First Things

DECEMBER 2024

The Newsletter of First Evangelical Lutheran Church
561 Chestnut Street | Taylors Falls, MN 55084-1110
651-465-5265 www.tflutheran.org

Ten years ago, the Capital Christmas Tree for that year was harvested from the Chippewa National Forest. That area starts just outside Deer River, MN where I was living at the time. But did you know that there were actually two trees cut and shipped to Washington DC? The main one, which would stand as the Capital tree, was put on display on the back of a special flatbed semi-trailer and paraded around our town and throughout the state. The other one that was cut down was to serve as extra parts. When the first tree was put into place, designers filled in branches from the other tree to make it "perfect."

When I was in junior high, my sister decided we needed to purchase a flocked tree. Remember those? Of course I was a key player in maneuvering this monstrous ball of white fluff up our narrow stairs and into the living room. After unwrapping it from the plastic covering I noticed strings all over the inside of the tree. Of course, I started clipping them soon to realize that they held extra branches in place to again, make the tree "perfect."

I wonder if this kind of thinking that everything always needs to be "perfect" maybe hasn't served us so well. You know as do I that life isn't always "perfect."

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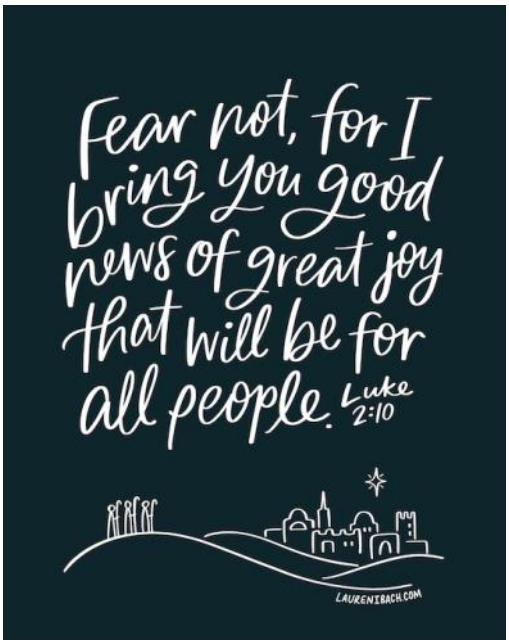
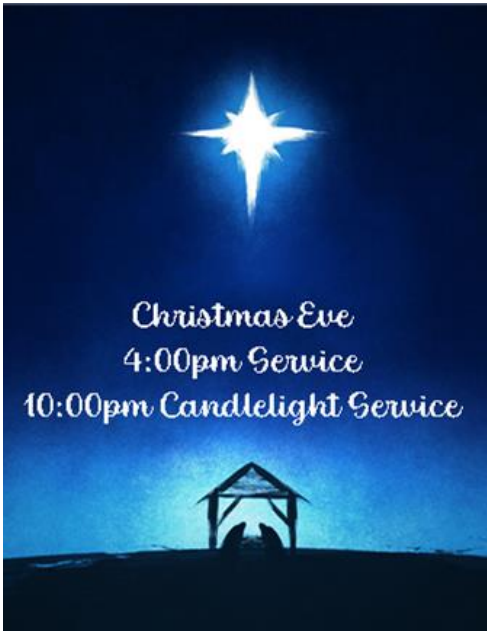
But that's part of why I love Christmas so much. God, in the form of a snot nosed, diaper filling, crying baby, enters our broken lives and our troubled world to make it right – not perfect, but right. The angel in Luke's Gospel says it well; "Do not be afraid; for behold – I bring you good news of great joy for all the people: for to you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." May we find peace and comfort in knowing that God doesn't need us to be "perfect" before entering into our lives, before coming to save us.



My wish for you this Christmas is to experience a full measure of God's peace, of God's love, with an extra helping of hope and joy to sustain you through the challenges we are facing. May God fill you with light and life as we move through this darkness into the wonder of Christ's coming to us anew!

Pastor Dwight Rudquist



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 and can also be found on our YouTube Channel: First Evangelical Lutheran Church of TF - 2nd.

COUNCIL MEETING

Council will meet in December

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

12/03 Mary Anne 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

10/27 Giving:	$2,534.40
11/03 Giving:	$3,991.00
11/10 Giving:	$1,011.00
11/17 Giving:	$2,302.00

Thank you for your faithful giving. Please contact FELC Treasurer, Craig Loen with any questions or concerns at: 715-553-0519 or cloen@federatedcoops.com

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.

Join the residents at The Lodge in Taylors Falls every Thurs at 2:30pm for their free Community Coffee Hour!

Church Choir

Wednesday evenings at 5pm in the sanctuary! No experience needed! We'd love for you to join us!!!

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

2025 Offering Envelopes are now available at the church! Pick yours up on any Sunday!

First & Third Wed mornings at 9:30am. No experience needed! We welcome new quilters!!!

Crafting on Saturdays

December 14th | 9 AM - 2 PM

Bring your craft to work on, a dish to share & come for the great company! Please note that this falls on the same day as making Lefsa & Cardamon Buns. We hope to see you for one or both of these fun activities!

SundaySCHOOL

Sunday, December 8th Children's Pageant

Miriam Flysjo and the Sunday school children have worked hard putting together a beautiful program for everyone.

Upcoming Events At Our Church

Church Christmas Decorating
Sun, Dec. 1st after worship

Making Lefsa
Sat, Dec. 7th | Time: 9am-12pm

Children's Program
Sun, Dec. 8th during worship

Making Cardamon Buns
Sat, Dec. 14th | Time: 9am-12pm

Christmas Eve Worship
Tues, Dec. 24th
4:00pm & 10:00pm

love OUR COMMUNITY

Christmas Food Drive

Family Pathways is prepping to assemble Christmas Meal boxes in early December! Each church in our Chisago Lakes area have been asked to contribute an item for the meal kits. Our church has been asked to collect 125 canned fruit and/or Jello and also collect money to purchase items needed for the kits. Please bring in cans of corn now through December 8th and place them in the Christmas Food Drive bin near the usher stand!!!

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

Each year, our generous congregation purchases gift cards for 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 put your donation in the offering plate on Sunday morning or mail your donation to the church, marking "Giving Tree" on the envelope.

First Evangelical Lutheran Church
Attn: Giving Tree
561 Chestnut Street
Taylors Falls, MN 55084

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

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 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.

Donations wanted: think small! Small toys, coloring items, etc. No candy. Bring donations to the office and a delivery will be made to the family after Christmas!

WHAT'S HAPPENING

IN OUR COMMUNITY

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7TH
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!

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14TH
9:00AM TO 12:00PM
JOIN US TO MAKE CARDAMON BUNS! NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED! OPEN TO EVERYONE! TAKE SOME HOME WITH YOU! SAMPLING AND GOOD CONVERSATION IS A MUST!

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

Santa Paw Days

at FAWN-DOE-ROSA
Sat. Dec. 14th & Sun. Dec. 15th
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!

ST. CROIX FALLS, WISCONSIN
RIVERTOWN
holiday
DECEMBER 7-8, 2024

Chisago Lake Lutheran
23rd Annual
Bazaar
2024
&
Bake Sale
Saturday
December 7
9am-3pm

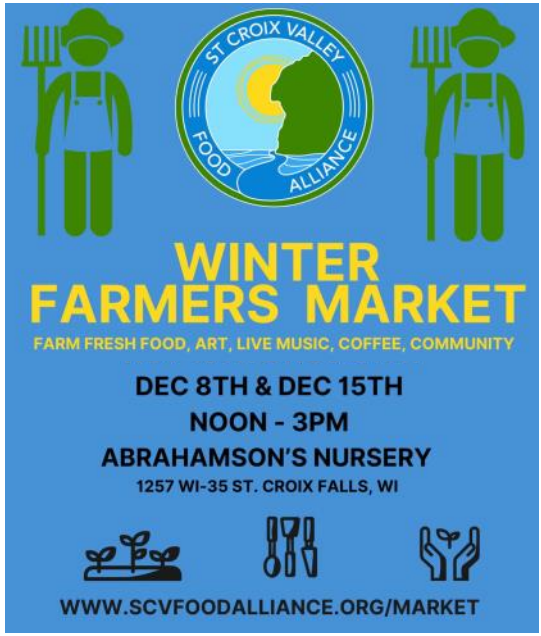
JOIN US FOR THE
7TH ANNUAL
HOLIDAY
BOUTIQUE
DECEMBER 7TH
9AM TO 4PM
Center City Fire Hall

Lindström
Holiday Craft Fair
Saturday, December 7, 2024, 9am - 4pm
Lindström Community Center, 13292 Sylvan Ave., Lindström
Join us for a fun day of holiday shopping & community!
~ Local Boy Scout Troop #159 will be selling food ~
Vendor entry fees help support Lindström's Harmony in the Park FREE summer concert series
Make a day of it and shop ALL 3 local shows!
Lindström Holiday Craft Fair
Chisago Lake Lutheran Christmas Bazaar (Center City) ◦ CCFD Holiday Boutique (Center City)

Knit and Crochet Group
St. Croix Falls Library

Mon. Dec. 9th
6pm - 8pm
Regular gathering:
2nd Monday of
the month

Come & stitch with us! Bring your project or start a new one. Don't know how to knit or crochet? We would be happy to teach new crafters! Bring some yarn (worsted weight cotton, wool or acrylic) & needles (size 6, 7 or 8, preferably wood) or a hook (size G, H or I) & a sense of adventure!



Winter Concerts

Swedish Holiday

Friday, December 6th
Time: 7:30pm
Faith Lutheran Church
Forest Lake, MN

Sunday, December 8th
Time: 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/

Christmas Checklist

- ☐ Make Clay Ornaments
- ☐ Decorate a Gingerbread House
- ☐ Drink Hot Cocoa
- ☐ Eat Rudolph Pancakes
- ☐ Wear matching Holiday PJ's
- ☐ Take a picture with Santa
- ☐ Give a gift to a family in need
- ☐ Take a walk in the snow
- ☐ Go to a Christmas Tree Farm
- ☐ Drink Hot Cocoa

CHISAGO LAKES
COMMUNITY MEAL

Chisago Lakes Community Meal Monday Evenings

4pm - 6pm

Zion Lutheran Church in Chisago City. All are welcome!

MORE INFO CAN BE FOUND AT
WWW.MIRACLEATBIGROCK.COM

MIRACLE AT BIG ROCK

ST CROIX FALLS, WI
NOVEMBER 29TH - JANUARY 4TH

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

Church Council of First Evangelical Lutheran Church
Sunday, November 10, 2024, in the church library
Note:
Next meeting: December , 2024

Minutes

Council Members: Rose Anderson, Kathy Carlsted, Don Hansen, Becky Hulden, Julie Valez, Pastor Dwight Rudquist

A. Opening Devotions – Kathy, Prayer for the future, those living with depression.
December - Kathy

B. Sharing Stories of God's Love in our Lives -

C. Pastor's Report- Pastor Dwight - See Page 13

1. **Met with Immanuel Lutheran for consideration of sharing pastor as an experiment next May. Ask questions on How does our mission fits with Immanuel's.**
2. **Funeral meal policy was drafted and submitted to the council-see page 14**
   Kathy moved, Rose Seconded to approve Meal policy. Motion carried.
3. **Invitation cards to be made for members to hand out to invite nonmembers.**

D. Treasurer's Report –
Julie moved to accept treasurers report
Kathy seconded, Motion carried

Financial statements are available in office.

E. Property Committee Projects

1. Bathrooms - repair of water main entrance to church completed
2. Regarding, south side will be deferred till next spring
3. Basement Chairs-$6,000 was approved for the purchase of chairs-Don to get 2 or 3 samples of chairs for congregation consideration. Chairs displayed in hallway for congregation feedback. Chair from sams club won the chair choice. Don purchased 100 chairs for $3,900.00
4. Both South education wing doors need repainting, the project will be a part of the season the renewal.
5. Don talked to Jeremy Vitalis regarding removal of the old fuel oil tank located on the west side of the sanctuary. Looking into oil removal Station 19 Architect firm was contacted regarding re-design of the west or back door entrance. She will send us a proposal.

F. Funeral Lunches / Kitchen Management

1. Funeral policy for members / nonmembers-work group to Updated policy for weddings and funerals on page 14. Team members Kathy Carlsted, Rose Anderson, Wendy Szczepanski, Dwight Rudquist, Craig Loen

G. Vision Group

Welcoming group has been in contact with the web designer on Thursday meeting November 14

Other Events

H. Upcoming events: lighting festival pancake breakfast November 30, Saturday,-Jerry Rhoads and Don Hansen to set up Rose to purchase supplies . 9am -noon Free breakfast

I. Vespers-Saturday evening-Dwight not available. Wendy possible for availability to participate

J. Making Lefsa on December 14th 9-noon

Pastor Rudquist's Council Report – November 10, 2024

Participated in Worship:

- October 13, 2024
- October 27, 2024
- November 3, 2024

Visits:

- In person visit with: Darlene Mueller, Janet Shepherdson, Cynthia Holmberg, Edna Curry

Phone visits with: Orval Curry

Funerals:

Other:

- Church Council - 10/13/2024
- Choir Practices 10/23, 10/30, 11/6
- Choir Sang on 10/27
- Newsletter Article for November
- Service at The Lodge – October 23rd
- What's Next Task Group Meetings – 10/15
- Funeral Task Group - 10/16
- Meeting with Immanuel LC 11/6

Continued on page 14

Pastor's Report continued……..

Thoughts/Reflections:

- Meeting with Immanuel, Dec. 15th at noon.
- Discuss Funeral Meal Guidelines (see below)
- Vacation Schedule
  - ◊ January 1-21, 2025 (tentative dates to be in Namibia – 3 Sundays – Jan. 5, 12, 19)

Funeral Meal Policy
First Evangelical Lutheran Church
Taylors Falls, MN
Est. November 2024

At this difficult time, we at First express our deepest sympathy for the loss of your loved one. It is our desire to stand with you in the good news of the resurrection that is ours through Christ Jesus. We also want to provide an opportunity for your family and those who gather to celebrate the life of your loved one as we worship together and join in fellowship through a meal.

Our policy for providing for this meal is that:

1. Members of First will provide and serve bars and/or cake, along with beverages (coffee, lemonade, water).
2. If a fuller meal is desired, it is the family's responsibility to arrange for food to be catered and delivered to First at the family's expense.
   - Members of First will still provide what is included in #1 above, serve the food catered, and clean up following the meal.

Here are potential places to arrange for food to be catered from:

MarketPlace Foods
St. Croix Falls, WI
(715) 483-7158

Brinks Market
Lindstrom, MN
(651) 257-1700

Village Pizzeria
Dresser, WI
(715) 755-2900

Deutschland Meats
Lindstrom, MN
(651) 257-1128

Dick's Fresh Market
Osceola, WI
(715) 294-2158

Sir Smoke A Lot's BBQ
St. Croix Falls, WI
(715) 501-8187

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

First Evangelical
LUTHERAN CHURCH of TAYLORS FALLS

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

Angie Linngren
Ministry Coordinator,
parishc@tflutheran.org

2024-2025
Council/Officers:

Becky Hulden—President
Kathy Carlsted—Vice President
Craig Loen—Treasurer
Don Hansen—Secretary
Julie Valez
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 in December 2024.

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.

First Evangelical
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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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