking for the light. Follow Bo on First Lutheran's Facebook, Instagram, and Remind @flcss18 and help us to find where Bo is.

FLY K-6 has been moved to Zoom on Wednesdays from 4:30-5:30. We will continue as interest lasts. We also have some Christmas activities we will be doing this month:

- Making and sending Christmas cards to our Pen Pals at Pioneer Care
- Decorating Christmas cookies
- Playing games
- Finding ways to be the light during our time at home



Remind App @flyk6



Be the Light

Matthew 5:14

Lord, Stir Us To Dream

Sometimes our dreams bring us what we would like to see, and other times it replays the memories of the past. This Christmas will be unlike any other, and while we dream of days to come, let us also reflect on the wonderful memories that have already been. I challenge you to find those wonderful memories of Christmas programs, and services, and events of the past at First Lutheran and share them with all. How can we share our memories?

- Post old photos on our Facebook page
- Email photos to office@flcff.org to be put in the Blast
- Tag First Lutheran in photos that you post on social media
- Email photos or memories to Kristy@flcff.org to be posted on Facebook and Instagram

Let's light up December with our dreams of memories past.



Pastor Preus posed with members of the First Lutheran Junior Choir in 1947, the first year of

his pastorate at the church. Also pictured is Mrs. Ed Aamodt, who worked with the youth program.

Yup, that's Kristy
in that
lightbulb costume!!



Trunk or Treat Oct. 30



Be the Light



**FLY K-6 having fun at
Roosevelt Park!**

Smore Smores please!

**Writing letters to pen
pals at Pioneer.**



**Calie staying in touch with the youth
via the mail and on-line!!!**



FLY 7-12

Contact Calie at
Calie@flcfff.org or use
Remind App by texting
@fly79 or @fly10-12 to
81010 or call
or text cell
218 321-0970.



UPCOMING ON-LINE GAME EVENTS:

Friday, December 11

FLY 7-9 at 4:30 pm and FLY 10-12 at 5:30 pm

Sunday, December 27

FLY 10-12 at 1:00 pm and FLY 7-9 at 2:00 pm

Link will be sent out before the date!

Hope you'll join us!!



Advent Reflections

An Advent reflection, provided by Rev. David Strom, Pastor Gretchen Enoch or Vicar Lynn Melchior, will be available each Wednesday during Advent on YouTube. To access YouTube go to the First Lutheran website: www.firstlutheranchurchff.org.

An Advent Prayer *by Henri Nouwen*

Lord Jesus, Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparation for Christmas.
We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.



We are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your Kingdom. We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, wading in darkness yet seeking the light.

To you we say "Come, Lord Jesus". Amen.

To keep Christ in Christmas, worship with us during this season of Jesus.

Christmas Eve worship will be on Thursday, December 24 at 3:00 pm.

If possible, limited in-person worship will be offered.

Christmas Day worship will be on Friday, December 25 at 10:00 am.

If possible, limited in-person worship will be offered.

Both services will be broadcast on YouTube.

The Christmas Day service will be broadcast on the radio on Sunday, December 27.



"For nothing is impossible with God." Luke 1:37

WHAT: "A Christmas Talent Show"

WHO: The members of First Lutheran

WHEN & WHERE: Broadcast on YouTube on Sunday, December 27 at 9:30 am.

HOW: Send your messages, videos and pictures to Kristy at Kristy@flcfff.org, or to the church before December 13. Play an instrument, sing, read a passage from the Bible, dress up like a Nativity character, share a recorded or written Christmas message, photo, or memory. Questions? Contact Kristy or the office.



Please remember to have your offering into the church office by December 28 to be recorded in 2020. Questions? Email the Office. Thank you!

If you requested offering envelopes for 2021 and haven't picked them up yet, please call the office at 739-3348 and we will make arrangements to get them to you.

Vicar's Thoughts

The gap between 'what you get' and 'what you expect' is stress.

'What you get' is reality. 'What you expect' is perception.

The Israelites expected a messiah who was a great warrior – one to throw off the Roman oppression. They perceived Jesus would end their troubles. Instead they received a little baby born to a young couple who had no political power. The gap between 'what the Israelites got' and 'what the Israelites expected' was a huge chasm. It is no wonder Jesus met such opposition.

As we now enter the holidays under the realities of COVID-19, how are your expectations and realities meshing? Are they a huge chasm or a small crack of space?

God is not in the stress. God does not want you to stress.

Philippians 4:6-7 (MSG) makes this clear:

"6-7 Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life."

Instead, Paul encourages us to follow God's desire:

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him...Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it.

Romans 12:1-2 (MSG)

In the coming month, let us offer to God our ordinary lives and recognize that God is not in the stress.

If you want to chat more about stress, ordinary lives, or something totally different, let me know. You can call/text me at 218-321-0967 or email me at Lynn@flcff.org.

Very gratefully,

Vicar Lynn



P.S. Even the cow in the comic is experiencing stress!



The Worship Corner by the Worship & Music Committee

A break from our Top Ten Hymn list is in order to examine a favorite Christmas carol. Silent Night (Stille Nacht in German) was composed in 1818 by Franz Gruber, with lyrics by Joseph Mohr, in

Obendorf bei Salzburg, Austria. Gruber was schoolmaster and organist and was asked by Joseph Mohr, the priest to compose a melody for his poem that could be played on guitar because the river had flooded the

Obendorf church and damaged the organ. Over the years, the manuscript was lost and Mohr's name was forgotten. Although Gruber was known to be the composer, people assumed that it had been written by a famous composer and the song had been attributed to Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Researchers in 1995 discovered a manuscript in Mohr's handwriting and certified it c. 1820. It states that the text was written in 1816 by Mohr and the tune by Gruber in 1818. This is the earliest manuscript that exists and the only one in Mohr's handwriting. The carol was declared an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2011.



Volunteer workers helping
with an Advent mailing!!!

Well done!



Make a Gift Tax-Free With an IRA



If you are 70½ years old or older, you can take advantage of a simple way to benefit First Lutheran Church and receive tax benefits in return. You can give any amount up to \$100,000 per year from your IRA directly to a qualified charity such as ours without having to pay income taxes on the money. This popular gift option is commonly called the IRA charitable rollover, but you may also see it referred to as a qualified charitable distribution, or QCD for short.

Why Consider This Gift?

- Your gift will be put to use today, allowing you to see the difference your donation is making.
- You pay no income taxes on the gift. The transfer generates neither taxable income nor a tax deduction, so you benefit even if you do not itemize your deductions.
- If you reached the age of 70½ on or before Dec. 31, 2019, you can use your gift to satisfy all or part of your required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year. If you turn 70½ on or after Jan. 1, 2020, you can use your gift to satisfy all or part of your required minimum distribution starting at the age of 72. (Note: The RMD requirement has been waived for 2020, per the CARES Act signed into law on March 27, 2020.)

Since the gift doesn't count as income, it can reduce your annual income level. This may help lower your Medicare premiums and decrease the amount of Social Security that is subject to tax.

Next Steps

1. Contact our Bookkeeper Paul Haarstick at 218-739-3348 or paul@flcff.org for additional information or questions on giving an IRA gift.
2. Seek the advice of your financial or legal advisor.

Ask your IRA administrator about making a direct transfer to FLC or have the administrator send a check from your account to us. (To be tax free, the donation must go directly from your account to FLC without passing through your hands.)

Legal Name: First Lutheran Church Address: 402 S Court St, Fergus Falls, MN 56537

First Lutheran Foundation Requests 2021

The Foundation will hold its annual meeting on Monday, January 11, 2021. Any requests from the Foundation should be approved by the Church Council. Written requests for funds should be emailed to Chad Felstul (c.felstul@pemlaw.com) or dropped off at the Church office, before December 21, 2020. If you have any questions, please contact any Foundation Board members: Chad Felstul, Vicki Hanneman, Leonard Hatzenbuehler, Tim Johnson, Missy Mattson, Linda Mellon, and Greg Wagner.

IMPORTANT UPDATES FOR FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

The SMART Team met after Governor Walz's address to the State. Based on recommendations of 'dialing back' through December 18 and to answer the call to protect our community, the actions recommended by the Smart Team will be followed at First Lutheran Church through December 18:

In-person worship is paused through December 18; online only. Services will use the bare minimum of people (singers/lectors/pastors, etc.) at each service. Services will be broadcast on the radio and YouTube.

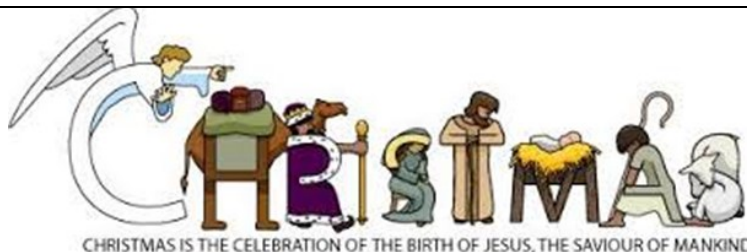
FLC will remain open to the recovery community and continue to host AA Al Anon etc. meetings to support this essential service. The key-holders for these groups will be reminded of the masking/distancing policy.

The office will be closed to the public and will be open by appointment. Please call 739-3348 to arrange a time to come in the building.

Employees will still work onsite and will follow masking/distancing protocols.

No onsite education, including Confirmation.

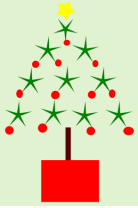
No in-person Committee meetings. Staff meetings will be held on-line.



Ways to Help while Social Distancing



Please call the office 739-3348 if you have items to drop off. Thanks!



Financial Contributions for the Giving Trees

Checks (payable to First Lutheran Church) can be sent to the church office with a note specifying the funds are for the Giving Trees.

Please have contribution to the church office before December 10th.

Thank YOU!

If you know someone who could benefit from a Christmas Food Basket, please contact the church before December 14th.



Mitten Ministry—we are collecting new mittens, hats & scarves (purchased or homemade) to help those in need of winter wear. Please leave your donation in the basket in the Narthex.



There is a receptacle in the narthex for you to place your surplus clean bags & wraps. Acceptable are clean shopping bags, bread bags, dry cleaning bags, produce bags such as potatoes, oranges, etc, cereal bags. Acceptable wraps include clean meat wraps with the labels removed, air pillows - please deflate, packaging wraps from multiples of water bottles, paper towels, etc, NOT ACCEPTABLE are frozen veggie bags, chip bags, bags from prewashed ready to eat salads, or any bag coated, waxy, or containing food residue. Thank you from the Riverside Lions, Fergus Falls.



The Riverside Lions collect eyeglasses for reuse. There is a collection box in the Narthex for your convenience.

thank you!

Change to Make a Change – There is a large plastic bottle in the Narthex and we invite you to put your spare change in the bottle. The money collected will go to help feed the hungry – 75% locally and 25% worldwide. Many THANKS!!



Sponsorship Sheets for 2021 Radio Broadcasts and Altar Flowers

are on the kiosk in the Narthex. You are welcome to stop by to select a Sunday you would like to sponsor, or you can call the office at 739-3348 to check on availability.

Radio broadcast cost is \$100.00, and flowers run approximately \$45.00.





ALTAR GUILD

Many thanks to Marjean Hanson for all her work as the chair of the Altar Guild these past years. We are looking for a new chairperson. The duties of the Altar Guild involve vesting the altar, preparing for the sacraments, arranging items needed for a liturgy, changing paraments, caring for linens and vessels, preparing for various days and weeks in the church year as well as baptisms, funerals and weddings. We are advised and work closely with the pastor and the Worship committee. Timely meetings are held and minutes recorded.

Serving on the Altar Guild is a rewarding experience and currently we have men and women serving on this committee.

If you would like to serve in this capacity, please contact the office or Pastor Gretchen.



Quilts made by our quilters and given to Slumberland for their **40 Winks Foundation**.

Since 1993 Slumberland has been helping kids get the restful sleep they require by giving new beds to families in need. Our quilters have helped by adding quilts to go with the beds.

Thank you Quilters!!

All women are encouraged to join our Love Days and/or Hannah Circle!



Due to the Coronavirus, most of you do not feel comfortable in group settings. We will postpone all gatherings through December.

We will evaluate again in January 2021.

“Thank You” First Lutheran women for your offerings, support of our WELCA projects; locally, Conference 7 and NW Synod. Remember, we won’t be gathering until 2021, so your offerings are still needed and appreciated!!!!

Also, “Thank You” First Lutheran for your support of the WELCA Thankoffering mission project during November.

Quilters—we will be in touch after the New Year.



Christmas Blessings to All!



ANNUAL
CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING

January 31, 2021
after Worship.
Watch for more
information.

Church Council First Lutheran

Executive Committee

Steve Guttormson, President
George Mathison, VP
Debbie Opatz, Secretary
Suzanne Demuth, Treasurer

Term ending 2021

Abbey Kwapinski
Harriet Wicklund
Sara Koch
JoAn Whitlock

Term ending 2022

Suzanne Demuth
Jennifer Frank
Debbie Opatz
Jennifer Woore
Ron Spangler
Michael Wicklund
Missy Mattson
Leslie Flugstad



Christmas Food Baskets



Christmas Food Baskets will be prepared and delivered to community members. If you know someone who could benefit from a Christmas Food Basket, please contact the church before December 14th.

The baskets will be delivered to community members on Saturday, December 19. If you can help with delivery of these baskets, please call or text Jennifer at 701-238-0276. Thanks!



Council Resolution

The First Lutheran Church Council passed the following resolution at its meeting on November 10, 2020:

The Council of First Lutheran Church, Fergus Falls hereby resolves that it will resume in-person worship as of November 1, 2020. **Please note: As of November 18, in-person worship has been paused through December 18.**

Consistent with our calling to love and care for one another and for the health of our neighbors, any person attending in-person worship (including weddings and funerals) or other church activities must (1) sign-in providing their name and phone number, (2) wear a face covering at all times, and (3) maintain social distancing.

Those who are ill, have tested positive for COVID-19, or who are in vulnerable populations shall refrain from attending in-person worship or other church activities. A person exposed to COVID-19, or who has previously tested positive for COVID-19, must refrain from attending in-person worship or other church activities until they have met their isolation period requirements and are no longer considered infectious.

Persons who choose to attend in-person worship or other church activities agree to promptly inform the Church if they learn they have tested positive for, or have been exposed to, COVID-19. The notice should be made by calling Calie Anderson at 1-218-739-3348 and inform us of the relevant date(s) of in-person church attendance.

The Church, together with local or state health authorities, will make appropriate notifications to others who may have been in attendance on the same day while maintaining the confidentiality of those involved as directed under state law. This action should not be considered as a substitution for the individuals own responsibility to contact public health officials for more detailed contact tracing.

"For nothing is impossible with God." Luke 1:37

WHO: Everyone of all ages

WHAT: To share the Christmas spirit and the miracle of Jesus' birth with the community as a united church.

HOW: Participate by singing a Christmas song, playing an instrument, reading a passage from the Bible about the birth of Jesus, dressing up like a character from the nativity, sharing a message on a poster board, etc... Videos and pictures will be submitted and will be put into a Christmas Talent Show video to share at worship on Sunday, December 27 at 9:30 a.m. and on YouTube.

WHEN: All pictures and videos must be submitted by Sunday, December 13th. If you need recording services, please contact Kristy. Video will premiere on Sunday, December 27th at 9:30 a.m.

Please submit videos and pictures, or ask for recording services to:

Kristy Wicklund,

Kristy@flcfc.org (218) 531-9544
First Lutheran Church 402 S Court St, Fergus Falls

