



# First Things

DECEMBER 2023

The Newsletter of First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
561 Chestnut Street | Taylors Falls, MN 55084-1110



About two weeks ago, not long after Halloween, I started to see ads for Christmas sales and to hear Christmas songs being played on the radio. With the warmer weather, our neighbors were out in force the other day scaling their rooftops and decorating their houses with lights galore and more on the ground.

All this made me think of a story of a woman who was out Christmas shopping with her two children. With Amazon and a lot of other post COVID changes we've made to our lives, I'm not sure this picture is as true to our present day context, but I think the sentiment still remains.

As the story goes, this woman, after hours of looking up and down row after row of toys and for everything else on her Christmas list, and after enduring the constant cries of her children pleading for everything they saw on those many shelves, she finally made it to the elevator that went to the parking garage.

She was feeling what so many of us feel this time of year during the holiday season. There's the overwhelming pressure to go to every party, taste all the holiday food and treats, getting that perfect gift for every single person on our shopping list, making sure we don't forget anyone on our card list, and the pressure of making sure we respond to everyone who sent us a card.

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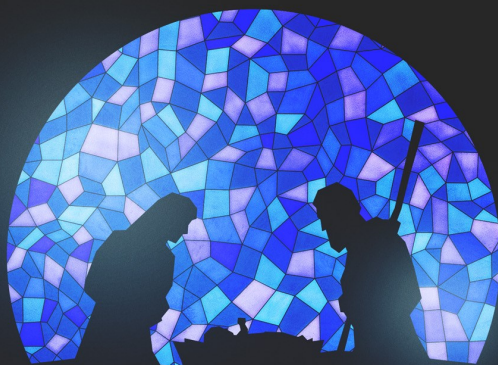
Finally the elevator doors opened and it was already crowded, but there was just enough space for her and her kids. She pushed her way in, dragging her two kids in with her and all the bags of stuff. When the doors closed she couldn't take it anymore. Under her breath, but loud enough that everyone in the elevator heard, she grumbled, "Whoever started this whole Christmas thing should be found, strung up and shot."

From the back of the elevator a calm quiet voice responded, "Don't worry lady, we already crucified him." For the rest of the trip the elevator was so quiet you could have heard a pin drop.

Let's not lose perspective this Christmas season! Take the time to breathe deeply and to enjoy what is really important in your life. And let's be thankful that as the saying goes, "Jesus is the reason for the season."

Have a Blessed and Merry Christmas!

Pastor Dwight Rudquist



## Sunday, December 24 Services

9:00am Worship

4:00pm Christmas Eve Worship

Please note: NO 10pm Christmas Eve Worship Service



## *New Members* **Welcome!**

If you are interested in becoming a member, please talk with Pr. Dwight or contact the office at 651-465-5265.

## **SUNDAY**WORSHIP

Worship every Sunday at 9:00am. Recorded services from Sunday morning worship are available Sunday afternoons on our website [www.tflutheran.org](http://www.tflutheran.org) and can also be found on our YouTube Channel: First Evangelical Lutheran Church of TF - 2nd.

## **LIBRARY**HOURS

Sunday 8:00am-10:30am

## **COUNCIL**MEETING

Council will meet December 10, 2023.

## **DECEMBER** BIRTHDAYS

12/03 Mary Ann Mattson  
12/05 Dalton Langer  
12/05 Makayla Langer  
12/06 Whitney Loen  
12/11 Gayle Langer  
12/12 Isaac Moberg  
12/16 Joan Boleman  
12/19 Jerry Rhoads  
12/21 Carol Nelson  
12/29 Luke Valez  
12/31 Suntina Hackmann



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

## **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: \$2771.60

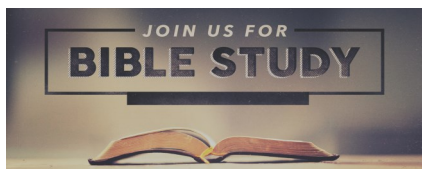
10/29 Giving:	\$2,294.00
11/05 Giving:	\$2,375.00
11/12 Giving:	\$1,545.00
11/19 Giving:	\$3,103.00
11/26 Giving:	&1,340.00

Thank you for your faithful giving. Please contact FELC Treasurer, Becky Hulden with any questions or concerns at: 651-465-3631 or [rhulden@gmail.com](mailto:rhulden@gmail.com).

# What's Happening in Our Church!



**Every Sunday: Worship at 9am  
followed by Fellowship at 10am.**



Bible Study: Sunday mornings  
following fellowship.  
Grab a cup of coffee & join us for  
Bible Study. Print outs available.

## Church Choir



**Tuesday evenings at 6 - 7pm  
in the sanctuary! No  
experience needed! We'd  
love for you to join us!!!**



A prayer shawl enables the  
recipient to be surrounded by  
prayer, and is a tangible  
reminder of God's care and  
love, encouragement and  
inspiration.

If you'd like to be part of this  
new ministry or have any  
questions, please talk with  
Becky Hulden.





First and Third Wednesday  
mornings at 9:30am  
No experience needed!

We welcome new quilters!!!



## CRAFTING ON SATURDAYS

NO CRAFT DATE

FOR DECEMBER

RESUME ON JANUARY 13TH



## Upcoming Events At Our Church

Snack & Paint Event

Sat. Dec. 2nd | 1pm-3:30pm

Church Christmas Decorating  
Sun, Dec. 3rd after worship

Lefse Making Event

Sat. Dec. 9th | Time: 9am-12pm

Christmas Eve Worship

Sunday, December 24th

9:00am Worship

4:00pm Christmas Eve Service

## *Poinsettias & Greenery*



We have ordered ten single & two triple poinsettias for church decorations this year! If you are interested in purchasing one or giving a donation towards the cost of the poinsettias in memory or honor of someone, complete a form on Sunday mornings!

Estimated Cost: \$15.00 Single ~ \$35.00 Triple

The poinsettias can be picked up after Christmas, first come, first serve, until gone! Thank you!

# What's Happening

IN OUR CHURCH



Making Lefse with the residents at the Lodge on November 7th



Quilts were donated to the Chisago County Sheriff's Dept and to Sleep in Heavenly Peace



A much needed paint job for  
our nativity scene!





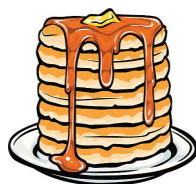
# Pancake Breakfast



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2023



Thank you to the helpers in the kitchen! We had a good turnout and you all made this event GREAT!



Official  
Pancake  
Tester!



THRIVENT  
FINANCIAL®

# Advent Wreaths

Thank you to our event  
organizer, Wendy Szczepanski!  
This is the second year she  
has organized this and it has  
definitely grown!!!







Are you looking for a great cause to donate to this holiday season? Here are a few that we hold close to our hearts!

## Taylor's Falls Elementary School

Each year, our generous congregation purchases gift cards for Taylor's Falls Elementary School students families who struggle at Christmas. These families are blessed with gift cards towards gas, food and presents.

If you'd like to donate toward this wonderful cause, you can purchase gift cards and bring them to the office or put your donation in the offering plate on Sunday morning (there are envelopes located at the usher stand with "Giving Tree" marked on them. You can also mail your donation to the church, marking "Giving Tree" on the envelope.

First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Attn: Giving Tree  
561 Chestnut Street  
Taylor's Falls, MN 55084



Thank you for opening your heart this upcoming Christmas season and blessing others!





**What is Andrew's Bravery Box?** Andrew's Bravery Box is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization that currently serves Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota by providing toys and rewards for some of the bravest people in the world. Each and every day, patients at Children's show courage as they push through tough situations in their battle against illnesses, congenital heart defects, cancer, and many other conditions that require hospitalization. By providing small rewards in the form of toys, activities, and other fun items for families and nurses to give to patients, Andrew's Bravery Box seeks to make the hardest parts about a hospital stay a little easier to endure.

**Who is Andrew?** Andrew Dorsing was the first patient to benefit from what used to be called the Bravery Bag. After losing his battle against a Congenital Heart defect, Beth and Jeromy Dorsing started Andrew's Bravery Box to help families who may be facing similar struggles and also as a way to help Andrew's memory live on.



**We will have a collection bin at the church if you'd like to donate to this amazing cause! Suggested items include but are not limited to:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Matchbox/Hotwheels Cars                              | Mad Lib Books                                |
| Small craft packs                                    | Small Lego Kits                              |
| Short books  | Fun hats                                     |
| Card games (Uno or Skipbo)                           | Small costume pieces/clothing                |
| Small Stuffed Animals                                | Self-inking Stampers                         |
| Play jewelry/Costume jewelry                         | Coloring Books/markers                       |
| Sticker Books  | Small plastic animals or dinosaurs           |
| Pokemon Cards (small single packs)                   | Action Figures                               |
| Travel Size games (Battle Ship, Connect Four, etc.)  | Small Dolls or Figurines                     |
| Temporary Tattoos                                    | My Little Pony Figurines                     |
| Sticker Books  | Fun Cups or Water Bottles                    |
| Coloring Books for Older kids (more complex designs) | Items from the Target Dollar area or Holiday |
| Nail Polish  | Stocking Stuffers or Easter Basket items     |
| Make up  | (no candy please)                            |

# What's happening

## IN OUR COMMUNITY



ST. CROIX FALLS, WISCONSIN

# RIVERTOWN HOLIDAY

DECEMBER 2  2023



**Downtown St. Croix Falls | Lots of events all around town!**



### Center City's 6th Annual Small Town Christmas Event

Friday Dec 1st Center City Fire Hall.  
Put your Christmas Jammies on and  
join us! The evening includes:

6:00pm- Cookie decorating, cocoa,  
popcorn, raffles!

6:20pm- Santa arrives by fire truck!

7:00pm- Christmas Story Read a  
Loud!

Cookies, popcorn and hot  
chocolate will be provided.

This is a FREE family event.

Center City Fire Department Auxiliary

## HOLIDAY BOUTIQUE, BAKE SALE, AND VENDOR EVENT

December 2nd, 2023  
9 am – 4 pm  
Center City Fire Hall  
335 Burns Ave. Center City, MN

- Get all your holiday gifts!
- Register to win a gift basket-  
no purchase necessary!
- Raffle tickets available to  
purchase to win prize baskets!
- Lunch available for purchase
- All proceeds will be donated to  
local residents in need!



**SHINES  
A  
STAR**

**UC**  
**UNEXPECTED  
COMPANY  
CHORALE**

**Friday, Dec. 1 • 7:30pm**  
ELIM LUTHERAN CHURCH  
SCANDIA, MN

**Sunday, Dec. 3 • 3:00pm**  
CHISAGO LAKE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Center City, MN

## Unexpected Company Chorale

Visit their website for more  
information and to purchase  
tickets online:

<https://www.ucchorale.org/>



## **St. Croix Valley Orchestra 2023 WINTER CONCERTS**

**Saturday, Dec. 2, 7:00pm**

Unity School Auditorium, Balsam Lake, WI

**Sunday, Dec. 3, 3:00pm**

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Almelund, MN

ADMISSION BY FREE WILL OFFERING

Check our website: [www.scvorchestra.org](http://www.scvorchestra.org)

Thank you!





**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9TH**

**9:00AM TO 12:00PM**

**JOIN US TO MAKE LEFSE!**

**NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED!**

**OPEN TO EVERYONE!**

**TAKE LEFSE HOME WITH YOU**

**AND SAMPLING IS ALWAYS**

**AN OPTION!**



## *Campfire Christmas*

*Dec. 9*

A time of celebration and fun at  
Luther Point Bible Camp.

Enjoy holiday crafts, cookie  
decorating, dinner, campfires,  
s'mores, caroling and more!

Visit their website for time  
& more details!



'Tis the Season...Come join our family  
for some holiday fun during

## **Santa Paw Days**

at FAWN-DOE-ROSA

Sat. Dec. 9th & Sun. Dec. 10th

11:00am - 3:00pm

This is a free event!

**GIFTSHOP OPEN ONLY (Animal Park is not open)**

Many items in the store will be 20% off (does not include FDR Gift  
Cert, trees and items from local vendors)

Visit with Santa ~ Enjoy a Horse Drawn Wagon Ride from 12-3  
Face Paintings ~ Balsam Fir Trees for sale while supplies last  
Hot Apple Cider ~ Bring your camera for pictures with Santa - pets  
are welcome at this event!!! The animal park is closed, however, a  
small Critter Corral with some furry friends to feed, see and pet!







# WINTER FARMERS MARKET

Sun. November 5 + 19 12PM- 3PM

Sun. December 3 + 17 12PM- 3PM

SHOP FOR LOCAL PRODUCE, MEATS,  
JAM, HONEY, GIFTS AND MORE...  
(STAY FOR THE COFFEE, TREATS AND LIVE MUSIC!)

Located in the greenhouse at  
Abrahamson Nurseries  
1257 WI-35, St Croix Falls, WI 54024

*Abrahamson*   
LANDSCAPE ▲ DESIGN ▲ NURSERY  
Beauty Since 1928



## MIRACLE AT BIG ROCK

ST CROIX FALLS, WI

NOVEMBER 24TH - JANUARY 1ST

FIREWORKS, SHOPPING VENDORS,  
FOOD TRUCKS, COOKIES WITH SANTA,  
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT & MORE!

DRIVE THRU: MON & TUES 5-9PM  
WALK THRU NIGHTS: WED, THURS &  
SUN 4-9PM; FRI & SAT 4-10PM

MORE INFO CAN BE FOUND AT  
[WWW.MIRACLEATBIGROCK.COM](http://WWW.MIRACLEATBIGROCK.COM)



CHISAGO LAKES



COMMUNITY MEAL

EVERYONE IS  
WELCOME!

Monday Evenings |  
4:00pm - 6:00pm

Zion Lutheran Church in  
Chisago City



# Council Meeting Minutes

Church Council of First Evangelical Lutheran Church

Sunday, November 19, 2023, 10:30 am

Next meeting December 10, 2023

“Proclaim the Gospel and Serve our neighbors.”

**Members Present:** Rose Anderson, Miriam Flysjo, Craig Loen, Becky Hulden, Pastor Dwight Rudquist, Guest Don Hansen      **Members**

**Absent:** Kathy Carlsted

The meeting was called to order by president Becky Hulden at 10:25. Miriam led devotions. Craig volunteered to lead devotions in December.

Rose and Becky shared stories of God’s work in our lives.

Pastor Dwight reported that the next MiChiLu meeting is December 7. He attended the synod Boundaries workshop for recertification. Pastor Dwight led the service at the Lodge, choir practice and What’s Up Task Force.

The council discussed the Christmas Eve services. Since Christmas Eve falls on Sunday, it is also the 4th Sunday of Advent so we will have our regular morning 9:00 am service and the 4:00 pm Christmas Eve service.

Becky completed the treasurer’s report since she is training Craig on the treasurer’s responsibilities.

Our income in October (\$12,327) is more than adequate for our budget. We are 33% of our budget year. Our income is 36% of our budget. Our expenses are at 38% of our budget.

General checking has \$2,774.87 less than a month ago.

Don Hansen, Craig Loen and Becky Hulden are in the process of getting their signatures straightened out for the accounts at the bank.

The audit committee met October 16th. In reviewing deposits and bank statements they were able to find one error. The Church Financial Secretary made the necessary corrections.

Don Hansen reported on the Property Committee projects.

The elevator was inspected and the church received a list of fixes that needed to be done. Bruce will install a light that will work if the power goes out. Then the church received an email that the elevator passed inspection so it seems like the improvements listed in the report were suggestions.

Don and Bruce will begin work on the bathrooms in January.

The regrading of the south side will have to wait until Spring.

The committee decided not to reupholster the fellowship hall chairs. Pastor Dwight will do a comparison of the chairs they are considering. Don will bring a sample sturdy plastic folding chair for the committee to examine.

The new boiler had some start up issues. The company came right away to make some adjustments. There have been no further problems.

When it rained in October there was some water in the kitchen, Don did a test that determined the water was groundwater. Heavy rain caused the water table to rise. A sump pump will be installed to see if that fixes the problem.

The Vision Group will meet with Rolf on December 4 to find out what's next.

The council discussed how we are living into our mission statement. It was decided to do twice a month mission minutes starting in January. The mission minutes will cover what our congregation is doing to reach out to our neighbors. Becky will head up finding people to share their projects in the mission minutes.

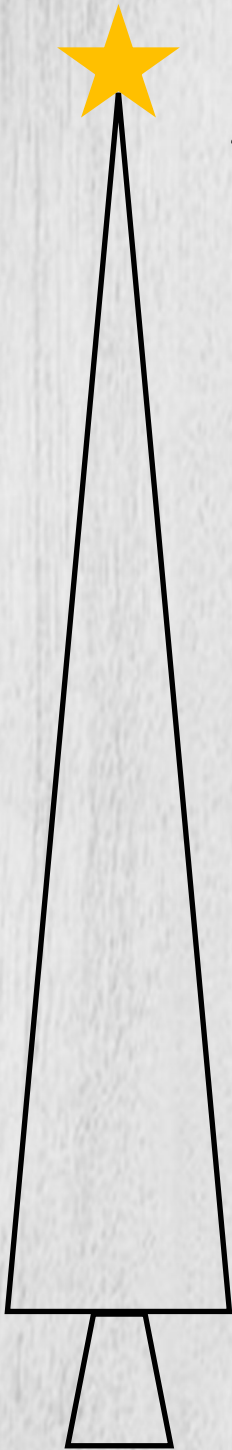
We also discussed how we can get more comfortable with tying the missions to the gospel.

Upcoming events:

- a. Lighting Festival (November 25)- Free lumberjack breakfast
- b. Advent wreath making event – November 25th
- c. Snack & Paint – December 2nd
- d. Lefse making- December 9th
- e. Lodge service Wednesday, November 22 at 1:30

Motion to Adjourn was made at 11:33 by Miriam, second by Craig.

Faithfully submitted,  
Miriam Flysjo, council secretary



# *Advent Readings*

December 3	Mark 13:24-37
December 4	Micah 4:1-5
December 5	Psalm 79
December 6	Luke 21:34-38
December 7	Isaiah 40:1-11
December 8	Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
December 9	2 Peter 3:8-15
December 10	Mark 1:1-8
December 11	Psalm 27
December 12	Isaiah 4:2-6
December 13	Luke 1:5-17
December 14	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
December 15	Psalm 126
December 16	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
December 17	John 1:6-8, 19-28
December 18	Ephesians 6:10-17
December 19	2 Kings 2:9-22
December 20	Malachi 3:16-4:6
December 21	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
December 22	Luke 1:46-55
December 23	Romans 16:25-27
December 24	Luke 1:26-38
December 25	Luke 2:1-20

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



**Pastor Dwight Rudquist**  
c: 651-829-4884  
pastorrudquist@gmail.com

**Angie Linngren**  
*Ministry Coordinator,*  
parishc@tflutheran.org

**2023-2024**

## **Council/Officers:**

**Becky Hulden**—President

**Kathy Carlsted**—Vice President

**Craig Loen**—Treasurer

**Miriam Flysjo** —Secretary

**Kathy Carlsted**

**Rose Anderson**

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 will be on December 10, 2023 at 10:30am.**

## *Mission Statement*

*Proclaim the Gospel and Serve our Neighbors.*

(Mission Statement approved 2023)

*"Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations."*

*Psalm 90:1*

Please send submissions to: parishc@tflutheran.org

Articles due the 10th of each month.





561 Chestnut Street, Taylors Falls, MN 55084-1110



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ORGANIZATION

**US**

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TAYLORS FALLS, MN

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