

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Ministers: All God's People at FLC

Hank French, Pastor



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January, 2016 Newsletter

January 5, 2016

First Lutheran Church

Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 31, 2016

Following the 10:30 a.m. Service

Share a fellowship meal – child care will be provided

- Election of Council members, voting members, and other leadership positions
- Adoption of 2016 Mission Plan
- Annual Reports

The following leadership positions will be elected at the annual meeting. If you or someone you know would like to be considered for serving please contact the Nominating Committee or the church office.

Church Council:

Four individuals each to a 3-year term: Dave Buker, Katie Riitters, Sue Salvog, Marlene Williams

Two individuals each to a 1-year term: Les Hittesdorf, Wayne Liljegren

Lay voting members to

Heartland Conference Gathering, date to be determined *and* NE Minnesota Synod Assembly, Friday-Sunday, April 29-May 1, 2016 at Breezy Point Resort, Theme: Living Forgiveness

Three voting members: Ruth Jeremiason-Jensen, two additional and three alternates

Lay voting members to

Luther Crest Bible Camp Annual Meeting in October 2016:

Three voting members: Brian and Caitlin Skluzacek, one additional

2017 Nominating Committee: *three members to be elected*

Stumpf Memorial Scholarship:

One person to coordinate a group of five to select scholarship recipients

Please plan to attend this important meeting. Share in a fellowship lunch following the 10:30 a.m. service. Child care will be provided. Annual Reports will be available at the church for review before the Annual Meeting.

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Notes from Pastor Hank:

I am writing this on New Year's Eve—the last day of 2015 which, in spite of the many tragedies that humankind has inflicted on itself in the last 12 months, has been a good year.

Of course, I tend to be a bit of an idealist and a bit of an optimist—two character traits that should mark every Christian for the simple fact that we live in the light of Christ and that light gives us a new perspective on things. In the light of Christ, we *see* the presence of God in our troubled world; we *see* God working through love to heal the brokenness of the world, and we find ourselves called to join God in the healing of the world.

In the light of Christ, things look different; in the light of Christ, one finds extraordinary goodness in ordinary people who go about their ordinary everyday lives in kind and compassionate ways. So we face 2016 with a firm hope in the God who is love; “and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Romans 5:5). Which is to say that 2016 will also be a good year for those who live in the light of Christ.

In 2015, my experience of ordinary folks going about their everyday lives in kind and compassionate ways has largely centered on this community of the faithful—First Lutheran Church. I have, as it were, a front row seat from which to witness members of this community simply doing good for each other—and doing good for folks who are not members of this community but who have needs. Acts of hospitality and welcome, acts of generosity and charity, acts of kindness to and concern for others, acts grounded in the bonds of friendship and fidelity—I see these things happening all the time.

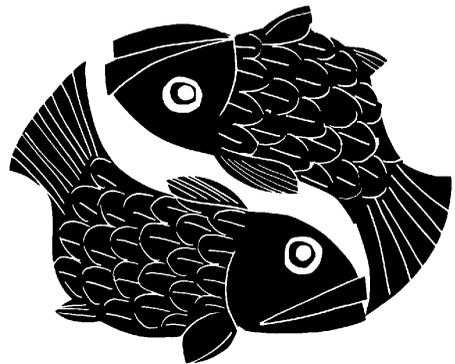
And if they are happening here, you can bet that they are happening all around the world. In spite of the evening news with its penchant for reporting the bad, there is far more good in this world of ours.

This community of the faithful strengthens my fundamental belief that, as Paul said, “the only thing that counts is faith working through love.” (Galatians 5:6). Of course, we don't get it right all the time. None of us is perfect, not by any stretch of the imagination. We all have our flaws, foibles and failures. But we follow a God who forgives and continually calls us to become more than our flaws, foibles and failures. When we live in the light of Christ, we *see* those flaws, foibles and failures more clearly and we *hear* the call of God to believe that we are forgiven them, and therein is the courage to grow, the courage to keep on in the practice of love.

My prayer for everyone at First Lutheran is that 2016 will be a year of living in the light of Christ.

On Wednesday, January 6 at 5:30 p.m. we will hold a brief Epiphany service—both outside and inside the church—in which we commemorate the coming of the Light of Christ into the world in the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. As part of our gathering we will share a light meal affirming that we are indeed a community of the faithful living in the light of Christ. See you there.

Pastor Hank



WORSHIP LIFE

Personnel Changes at First Lutheran

Amber Sobiech resigned effective January 1, 2016 as Christian Education Coordinator and Worship Volunteer Coordinator—a position she has filled for the last 17 months. We are sad to see her go and deeply appreciative of the faithful and effective way she has contributed to the ministry of our community of faith. Amber and her family remain members of the congregation. When you see her on Sundays, thank her for her service and wish her well in her new vocational venture.

Effective January 1, Jay Kiel, along with his duties as Youth and Family Minister, will take on the responsibilities of Christian Education Coordinator, and Rachel Flogstad-Heise will take over as Worship Volunteer Coordinator. Thank them when you see them and offer your support for their continuing ministry with us.



Equal Exchange Fair Trade Products

First Lutheran purchases coffee, tea, hot cocoa, and other Equal Exchange fair trade food items through Lutheran World Relief. We serve this coffee at all congregational fellowship times and events. Anyone is welcome to purchase from the inventory in the church office for their own use or for gifts. What a great way to support farmers around the world to make better lives for themselves and to treat the earth kindly through environmentally sound growing practices. Single-serve cups in completely recyclable packaging are now available. Thank you for your support



Worship Serving Opportunities Signup for 2016

Each Sunday, many worshipers come to worship at First Lutheran. Your servant hands are an integral part of providing hospitality to all who enter here. Stop at the table in the Gathering Space to offer your gifts in service to Christ's body at First Lutheran. Serving areas are greeters, ushers, scripture readers, communion ministry, child care, coffee hospitality. You can sign up for a time that fits your schedule. Sign up now for January and February. You can also sign up for the serving areas that interest you. You will be called as needed. Training for each serving ministry is available—please ask in the church office!

We will devote space in the newsletter in the coming months with information about the various serving ministries. You may want to try something new!

Signup sheets are posted now. Thanks for being *First...Servants of All.*



Council Highlights

- Council approved new Mission and Vision statements for the congregation.
- Thank you to Jay Kiel for adding the Education Coordinator responsibilities to his ministry description.
- Thank you to Rachel Flogstad-Heise for adding the Worship Volunteer coordinator responsibilities to her ministry description.
- Approved replacement of nine windows over a three year period.
- Planning for the congregational Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 31.

Adult Opportunities

Men's Bible Study Breakfast

All men of the congregation and friends are invited to a Men's Bible Study Breakfast. This study meets for breakfast on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 a.m. at the church. We meet only on January 6 and 20. All are welcome – come when you are able, leave when you must. For more info., contact Pastor Hank.

Women's Winter Bible Study

Watch for information about a new women's study beginning Wednesdays in January. For more info, contact the church office, 632-6667.

Book Club

All adult readers are welcome to read with this group. The next selection is Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics by Daniel James Brown. Readers, please secure your own copy of this book. The group will meet in the church library at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 26, to share and discuss the book. The February selection is The Traveler's Gift by Andy Andrews. For more info contact Tifanii Dahl, 632-8207.

Women's Martha Circle:

The Martha Circle meets Monday, January 11, at 10:00 a.m. at the church. Karen Fellbaum is the hostess. Please note this is a date change.

Library Corner

During January we are featuring First Lutheran members who are published authors. Stop in the library to check out the writings of Pastor Hank French, Rusty Gwost, Laura Hansen, and Mark Moe. If you or someone you know is also a published author, please let us know so that we can include your work.

Sunday School News

Welcome back! Sunday School resumes on Sunday, January 3, at 9:35 a.m. in the sanctuary for opening music. Thank you to Debra Yliniemi-Ahlin, Camilla Larson, and Becky Nelson for leading the songs each week.

Preschool/PreKindergarten children meet in their classrooms along with teachers and helpers. Please remember to take your child to the restroom before class and sign in to the information book when you bring your child. Thank you!

Kindergarten-Fifth Grade begin a new rotation – “Good News.” The dates for this section are January 3, 10 and 17. Children will learn to share the Good News of Jesus through Storytelling/Games, Cooking and Crafts. All of God's children of any age are welcome to participate. “David, the Boy” begins on January 24. If you would like to share as a leader, please contact Jay in the church office. Thank you to all who lead rotations!

Thank you to all who assisted with the Christmas program. Whether you led the singing, helped with direction and rehearsal, had a speaking part, sang, arranged costumes, assisted with fellowship, helped in any way, and came to the program, you are all appreciated! Thank you!

6th Grade-12th Grade meet together in the Youth Room, then Grades 6-8, and Grades 9-12 meet separately for activities and lessons.



Worship and Music written by Paula Monahan

Adapted in part from "Then Sings My Soul" by Robert J. Morgan

You are the light of the world. *Matthew 5:14a*

What better way to start fresh in the new year than to "Brighten The Corner Where You Are!" This hymn gives great advice for every day of every year! In August 1874, a Sunday School training camp was organized, on the shores of beautiful Lake Chautaugua in upstate New York. Eventually the camp outgrew its origins and changed to having performers, musicians, lecturers and motivational speakers come to the camp each week. In 1912, Ina Duley Ogdon was invited to the camp to speak. She was excited for the opportunity to motivate thousands of people for Christ. Unfortunately, as she was packing, her father was seriously injured in a wreck of one of the new-fangled "horseless carriages." Ina cancelled her travel plans to care for her father. Even though Ina was bitterly disappointed, she surrendered the disappointment to God and trusted His plan. She concluded that even if she couldn't minister to thousands, she could be a blessing to one—her father—and those around him. She wrote:

"Do not wait until
some deed of greatness you may do,
Do not wait to shed your light afar.
To the many duties ever near you now be true,
Brighten the corner where you are.

Refrain:

Brighten the corner where you are!
Brighten the corner where you are!
Someone far from harbor
you may guide across the bar,
Brighten the corner where you are.

Just above are clouded skies
that you may help to clear,
Let not narrow self your way debar.
Tho' into one heart alone
may fall your song of cheer,
Brighten the corner where you are.

Here for all your talent
you may surely find a need,
Here reflect the Bright and Morning Star.
Even from your humble hand
the bread of life may feed,
Brighten the corner where you are."

Thank you!

- ♥ First Lutheran Church participated in 'Making a Joyful Noise' fundraiser at Coborn's for the Morrison County Foodshelf in December. Dollars raised support hungry in the community. Thank you to those who 'made noise' at Coborn's, to Ron Hinnenkamp for coordinating the project, and to all who supported this effort through your donations!
- ♥ First Lutheran helps to deliver meals in the community on a rotating schedule with other churches and civic groups. First's next week to deliver is January 11-15, 2016. If you can help with this caring opportunity, please contact the church office.
- ♥ The Commission for Youth thanks everyone who participated in the Advent Craft Sale fundraiser for Youth Ministry. Over \$2,500.00

was received from sales and donations. Thanks to everyone who donated food, crafts, baked goods and their time in support of this event. Thanks to Thrivent ® for Action Team support. Your generosity is an inspiration!

- ♥ Thank you to all who use their time, talents and treasure to serve one another in ways both small and large. The smallest, quiet act of kindness may make the biggest difference in the life of another. Thank you for all you do daily in the love of our Lord.
- ♥ Thank you for your support of the Angel Tree Project. Because of your caring and commitment, over 100 Morrison County families know the peace of Christ. Thank you for making the difference in the life of a child. Sincerely, Annalee VanDenheuvel

Devotions for Health in the New Year

O Lord, by these things people live, and in all these is the life of my spirit. O restore me to health and make me live!
Isaiah 38:16

Thoughts:

The New Year is a wonderful time to consider our overall health and to set goals to improve our health. Our God is a God who restores our health. God gives us life, and life in abundance, and just as God restores our health, God calls us to care for our own health and the health of our communities.

Questions to ponder:

What are some ways you were healthier last year?

What are some ways you want to be healthy this year?

Healthy habits can include areas of diet and exercise, but we want to be spiritually healthy as well. What helps your body and spirit remain as healthy as possible?

What good thing is God doing in your life right now?

Prayer:

Lord, thank you for the health we already have, and we pray that you would restore us to health and make us live a life of health. In your holy Name, Amen.

Reprinted from: Walk and Talk. Walking together with scripture

Information: The POLST Form

What is POLST? POLST stands for “Provider Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment.” It is a signed medical order form that communicates the patient’s end of life health care wishes to other health care providers during an emergency.

Who should have a POLST form?

Patients with serious health conditions who need to make decisions about life sustaining treatment in advance of medical emergencies should have a POLST form. The form is recommended even for patients who have an advance directive, because it provides greater detail as to the provision of for the patient’s emergency care.

Where is a POLST form stored?

A POLST form is intended to travel with the patient between care settings including the patient’s home, long term care facility or hospital. It should be kept in a place where emergency responders can find it (for example, on the refrigerator door, if the patient lives in a house, or in the chart of a nursing home patient). Ideally, this form will also be kept as part of a patient’s electronic medical record. For more information on how it differs from an Advance Directive, who completes it, who updates it and when to review it, please see the bulletin board in the church gathering space. *(MN Medical Association)*

Minnesota Board on Aging

Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) is the gateway to services for Minnesota seniors and their families. MBA listens to senior concerns, researches for solutions, and proposes policy to address senior needs. In addition, MBA administers funds from the Older Americans Act that provide a spectrum of services to seniors, including Senior LinkAge Line®, Insurance Counseling and more.

First established in 1956, the MBA is one of the pioneers in the field of aging policy, information and assistance. It works closely with its Area Agencies on Aging, which are located throughout the state, to provide services that seniors need. Check out mnaging.org for more information.

"Children First" Christian Preschool

Greetings,

January is here! December was a month of Christmas preparation and celebration. The children celebrated the month with music and parades. They learned about the Nativity Story and enjoyed a Christmas movie and popcorn on pajama day. Our field trips this month were especially fulfilling. Preschoolers sang and presented a program for Christmas. Classes made Christmas projects and sang Christmas songs with the residents of St. Otto's and Bridgeway Estates. Handshakes and hugs were plentiful!

Thank you to all who assisted or donated items for the "Tree of Giving" at the Minnesota Fishing Museum Christmas Tree Lane.

Classes resume on January 5 and 6, 2016 with themes of snow and polar animals, dinosaurs, ocean fun and beach day, and ABCs. Please be sure to send boots, snow pants and mittens with your child. The preschoolers go outside on every possible nice day!

"Children First" Christian Preschool continues to welcome new preschoolers pending class openings. Currently enrolled children are also welcome to add the Friday Friends class to make a three-day school week. Children may enroll at anytime during the school year pending space availability. Families with children ages 33 months-PreKindergarten are encouraged to stop by to visit the classroom. Please contact Gail Hittesdorf, Preschool staff, or First Lutheran Church office for more information.

Thank you to all who have participated in the "Gifting Campaign" to date. Gifting Campaign forms are available, see Gail for more information.

Thank you to all who have blessed "Children First" Christian Preschool in 2015, with financial giving, giving of time and talents, tuition support, and including the school in your prayers. We appreciate you! God's Blessings!

Happy New Year!

Yours in Christ's Service,
Gail Hittesdorf, Director

Labels for Learning

Thank you for saving Coborn's/CashWise Food Club Points for "Children First" Christian Preschool. Check your cash register receipt for the printed points at the end of your receipt. Cut off the points section and place in the box in the gathering space or the preschool entry area. Or you can bring your entire receipt and we will cut it for you. These points help the preschool to earn dollars for supplies and other needs. Thank you!



Confirmation Ministries

Fourth Grade: Four week class on Holy Baptism meets on Wednesdays, January 6 through January 27, at 7:00 p.m. Families should have received a letter about this class. Students will make a keepsake baptismal banner as a part of this class. A parent, grandparent or guardian is encouraged to help with this project. Thank you to Michelle Dahlberg for teaching this class.

Seventh Grade: Ten Commandments class begins Wednesday, January 6 at 7:00 p.m. and continues through January 27. Parents, please attend the first session. Thank you to Gail Hittesdorf for teaching this class. Bring your Bible, Luther's Small Catechism and your great attitude!

Eighth Grade: Old Testament class meets Wednesdays, January 6 through January 27. Pastor Hank will teach this class. A Study Bible is used in this class.

O Eternal God, the beginning and end, you who sustain all things, understand all things, who existed before all things, and who is without end, be with us, remain among us; strengthen our intentions, sanctify our souls and eradicate in us all that is evil. Enable us to make a good sacrifice and pour out your abundant blessings, and so enable us to enter into the holy of holies wherein dwells your presence.

Ethiopian liturgy

Can Care Collection

Save a can – Save the earth –
Save our youth budget!

Place your empty aluminum cans in a securely tied bag next to the church garage. Thank you!

Save the Earth

Did you know that each American produces 4.6 pounds of waste per day, the most in the industrialized world? That in the U.S. 80 percent of products are used once then thrown away? Thank you for your efforts to reduce, re-use, and recycle around your home, our church building, and in the community. Paper, cardboard and aluminum cans used at church can be recycled at church. Your help with recycling glass, paper, cardboard, plastic, aluminum or tin cans is very much appreciated. Thank you for your care for creation!



This soup served at the Advent Craft Sale and Luncheon is a much-requested recipe, enjoy!

Sausage Kale Soup

- 1 pound Italian sausage, mild or hot, as you prefer
- ¾ cup chopped onion
- 2 bacon strips, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups water
- 1 quart chicken broth
- 3 cups potatoes, raw, diced
- 1 -8 ounce can mushrooms with liquid
- 2 cups thinly sliced kale
- ½ cup heavy whipping cream

Brown Italian sausage, drain and set aside. In soup kettle, sauté bacon until almost crisp, add onion and cook until onion is tender. Add garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Add water, broth, mushrooms and potatoes; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 20 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Add kale, cream and sausage to soup, heat through but do not boil. Makes about 8 servings.

News of the Family



Violet Maxine Monnier, daughter of Dereck and Jane Monnier was baptized on December 27.

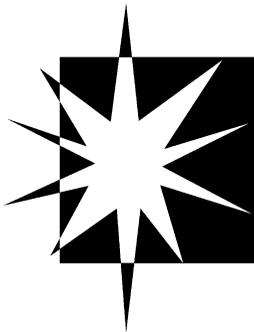
Welcome to the family of God!



Anne Gustafson Wildenberg died on November 29. Her memorial service was held at First Lutheran on December 22. May God grant peace and comfort to her family and friends.

Annual Report Deadline

Deadline for reports to appear in the Annual report is January 10, 2016.



Now we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone; a new life burgeons!

2 Corinthians 5:17 from The Message

Items for the **February NEWSLETTER** are due on **January 20, 2016!**