First Things
The Newsletter of
First Evangelical
Lutheran Church

JAN 2016

Gather | Grow | Go

561 Chestnut Street, Taylors Falls, MN 55084-1110

651-465-5265 • www.tflutheran.org

Good News (Jesus) In Your Neighborhood!

It is the season of Christmas in the church,
the shortest season of them all.

But the rest of the world is done with Christmas,
putting up the displays of organizing materials,
capitalizing on those who might buy things to fulfill
new year's resolutions,
or maybe your store has gone right to Valentines.

I wonder this about New Year's resolutions;
If we can resolve everything that is wrong or wanting in our lives,
with some Rubbermaid boxes and a plan,
do we need Jesus?

As I look for God's presence in our world, I see people hurting,
here and far away. Longing for the family member
or friend who has died to still be beside them,
and that pain is real.

And I believe that God comes to comfort them,
in the hugs of friends, in the neighbor who says
"I don't know what to say, but I'm here",
in communion "given and shed for you",
in the Word made flesh, who came to abide, to stay with us.

I see people writing hymns to inspire others to sacrificial kindness.
I hear pastors searching for new ways to communicate
the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

Think back to our cantata, a mixture of ages singing & speaking
of this Babe who has come to us, for us.

I see someone whose life was changed by the work of
a bunch of faithful Christians from this congregation,
and another pulled in to help.

Watch for the positive comment, the kind word,
the gentle act that doesn't draw attention to itself. God is there.

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Good News In Your Neighborhood—*continued from page 1*

Look at people saying life matters - yours & mine -
and not just yours & mine.

Our world has plenty for any of us to do as we seek where God wants us, and what God wants us doing.

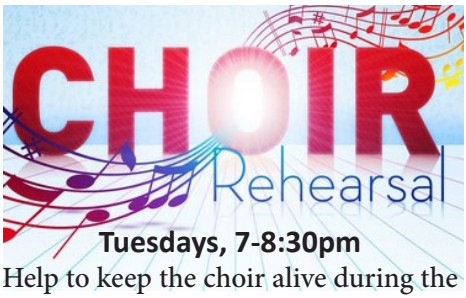
> **"The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.**
> **We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory,**
> **like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish."**
> (John 1:14 —*The Message*)

We pray, we listen, we watch, we work - what is our Good News this year?

In God's hands, as all of you are,
Pr. Mary Kaye

January COUNCIL MEETING

Council will meet again, **Sunday, January 10th, at 4:00pm**.



Help to keep the choir alive during the winter months. Share your voice while the snow birds head south. **Choir Meeting, Tuesday, January 5th!**

GIVING TREE

Thank you to all who gave so generously to families in our community who were in need this Christmas. We were able to give gifts to approximately 10 families. On the same day that the gifts were delivered by Principal Riebe of TF Elementary, a parent dropped off a thank you note to First Lutheran expressing her great appreciation. Thank you for blessing our community!

Epiphany HOME BLESSING

Join the Youth Group and Pastor Mary Kaye in doing home blessings on Epiphany. People of any age welcome. Meet at First Lutheran at **6:30pm on Wednesday, January 6th.**

SARAH CIRCLE

Sarah Circle will will not meet during the month of January. The next tentatively scheduled meeting is **Tuesday, February 2nd at 9:30am** at the Chisago House.

New Member WELCOME!

On Sunday, January 3rd, 2016
First Lutheran officially welcomed into membership:

Gail Johnson & Ollie Davis

~We are so glad you are with us!~

If you are intersted in becoming a member, please contact Pastor Mary Kaye Ashley.

COUNCILCORNER —January, 2016

Blessings and love to all, and a Happy New Year. We are at the beginning of our Church year with the Christmas Season as well as the beginning of our calendar year. This is an excellent time to consider New Year goals. The Council Retreat, in early December, was devoted to developing New Year goals for our community of faith and considered many possibilities. God revealed to us through lively and constructive conversations the possibilities of what we could accomplish in the coming year. We felt that these goals are achievable, and everyone will be able participate in some way. The New Year Goals are:

Ministry Goals -Create a spiritual haven, a space where everyone will feel welcome.

Mission Goal–Discover ways in which more people are involved in the community of faith, invite more people willing and interested in participating

Worship Leadership spiritual growth–Schedule an alternative worship service at a non-standard time, 4 per year, Saturday night, Sunday night, Wednesday night, and offer adult education/book study option.

Pastoral Care and Visitation–Hold individual Council Member conversations with Pastor Mary Kaye

Serving all People through ministry programs– A) Collaborate with Lutheran and other Churches to maintain and grow program ministries. B) Send maximum attendees to Synod and Conference Assembly.

Develop A Stewardship Education Plan

Capital Improvement Goals–Repair and replace Fellowship hall windows, concrete sidewalk repair, Lighting by church steps. Obtain kitchen remodel estimate.

It is our hope and prayer that throughout the year as we strive to achieve these goals, we continue to love and serve others as Jesus taught us and commanded us to.

Don Hansen, Council President

MONTHLYGIVING 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: $3114.

12/06 Giving:	3,948.60
12/13 Giving:	2,524.25
12/20 Giving:	5,027.00
12/24 Giving:	3,325.60
12/27 Giving:	1,089.00

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.

JANBIRTHDAYS

Paredes, Sydney	01/02
Vitalis, Peter	01/04
Krueger, Rhonda	01/06
Olson, Duane	01/09
Langer, Isabella	01/12
Alden, Maia	01/13
Halstrom, Coby	01/14
Davids, Bill	01/15
Vodenka-Reed, Patricia	01/15
Johnson, Natasha	01/16
Peterson, Brynna	01/18
Magnuson, Dylan	01/19
Nelson, Timothy	01/19
Kelley, Brian	01/21
Dexter, Breanna	01/23
Larson, Terri	01/25
Olson, Marilyn	01/28
Linngren, Carli	01/31

Christian WOMEN'S CONNECTION

Monday, January 18th at 11:30
($10 inclusive)
At the Alliance Church of the Valley
1259 State Rd 35, St. Croix Falls, WI
RESERVATIONS:
651-257-4741 (Carrie)
715-554-2330 (Mary)

Thrivent GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

Are you a member of Thrivent? Members of Thrivent have access to some funds thru Thrivent to benefit others in our community by joining together for projects. But Pr. Mary Kaye has only a tiny idea who is a member, (no they don't share that info with FELC.) If you're willing for me to know who you are, would you drop me an email, or text or call me?
Thanks! PMK

GIVING NOTES

You can help us to save high postage costs by picking up your giving envelopes on the table near the church office.

Please remember to stamp and mail your giving envelopes if you travel this winter.

2016 Annual Giving Cards are still being accepted. Thank you for helping us plan for our ministry at First.

Lighting Festival FIRST LADY

We would be remiss if we didn't recognize the royalty in our midst. Congratulations to our member, Kathy Carlsted, who is the 2015 First Lady of the Taylors Falls Lighting Festival.

Charitable GIVING CHANGES

President Obama signed the 2016 budget this week. Bill H.R. 637 was part of that budget which states that the Permanent IRA Charitable Contribution Act allows individuals age 70½ or older to donate up to $100,000 to charity directly from their IRAs without incurring tax on the withdrawal. More info at: https://www.cbo.gov/publication/49935wardship

Safeguarding GOD'S CHILDREN

Safeguarding God's Children is an opportunity for those working in the areas of children, youth, and family ministries to learn about best practices in child safety in the church as well as for youth and vulnerable adults so that our ministries with young people are healthy and safe. This is open to anyone interested, and strongly encouraged by church insurers for anyone working with children or youth. Pastor Mary Kaye Ashley is trained to lead these sessions. Cost is $5, with lunch included. It will be offered on **January 16th at First Evangelical Lutheran of Taylors Falls** *or* **January 30th at Immanuel, Almelund** from **9am-1:30pm**. Please register with Pr. Mary Kaye.

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.

JANUARY SCHEDULE

Wednesdays ~ 6:30-8:00pm

1/6 Epiphany Home Blessing*
1/13 FLY Large Group (w/breakouts) - Winter Retreat Sign-up
1/17 Mandatory Mission Trip Mtg. 11:30-12:30pm
1/20 FLY Large Group (w/breakouts)

2015 Christmas Party!

Epiphany HOMEBLESSING

*Join the Youth Group and Pastor Mary Kaye in doing home blessings for the new year with chalk on Epiphany. People of any age welcome. Meet at First Lutheran at 6:30pm on Wednesday, January 6th.

Summer 2016 Mission Trip Spots Open!

Spots still available for the Summer 2016 Mission Trip! Contact Michelle Lynch (Youth Minister) at 715-220-2782 or felcyouthminister@gmail.com if you are interested in learning more or would like to reserve your spot. First Mandatory Mission Trip Team Meeting: **SUNDAY, JANUARY 17th, 11:30-12:30pm**

Youth Winter Retreat

to Luther Point Bible Camp in Grantsburg, WI
Friday - Sunday February 26-28, 2016
with the worship band 100 WHITE FLAGS!
Be watching the newsletter, email, and church website for more details regarding sign up and cost.

MUSICALBRAINSTORMING

Musicians Brainstorming Meeting: **Tuesday January 5th, 7pm.** Invitation to all winter choir members and any youth interested in helping lead worship with their musical skills: vocals, guitar, piano, percussion, and any other instruments welcome. (KIDS ON BOARD) Help to brainstorm worship music ideas for January through March/Easter. With many choir members now traveling during the next 3 months we have an opportunity to work together to lead worship and I would love to hold a conversation as to what this may look like. Here is a proposal to consider: 2 Tuesday rehearsals a month for leading worship twice each month. Proposed Dates: Rehearsals Jan 12, 26 7pm; Lead Worship Jan 17, 31; Rehearsals Feb. 9, 23 7pm; Lead Worship Feb. 14th; 100 White Flags will lead Feb. 28th; Rehearsals March 8, 22; Lead Worship March 13th and 27th (Easter).

Worship Committee Meeting Tuesday January 5th @9am

Greetings from Luther Point

January 2016

Summer Camp Registration is Underway!
Even though the snow is falling, we are already thinking about the summer camping season here at Luther Point. Registration for summer 2016 opens at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 5. You can find a current list of dates for each different camp on the lutherpoint.org home page. Our first week of camp begins on June 12! Please contact our office at 715-689-2347 if you have questions regarding registration.

It Pays to Plan Ahead When Thinking About Summer Camp
Anyone who registers for camp before April 1 will automatically receive a $15 Early Bird discount that will be applied to your registration fee. This can also be combined with either the $20 Invite A Friend discount if you bring someone who has never been to camp before OR the $20 Sibling discount.

Come Stay With Us and Enjoy Our Beautiful Setting on Big Wood Lake
If you're needing a place to get away and recharge after the busy holiday season, we still have some of our warm family cabins available. Luther Point is a wonderful place of serenity where you can come and reconnect with family and friends while recharging your faith in God's beautiful creation. We also have space in our lodge and Retreat Center for events such as Board and Council retreats or youth retreats. Contact Amy at 715-689-2347 ext. 102 or amy@lutherpoint.org for more information.

Mark Your Calendars and Sign Up for Weekend Retreats When Registration Opens
We will hosting our Elementary (grades 3-6) and Junior High (grades 7-9) weekend youth retreats on April 1-2. This is an opportunity to experience a weekend of camp during the spring. We will have summer staff members to lead activities including songs, games, and Bible studies. Additional information can be found on our website.
Grace and Peace,
Rev. Mark T. Peters, Executive Director

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

First Evangelical
LUTHERAN CHURCH of TAYLORS FALLS

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

Caroline Greene
Ministry Coordinator,
parishc@tflutheran.org

2015-2016 Council/Officers:

Don Hansen—President

Sharna Braucks—Vice President

Joe Landgreen—Treasurer

Gayle Langer —Secretary

Julie Valez

Duane Olson

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, January 10, 4:00pm in the 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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