

# First Things

February 2020

The Newsletter of  
First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
561 Chestnut Street,  
Taylors Falls, MN 55084-1110  
651-465-5265 ♦ [www.tflutheran.com](http://www.tflutheran.com)

We are in the very midst of the season of Epiphany. Epiphany is the season where we think about God being revealed to us in Jesus and how the Light of Christ not only shines on and in us, but how does that Jesus shine through us. Often we say to ourselves, "But I'm no star, I don't have anything much to say or I don't know how to be a light to others. If anything I'm a candle just struggling to stay lit." That may be true, but God amazingly uses both stars and candles to accomplish God's revealing work and word to the world.

One of my favorite stories comes from Mary Schramm's book *Gifts of Grace*. She tells this story about how her mother shared a simple gift.

*My mother lives in an apartment in Seattle. She shares a common laundry with 30 other tenants. One day, while doing her laundry, she noticed an elderly man across the room putting his coins in the dryer. He had obviously been crying. My mother went over to him and said, "I've seen you in the building, but I don't know your name." She introduced herself and then said, "I noticed you've been crying. Is there anything I can do for you?"*

*The man wiped his eyes with the back of his hand. "Thank you, but no," he said. As more tears started to come he looked at her and added, "Yes, there is something but I don't expect you'd want to do it. It is one year ago today that my wife died, and in all that time no one has put their arms around me and hugged me." With that my mother, Norwegian as she is, wrapped her arms around the stranger and both began to cry as they rocked in each other's arms.*



Continued on page two

*When my mother told me the story, later, she did so with great embarrassment. "I don't know what got into me," she exclaimed. "What if someone had come into the laundry room and seen me with my arms around a stranger! But somehow it just seemed the right thing to do."*

It was the right thing to do. It is exactly the thing God does for us. More and more I am discovering that the two issues we face is identity and being free/liberated from all that binds us. Do you know who you are in God's eyes? Can you hear God's voice claiming you, "You are my beloved, with you I am well pleased"? That in itself is liberating. But think of all the other things that we are bound to and that bind our world. What an opportunity we have to see for ourselves the freeing message of God's love for us in Christ and to use our simple gifts to make that good news know. For freedom Christ has set us free. (Galatians 5:1)

Pastor Dwight Rudquist

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

If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact the office at 651-465-5265.

## **SUNDAY**WORSHIP

9:00am—Worship  
10:15am—Fellowship Hour  
10:15am—Education Hour

## **OFFICE HOURS**@FELC

Monday 8:30am—1:30pm  
Tuesday 8:30am—12:30pm  
Thursday 8:30am—11:30am

## **COUNCIL**MEETING

Council will meet on **Sunday, February 9th at 10:30am** in the library for a meeting.

## **SARAH**CIRCLE

Sarah Circle will not be meeting in February.

## **QUILTERS**



Quilting meets each 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 9:30am. No experience needed to join this enjoyable group!

## *Adult* **CHOIR**SCHEDULE

### Rehearsal Schedule

### Tuesday Evenings

7:00pm – 8:30pm

February 4th, 11th, 18th, & 25th

New singers are

**ALWAYS WELCOME!**



Offering Envelopes are available at the church for the new year. If you haven't picked yours up, they are located on the table below the mailboxes near the office.

Please call the church office with any questions!



## **FEBRUARY**BIRTHDAYS

Miriam Flysjo	2/03
Gail Gustafson	2/03
Dena Johnson	2/05
Michelle Lamb	2/06
Edna Curry	2/07
Wendy Parks	2/07
Ian Anderson	2/12
Orval Curry	2/12
Scott Hansen	2/12
Valerie Lundsted	2/15
Jessica Vitalis	2/16
Cheryl Moberg	2/21
Shawn Valez	2/21
Jacob Vodenka-Reed	2/21
Kayla Donahue	2/23
Mary Kaye Ashley	2/24
Leo Nelson	2/24
Lowell Nelson	2/24
Marilyn Tangen	2/24
Michelle Lynch	2/26
Cullen Luschen	2/27
Randy Valez	2/28

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

12/22 Giving:	\$3,064.00
12/24 Giving:	\$2,146.75
12/29 Giving:	\$1,070.00
01/05 Giving:	\$2,917.00
01/12 Giving:	\$2,399.00

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.

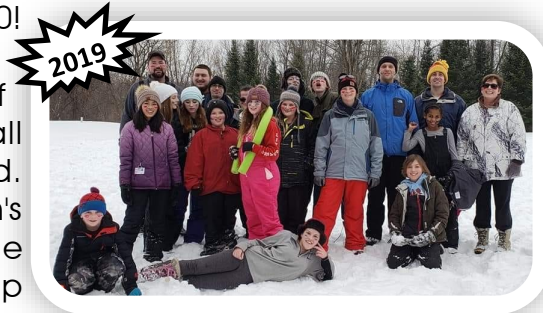
# First Lutheran Youth

YOUTH, GRADES 6-12 WELCOME!

**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.

## WINTER Retreat

The annual Youth Winter Retreat to Luther Point Bible Camp is coming up Feb. 14-16 with the worship band 100 White Flags for their 12th year with us! This year we would like to open up this wonderful weekend to parents and youth; alumni; and make it a FAMILY EVENT! We want to FILL the retreat center to its capacity of 60! The cost per person is \$80 which includes 2 nights of lodging, 3 meals, and all activities for the weekend. You may go to the church's website for more information and sign up forms. We want everyone to be able to experience a weekend away - playing, praying,



singing, sleeping, eating, and having fun! No dishes to wash, no cleaning, just time to be together in fellowship and most importantly with our Savior Jesus Christ! Please see Michelle Lynch for more information and to get the sign up forms. This is open to younger elementary age youth and parents. Plus more adult helpers are also needed. If you are willing to help throughout the weekend your trip will be paid for! Thank you!

### FIRST LUTHERAN YOUTH SCHEDULE

**February 5th: 6:30pm—8pm**  
Regular Youth Group

**February 12th: 6:30pm—8pm**  
Regular Youth Group

**February 19th: 6:30pm—8pm**  
Regular Youth Group

**February 26th: 7pm**  
You are invited to Ash  
Wednesday Worship

Imagine this: a Sunday morning gathering in which people form intergenerational relationships as all ages share coffee, juice & a treat together and participate in a time of faith growth.

Intrigued? Us too. We are hoping to begin a new program soon: **Intergenerational Sunday School!** The format will be simple: sharing, scripture reading or devotions and praying for one another. The goal is mutual learning, growing closer to Christ, and deepening faith. In intergenerational formation, people of all ages make this journey together. Stay tuned for more details!!!



In cooperation with Family Pathways, our church helps supply sixteen Taylors Falls elementary school kids in need of weekend food. Each care package is given to the child that covers:

2 breakfasts, 2 lunches, a canned vegetable, a canned fruit and 2 snacks. The cost is only \$2.50 per week and is ongoing throughout the school year. You can donate money or time; if you are interested in helping, please **Contact Deb Rhoads at 651-257-1658.**

"Faith formation is more than a subject to be taught- it is an invitation to a way of life"  
- Joe Paprocki



The confirmation class has met and is reading a new book.

Class will meet again on Sunday, Feb. 23 at 10:15am Please read through Chapter 5 and bring your Bible.

If you need copies of the materials, please call the office at 651-465-5265.



# What's Happening?



We will be having Coffee with Council on February 2 during the coffee hour to discuss the book, "Ask, Thank, Tell" by Charles Lane. We will meet in table sized groups to share thoughts on the book and stewardship. If you can't be there, take some time to record your thoughts and email them to me at [wszczepanski@yahoo.com](mailto:wszczepanski@yahoo.com) or drop off a paper copy in the church office so we can add your two cents to the discussion.

~Wendy, Church Council President

Book study at the Lodge! Participants are reviewing The Dance of Connection by Harriet Lerner. If you're interested in participating, please call the church office so we can make sure you know about schedule changes and get you a book! Look for us in the sunroom! Friends & neighbors are welcome!

"Once again Lerner does a remarkable job of teaching us new ways to the complicated, experience, joyful, and beautiful dance that we call living."  
**Harriet Lerner, Ph.D.**  
Author of the New York Times Bestseller  
*The Dance of Anger*

How to Talk to Someone  
 When You're Mad, Hurt,  
 Scared, Frustrated,  
 Insulted, Betrayed,  
 or Desperate

**The  
 Dance of  
 Connection**

Meeting time at the Lodge will be 10:30-11:30am on Wednesdays. February 5th, 12th, and 19th

## EDUCATIONAL STAFF APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

Friday, February 7th.

The four Taylors Falls churches come together to host this event to say thank you to the Taylors Falls Elementary school staff.

Our church asked to bring the Festive Rice Pilaf and a fresh vegetable relish tray. If you are able to help bring these items or help with set up/clean up, please sign up on the bulletin board at church or call the church office at 651-465-5265.



Taylors Falls  
 Community Winter  
 Potluck

Saturday, February  
 8th

6:00pm at the  
 First Baptist Church  
 In Taylors Falls

All Taylors Falls area residents are invited to attend. Please bring a dish to share and enjoy a bounty of good eats!



Join us for a fun night of board games! Bring a dish to share and your favorite board game!

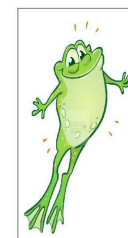
Saturday, February 22nd  
 4:00pm—6:30pm

First Evangelical Lutheran  
 Church of Taylors Falls



We encourage you to check out the library! There are so many good books to check out!! There are books on many subjects: prayer, daily living, poetry, fiction, children's books, teen books, bible stories, DVD's and VHS tapes.

Donations are welcome! If you have some to share, please bring them to the church office with a label: "Donation—Library"



River Valley Christian Women's Connection invites women to:  
**Leap into your best year ever LUNCHEON**

**It's Leap Year, you know....  
 Monday, February 17, 2020**

Alliance Church of the Valley  
 1259 State Rd. 35, St Croix Falls

*Special Feature*

"The Frog Goes a Courting"

Diane Harvey, O'Brien State Park

*Soloist:* Colleen Dittmer

*Inspirational Speaker:* Arlene Gabrielson

Reservations due by Tues. NOON, Feb 11 by calling Shirley 715-483-1216 or text her, 715-338-1473.

## Annual Maple Syrup Commitment Meeting

Sunday, February 23rd  
 12:00pm

Peace Lutheran Church  
 Dresser, WI



## Library Hours:

Monday 8:30am-1:30pm

Tuesday 8:30am-12:30pm

Thursday 8:30am-11:30am

Sunday 8:30am-11:00am



## Meeting Agenda Church Council of First Evangelical Lutheran Church

January 12, 2020, 10:30-12:30pm

“To worship God as an intergenerational praying community, learning God’s Word, and building lasting relationships as we grow in God’s love and grace.”

**Members Present:** Wendy Szczepanski, Rose Anderson, Miriam Flysjo, Craig Loen, Becky Hulden, Pastor Dwight Rudquist **Members Absent:** none

**A. Opening Devotions**– Becky next month– Miriam

**B. Sharing story**– Craig

**C. Pastor’s report** - Pastor Dwight

In addition to presiding over weekly church services and 2 Christmas Eve services, Pastor Dwight has met with Confirmation students periodically, made 5 Hospital visits, presided over 2 Funerals, attended meetings and organist interview and the monthly synod interim meeting.

Now that the holiday season is over he is wondering how to move forward.. How he can help make the transition to our next pastor? What our next pastor position will look like?

Possible next steps include:

- Meet again with Krista Lind
- Meet with Jerry Wahl
- Congregational survey or conversation with the council to determine what the congregation wants.
- Possible monthly coffee-time table conversations: who were we in the past, who are now, who do we want to be in the future.. We could consult the ministry site profile to see what questions there are so we know what questions to ask the congregation.

**D. Treasurer’s Report** - Becky

We took in \$18,395.75. There were 5 Sundays in December and Christmas services helped with giving. Our income for the fiscal year (from July) to date is 60% of our budget. This does not include the steeple fund. Not having to pay regular pastor salary and benefits has helped our budget. Becky will move \$9000 (from our to gift last month) to savings. The tithed amount from that gift will allow us to give \$400 to the Samaritan fund, \$300 to Together with Friends and \$300 to the Synod.

Motion: Becky made the motion that the balance of the gift from the most recent funeral go into the kitchen fund once the lunch expenses are paid. Seconded by Rose. Motion carried.

Steeple fund \$32,014.84 This is before any memorials from Swenson funeral. Becky asked Don to contact roofing company in December but has not heard back.

He is looking for 3 bids. We will have to decide on the color of the tiles. The Fick family has money for the lighting of the steeple. Joe is going to talk to an electrician about the cost for lighting the steeple.

People are wondering about a plaque with names on it of people who have given a substantial amount to the steeple fund. We don’t have a precedent of having a plaque listing donors. The dedication ceremony bulletin could have an insert that lists the people who gave large contributions. Wendy will check with Jerry to see if there’s a list of people who gave money.

**E. Stewardship** - Wendy

**Time and Talents Sheet**- We haven’t done this in a few years. Wendy would like it to be part of the stewardship campaign.

**Stewardship**- We need to form a committee that is not council members. The stewardship committee can decide what to do with the time and talent sheets. Pastor Dwight will help guide the stewardship committee. People have been reading the stewardship book. We plan to set up a date to discuss the book. Possibly during coffee after church.

**Discipleship Lists**- The lists were meant as a way to ensure all members were contacted at least a couple times a year. They are not so useful if people don’t call everyone on the list. We need some sort of list to ensure that there are volunteers for the jobs on Sundays.

**Coffee with Council**- The council will meet with people to discuss Ask, Thank, Tell on February 2 after the service.

**F. St. Paul Area Synod** Toolkit for Congregational Leaders, Gloria Dei Lutheran, St. Paul, Feb.22, 8-2:30. Pastor Dwight, Craig and Wendy will go.

**G. Other business**

The council received a suggestion to purchase a new lightweight metal rack for storing folding tables and folding chairs. The janitor was consulted and he has been asked to provide the council with an inventory of the number of folding tables and chairs around the church, how heavy they are and how many locations around the church have chairs and/or tables stored in them.

**H. Upcoming events**

Worship at the Lodge, Sunday, January 19, 2:00, Craig, Pastor and Michelle will go.

Meeting at Faith Lutheran Church, Balsam Lake, Sunday, January 19, 2:00- Wendy, Becky and Miriam will go

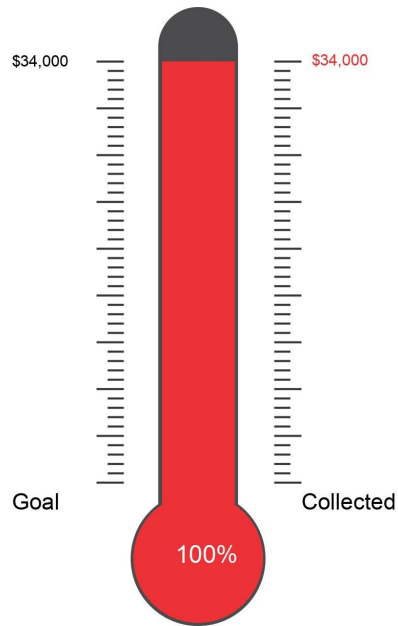
Game night – Saturday, January 18, 4-6

Ash Wednesday – February 26- We discussed continuing to have two services during lent. The morning service has not been well attended but it does serve people who don’t like to go out in the evening. Maybe there are some people who could give rides. Maybe the morning service could be at the lodge because a couple of our members live there now and we are currently doing a book study there on Wednesday morning. Pastor will look at the materials and make a recommendation.

Intergenerational Sunday school- We discussed how to start an intergenerational Sunday school. We decided it would be best to offer activities for kids at a table in the fellowship room so the adults are in close proximity. One Sunday a month everyone would be involved in the activity. Becky, Pastor Dwight, Michelle and Julie M. will meet to determine how to proceed.

**I. Motion to Adjourn, Rose, Craig seconded**

**Next meeting Feb 9 10:30**



# Steeple Fundraising

Each square foot is \$30.

We appreciate all donations towards replacing our steeple.

Online donating is now available! Check out the church website!

## Good News!

We have good news to share! The steeple fund has met the goal of raising \$34,000!

What's our next step? Don Hansen is in contact with three companies to get new bids as the original bid is two years old.

We are still looking at going with copper shingles vs. painted; copper holds up for 100 years while the painted shingles only last 30 years, but nothing has been permanently decided. Once we know the new bid, we will update the congregation.

If you have any questions, please ask a council member or Don Hansen.

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



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

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

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

**2019-2020**

### Council/Officers:

**Wendy Szczepanski**—President

**Craig Loen**—Vice President

**Becky Hulden**—Treasurer

**Miriam Flysjo**—Secretary

**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 February 9th at 10:30am in the Library.**

### *Mission Statement*

*The mission of FELC is to worship God as an intergenerational praying community, to learn God's Word, and to build lasting relationships as we grow in God's love and grace.*

(Mission Statement approved 2017)

*"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.