

First Things

The Newsletter of
First Evangelical
Lutheran Church



Wait. Watch. Prepare

Dear friends in Christ,

I don't know about any of you, but Advent seems to have slammed into me this year. I'm not the worse for wear, but it seemed to come faster than it has previously. Could be my age, or the volume of things I want to get done, or that fact that we're in the midst of setting up interviews for our new ministry coordinator. In any case, it's mostly an embarrassment of good things to do. :)

Advent will have begun by the time you read this, (except for our interim newsletter creator, Don Hansen; thanks, Don!) We are in a beginning season, the season of the coming of the infant Who will save us. And few of us are thinking about waiting & watching, and yet, that's just what Advent is for. See, if we don't slow down & take a few deep breaths, we may miss what God is doing right around us. Here's what I'm seeing; I'm seeing people struggling with other people's choices, and trying to bring

love & courage to the table. I'm seeing people trying to help when there's a need, and other people trying to be wise about what help is helpful, and what needs to be declined with grace & care. I'm seeing people being creative in how they look for ways to make differences in other's lives. And I see the doggedly faithful who just keep praying, who just keep visiting, who just keep checking in on those who need checking in on. And I also see people who faithfully show up, sing out, praise God, and love those around them. (By the way, there will be time for some extra pastoral visits during this season, so let me know if you'd like me to connect with you - for any reason.) Now, to be honest, I also see volumes of spending on "stuff" we don't need. And the use of alcohol used to self-medicate loneliness or sorrow or hurt. I see standoffs between siblings that look like they may never be repaired. I see people feeling fragile, from being called names, names like racist or sexist, or classist.

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Wait. Breathe. Pray...

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I also see people who aren't sure they are safe anymore, because someone doesn't like the composition of their family. Some feel at risk because they worship differently, and someone sees that as a license for harassment. Some are hurt or offended because others have branded them with the labels they don't think fit. Trust me on this; we need to hear each other as God's people. Public safety employee lives matter, black lives matter, peachy lives matter, lives that began in another country matter. Each child of God's life matters. Truly we need each other to do this well. Vulnerable lives matter. A child will be born in a manger, or at least a barn, somewhere this winter, in 2016, because it will be the warmest place around...may it also be safe. May her or his parents not have to flee from those who would harm their child. May they be able to return to their home eventually, and may that child grow in wisdom & compas-

Book Studies -

A book study on *Trouble I've Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism* by Drew G. I. Hart will be beginning on Sunday, January 1 at 11:45am. Go home & grab lunch, or bring with you; we'll meet for an hour and a half every other week, beginning January 1, 15, 29. Let Pr. Mary Kaye know if you'll be joining us,



sion. Jesus' parents wanted what we want.

Take a deep breath. That very breath is a gift of God. Let your heart rate and your breathing slow down, and perhaps the fullness of your "list" or your brain will slow down, too. God comes to us in Advent in mysterious & grace-filled ways, (thanks for the reminder, Bible study buddy, Pr. Cindy Bullcock)

Wait & watch, and then ask God, "What is the next thing I should do to prepare my heart for you, Lord?" (Not the next 10 things, the next one.) Do that, and keep asking. I trust that we'll arrive together at the birth of Christ with as much preparation as we need.

Because here's what mature pastors have learned - and many of you, too! The graciousness of God is that Jesus comes, ready or not. Praise be to God!

Christmas at First

December 4th

Decorate the Church @ 10:00am

December 11th

Caroling at 1:30pm meet at Church

December 18th

Christmas Cantata @ 9:00am

December 24th

Candle Light Christmas Eve services with holy communion at 4p and 10p

Sunday December 25th

Christmas Day Worship with

communion @ 9:00am

December COUNCIL MEETING

Council will meet **Sunday, December 11th, at 10:30am.**

DEC BIRTHDAYS



Goranson, James	12/01
Miller, Katrina	12/01
Mattson, Mary Anne	12/03
Carlson, Caren	12/04
Langer, Makayla	12/05
Langer, Dalton	12/05
Jorgensen, Justin	12/06
Beaudry, Vanessa	12/08
Jorgensen, Matthew	12/10
Langer, Gayle	12/11
Moberg, Isaac	12/12
Hall, Todd	12/13
Carlson, Lynnette	12/14
Dexter, Colton	12/14
Museus, Shelley	12/14
Posey, Emily	12/17
Rhoads, Gerald	12/19
Swenson, Geraldine	12/19
Lamb, Rachael	12/20
Nelson, Carol	12/21
Berthiaume, Susan	12/22
Braucks, Darren	12/23
Smith, Olivia	12/23
Thorson, Jonathan	12/23
Peterson, Deanna	12/24
Johnson, Melissa	12/27
Valez, Luke	12/29

Please contact the church office if there are any errors or omissions. Thank you.

Christmas SYRUPSALES



Begin and end your holiday shopping with the First Lutheran Youth's syrup sales! Maple sugar and maple cream available during Christmas. Thank you for supporting this ministry which funds our youth ministries.



GIVING TREE

First Lutheran is sponsoring a giving tree again this Christmas season. In coordination with Taylors Falls Elementary School and area churches, we would like to invite the congregation to select gift tags from the tree to contribute to gift cards for families struggling to make ends meet. Please take a tag from the tree in the sanctuary and return gift to the church by **Sunday, December 18th.**

Thrivent "Choice"

Giving Opportunities

Are you a member of Thrivent? Members of Thrivent have access to Thrivent funds to benefit FELC and our community. Thrivent participants may direct "Choice" dollars to First Lutheran and our community. Please call the Church office for more information

MONTHLY GIVING REPORT

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. —2 Cor. 9:7 (NIV)

Budgeted Weekly Expenses: \$3158.00

11/06 Giving:	2,972.00
11/13 Giving:	3,166.85
11/20 Giving:	2,128.75
11/27 Giving:	4,616.59

Thank you for your faithful giving. Please contact FELC Treasurer, Joe Landgreen with any questions or concerns at: 715-417-1429 or jlandgreen.jl@gmail.com.

**40th Anniversary
Celebration
Sunday December 18,
3-7pm**

How do you celebrate 40 years of fun, family, laughter, friends, play & good work we care about?

You are most affectionately invited to join us, because you've been a part of what's been so good.

please join us at Oak Grove Lutheran Church, 7045 Lyndale Ave. So., Richfield, MN 55423 for the Ashley 40th anniversary open house potluck, friends, family & board game-a-thon! Your presence is a gift, and if you cannot join us, your friendship & love still are. love all,

Jim & Mary Kaye Ashley

Council Corner

The Council has been stretched this past month with the Ministry Coordinator position vacant. I want to thank all those that have volunteered with the work Caroline had always done and your words of encouragement.

Tim Nelson is back to work and the contract cleaning service will end December 1. We are planning for conversations with members in late January who are curious about racial justice and what "white privilege" is.

Our tithes and offerings have been below budgeted giving during the first 6 months of the fiscal year, and I am confident that we will catch up by the end of this month, as we have in past years. Have blessed and joyful Christmas season.

Love, Don

Council President



LEFSE MAKING

A community Lefse Making event is being organized. The 2 dates involved:

Potato Night

(peeling, boiling, & ricing the spuds)

Friday, December 2nd, 6:30p-9:00p

Lefse Make & Take

(rolling, cooking, & sharing)

Saturday, December 3, 8:30a-12:30p

Invite friends! Equipment and makings will be provided, but you may also bring your own. Come for one or both. Begin a new Christmas tradition bringing lefse to shut-ins, nursing homes, or neighbors.

Sanctuary Poinsettias

Please let PMK know if you're purchasing a poinsettia to enhance our sanctuary for Advent, and wanted to give it in honor or memory of someone, Thanks!

ALL MEMBERS

Please be on the lookout for a Discipleship Team Leader to be contacting you to assist with different worship related opportunities twice year. Welcome their call and experience the joy in serving in this way.

Morning Star



CHRISTMAS CANTATA

Sunday, December 18th at 9:00am

Michelle Lynch is looking for 2 or 3 narrators (Jr. High through adult) who would be willing to join the choir on Saturday, December 17, and Sunday December 18 as narrators.

ADULTCHOIR

Share your voice for the Christmas Cantata! Singing Dates:

Sunday 12/4 Choir meet at 8:15am Anthem "The Hills Are Bare at Bethlehem" Molly Moberg will be playing the flute

12/6 Tuesday Cantata rehearsal 7-8pm, Choir rehearsal 8-8:30

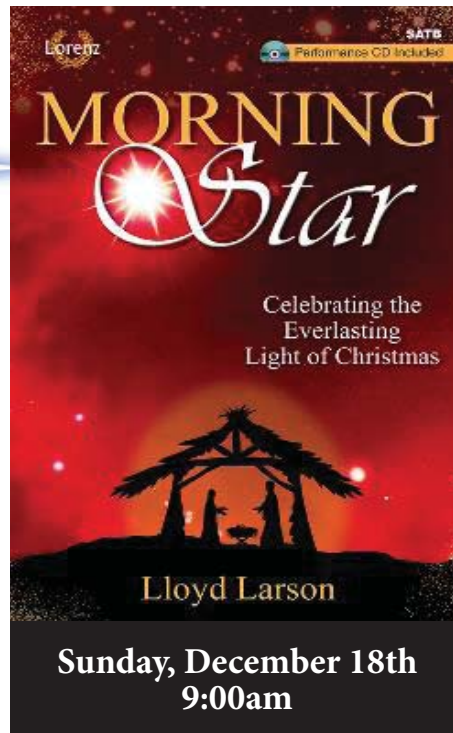
12/11 Sunday Meet: 8:20am Singing: "Will We Know Him" as our anthem

12/13 Tuesday Cantata Final Rehearsal 7-8pm Complete Run Through Choir 8-8:30pm Preparation for Christmas Eve

12/17 Saturday, 9-11:30am Cantata Dress Rehearsal

12/18 Sunday 9am Cantata Worship Service "Morning Star" Cantata Choir Report for Warm Ups: 8am downstairs. Narrators: 8:30am

12/20 Tuesday 7-8:30pm Choir Rehearsal final preparations for Christmas Eve Service.



**Sunday, December 18th
9:00am**

ADULTCHOIR continued

12/24 Saturday 4pm Christmas Eve worship. Choir Sings Warmup at 3:15 downstairs.

12/24 Saturday 10pm Christmas Eve worship, Special Music Michelle & Dylan Lynch.

12/25 Sunday Christmas Day 9am Worship Service;

12/27 Tuesday NO REHEARSAL! Take some much needed time off to rest. You have given your beautiful gifts and talents to edify the birth of our Savior! Enjoy a quiet evening home!

January 3rd. Rehearsals will resume Tuesday

OFFICE HOURS

**Monday—Tuesday—Thursday
9:30a-12:30p**

First Lutheran Youth

CONNECT
to a Christian Community;
INVITE
into the life and love of God;
EQUIP
*to make God-honoring choices in their lives
and to put their faith into practice.*

YOUTH, GRADES 6-12 WELCOME!

DECEMBER SCHEDULE Wednesdays ~ 6:30-8:00pm

Sunday Dec. 4th: Decorating the church for the Christmas season immediately following worship! We would love to have congregational members, youth and their families, friends....anyone willing to come help string up the garland (Kullan Parks!) put up the tree, decorate, put up wreaths, and prepare our beautiful church for Christmas!

Wednesday Dec. 7 Regular Youth 6:30-8pm Session #3 of "UPSIDE DOWN: Following Jesus = focusing on people who can do the least.

Wednesday Dec. 14th: 6:30-8pm Youth Christmas Party! More information to come!

Saturday December 17th: Christmas Cantata Dress Rehearsal with YOUTH NARRATORS 9am to 11am.

Wednesday Dec. 21st: AGAPE CONCERT! At Faith Lutheran in Forest Lake. FREE!! We LEAVE the parking lot of the church at 6pm and will return approximately 8:30pm.

Wednesday December 28th: OFF for all YOUTH ACTIVITIES. ADULT LEADER MEETING AT COFFEE TALK.

Summer 2017

Mission Trip Spots Open!

**WED. DEC. 14TH: \$50 NON-REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT AND PERMISSION SLIP DUE TO MICHELLE LYNCH FOR THE 2017 SUMMER MISSION TRIP TO MINNEAPOLIS!! Please pick up your deposit form at church or in your email where you can download and print it off.



Caroling!

SUNDAY DEC. 11th

Come spend a fun afternoon Christmas caroling. Open to ALL! Meet at 1:30pm at our church then start at THE LODGE @1:45pm; drive to COMFORTS OF HOME @2:30; then end at GOOD SAMARITAN HOME @3:15 ~ finishing up with a short worship service at 4pm at Good Sam's. Pastor Mary Kaye and I will lead a short worship service at 4pm. Stay and worship with the residents! Dress Festive with beautiful smiles and joyous energy to pass on to those who may be feeling alone this time of year!

-6- Thank you, Michelle



Church Office
651-465-5265
www.tflutheran.org

Pastor Mary Kaye Ashley
c: 612-532-7083
felcpastor.mk@gmail.com

Michelle Lynch,
Youth Minister/Choir Director
c: 715-220-2782
felcyouthminister@gmail.com

Vacant
Ministry Coordinator,
parishc@tflutheran.org

2016-2017 Council/Officers:

Don Hansen—President
Duane Olson—Vice President
Joe Landgreen—Treasurer
Gayle Langer—Secretary
Sharna Braucks
Rose Anderson
Riley Linngren
Pastor Mary Kaye Ashley

Financial Secretary
Jerry Rhoads

Please hold the ministers and council members in your prayers that God would give them the wisdom, strength, courage, patience and perseverance to serve this community of faith as they lead us in our mission for the sake of the world and the glory of God.

Next council meeting is Sunday, December 11, 10:30am in Library

Mission Statement

Gather. Grow. Go.

Gather—all people into the saving faith through Jesus Christ
and to worship together;

Grow—through the Word of God in faith, understanding, and love with God and
one another;

Go—as the Holy Spirit sends us to care, serve, and witness;
For the sake of the world & for the glory of God!

(Mission Statement approved 2009)

“Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.” *Psalm 90:1*

Please send submissions to: parishc@tflutheran.org
Articles Due the 15th of each month.



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