

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Ministers: All God's People at FLC

Jake Dyrhaug, Pastor



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January, 2017 Newsletter

December 28, 2016

First Lutheran Church Annual Meeting Sunday, January 29, 2017

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 2017 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:

Five individuals each to a 3-year term: Dale Gohl, Jerry Neumann, Bob O'Neill, Kerry Olson, Jennifer Schott

Lay voting members to

Heartland Conference Gathering, date to be determined *and* NE Minnesota Synod Assembly, Friday-Sunday, April 28-30, 2017 at Cragun's Resort

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

Lay voting members to

Luther Crest Bible Camp Annual Meeting in October 2017:

Three voting members to be elected

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 Jake:

A New Year!

I heard once that in a town in Italy they have a New Year's Eve custom. As midnight approaches, the streets are clear. There is no traffic. There are no pedestrians. Even the policemen take cover, and then, at the stroke of 12:00, the windows of the houses fly open. To the sound of laughter and a lot of music and fireworks, each member of the family pitches something out—old dishes, detested ornaments, hated furniture and a whole bunch of personal possessions which remind them of something in the past year they are determined to wipe out of their minds. The forgiveness of our sins is kind of like that. We all know of things about ourselves that we would just as soon have wiped out. That is what God does when we repent and ask forgiveness in the name of Jesus, his Son. From there we can move on to a truly new year.

When the prophet Isaiah received the words from God that the Israelites would experience a second exodus, this time out of the hand of the oppressive Babylonians in the 6th Century B.C., it was a great message of hope. And it came true! Under Cyrus the Great, the king of Persia, they were free and allowed to return to the land of Israel and to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, which the Babylonians had torn down. Their first exodus had been out of the hand of Pharaoh in Egypt, and now, hundreds of years later, they were to be freed again! Imagine being taken by force from your homeland and decades later, able to go home. It was amazing to them. Many must have thought it never would happen. But what a celebration when it finally happened!

In Christ, we are delivered out of slavery to our sins and brought into the freedom of the promised land of new life in our baptism. God is still doing a

“See, I am doing a new thing!” Isaiah 43:19

new thing among us, as I remember the words saying from a song at Bible camp, “I believe that Christ is changing everything, everything, everything, everything, everything!” Out with the old, in with the new. In Christ, we are new creations. And we are sent out into a world in need of that hope we have and proclaim. What will you “throw out” from the past year of your life, so that God can bring in the new life of the gospel in 2017? Happy New Year to all of you, and be blessed as God does a “new thing” in you!

In Christ,

Pastor Jake Dyrhaug



WORSHIP LIFE



Worship Serving Opportunities Signup for 2017

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.*

Greeters

Ministry begins at the front door as we enter and exit the house of God. Greeters help us to be a congregation that is a good host. The goal of greeting is to help God's people experience First Lutheran as a place of welcome and compassion. We want to grow disciples and provide a church home for those in search of one. Thank you to all who serve in this important way.



Council Highlights

- Planning for the congregational Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 29.
- Planning for a council leadership retreat on Saturday, February 11, 2017.
- “New Consecration Sunday” stewardship program will take place in the spring with Consecration Sunday on May 7.
- A special service to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation will be held at the NE Minnesota Synod assembly on Saturday, April 29 at Cragun's Resort. Special guests are Bishop Paul Sirba of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Duluth and the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls.



Thrivent Choice®: Thank you to all who have designated their Thrivent Choice dollars to First Lutheran Church and to “Children First” Christian Preschool. This year we have seen an increase in the number of Thrivent members who are eligible to donate these funds, and an increase in the amount. Thank you for putting your Thrivent Choice dollars to work in mission and ministry at First Lutheran!

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 on January 4 and 18. All are welcome – come when you are able, leave when you must. For more info., contact Pastor Jake.

Women's Winter Bible Study

A new women's study will begin in January using an audio dramatic reading of the Bible. Naomi Engel will lead this study. Watch for more info.

Book Club

All adult readers are welcome to read with this group. The next selection is Once We Were Brothers by Ronald Balson. 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 31, to share and discuss the book. The February selection is 1984 by George Orwell. For more info contact Tifanii Dahl, 632-8207.

Women's Martha Circle:

The Martha Circle meets Monday, January 9, at 9:30 a.m. at the church. Karen Fellbaum is the hostess.



A Grace-full Life Lutheran Spirituality for the 21st Century *A two-night class on living as a Lutheran* January 24 and January 31 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

If you Google the question “How many Christian denominations are there?” you will discover that there are somewhere between 30 and 40 thousand!—which means there are lots of different ways of being Christian. Here at FLC we are *Lutheran Christians*—which means that we have a particular understanding of what it means to be Christian.

If you are interested in learning more about that particular Lutheran understanding of what it means to be Christian, *plan on attending Pastor Hank's class on the last two Tuesdays in January*. He will focus on questions like:

- What exactly is a “Lutheran spirituality,” and what does it have to do with you?
- How do Lutherans read the Bible, and what does it have to do with you?
- What is grace, and what does it have to do with you?
- What did Jesus accomplish, and what does it have to do with you?
- What is the “priesthood of all believers,” and what does it have to do with you?
- What do Lutherans think about the church and the sacraments, and what does it have to do with you?
- And other things that Lutherans think, believe and do, and what it all has to do with you?

2017 is the 500th anniversary of the Reformation—what better time than now to go deeper into our Lutheran identity.

There is a sign-up sheet in the Gathering Space. If you plan on attending, please sign up so Pastor Hank knows how many handouts to prepare.

I grew up a stone's throw away from Epiphany Catholic Church in Coon Rapids, Minnesota. I thought epiphany was such a strange word so I asked one of my Epiphany church friends what it meant. She shrugged—"I don't know. Must be the name of a saint." A couple of years later my older brother started using the phrase, "I have had an epiphany." Hmmm. So I looked up the word. The dictionary definition of the word 'epiphany' is a "sudden, intuitive perception of or insight into the reality or essential meaning of something".

The Feast of Epiphany is traditionally celebrated on January 6. This is the Twelfth Day of Christmas and commemorates the visit of the Magi to the Christ Child, having been led by the Star of Bethlehem. But why is this feast called "Epiphany"? What is the real meaning of God leading the wise men to the Baby Jesus? The magi were Gentiles (like us). Aha! So Epiphany is God's first revelation of His saving grace to the Gentiles (us). The essential meaning of the birth of the Baby Jesus is that God's gift of grace and mercy is for everyone!

First Lutheran will celebrate the Feast of Epiphany on Friday, January 6. The "Burning of the Greens" evening starts at 5:30 p.m. We will share supper, worship and gather around a bonfire of our church's Christmas tree, as we celebrate Jesus Christ, the Light of the Nations. You may wish to bring your Christmas tree or a bough or branch to add to the fire. This evening is for the whole family, bring a friend as well. Dress for the weather as part of this evening we will be outdoors letting our light shine!

If you would like to help with the service, or can assist with a chili supper, please contact the church office.



Thank you!

Thank you to all who had any part in enriching the season of Advent and Christmas here at First Lutheran, and around the community and globe. Whether you provided gifts of service, music, arts, fellowship, served behind the scenes, and/or were present in worship—all is appreciated.

Christmas blessings to All!



Grace Notes Choir

All singers high school age and up are welcome to sing with this group. We rehearse on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary and sing two or three times per month at the 8:30 a.m. service. On Wednesday, January 18, we will gather at 6:00 p.m. for a supper before rehearsal. Come and use your voice to praise God! For more information, contact director, Barb Stumpf at 632-8372.

Music Opportunities

If you or someone you know would like to share musical gifts please contact Director of Music, Becky Nelson. Opportunities for worship leadership assistant/cantor, instrumental or vocal gifts of music, participation in praise band, and other opportunities are available. You can reach Becky at the church on Wednesday afternoons or at 749-2336.

✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱ **Mission Life** ✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱

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 those who coordinated 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 30-February 3, 2017. If you can help with this caring opportunity, please contact the church office.
- ♥ The Youth Ministry Team 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
- ♥ Thank you to all who assisted in any way with the weekly Share A Meal on Thursday, December 22. We served a traditional turkey dinner to about 100 guests. It was a fun and festive evening with music and even Santa! We had helpers ages 7 to 87—thank you!

*Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God,
serve one another
with whatever gift each of you has received.
1 Peter 4:10*

**Souper Bowl of Caring
Sunday, February 5**

Join with others around the nation in a simple act of caring. On Sunday, February 5, youth will hold large soup pots in the Gathering Space and ask worshippers for one-dollar (or greater!) donations to be used for local hunger needs. In 2016, 6,855 groups of young people including those at First Lutheran, received over \$10.5 million in donations which was donated 100% to local charities! Thanks for your support!

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

Parish Nurse News

Tracy Moe, RN

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

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

Prayer Chain

For many years First Lutheran prayer chain participants have intentionally prayed for concerns and/or joys of those who request prayer. In the past, prayer concerns were shared via telephone, now most all participants receive requests via email. It is a powerful thing to know that one's requests are being prayed over by others. If you would like to serve and support others through prayer in this way, please contact the church office to be added to this group.

Sunday School News

Welcome back! Sunday School resumes on Sunday, January 8, 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 – “Gift of Jesus.” The dates for this section are January 8 and 15. Children will learn about God’s great gift to us in Jesus through Storytelling/Games, Cooking and Crafts. All of God’s children of any age are welcome to participate. “Jesus is Baptized” begins on January 22. If you would like to share as a leader, please contact 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.



"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.

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 3 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 2016, 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 4 through January 25, 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/Eighth Grade: This combined class resumes on Wednesday, January 4 at 7:00 p.m. We will study the New Testament. Letters with the class schedule have been sent to families; if you did not receive a letter of for more information, please contact the church office. Pastor Jake Dyrhaug teaches this class. Bring your Bible, Luther's Small Catechism and your great attitude!

Ninth/Tenth Grade: This combined class begins on Wednesday, January 4 at 7:00 p.m. This class will study New Testament and Lutheran Identity with Ruth Jeremiason-Jensen teaching. Letters with the class schedule have been sent to families; if you did not receive a letter of for more information, please contact the church office. Bring your Bible, Luther's Small Catechism and your great attitude! Study Bibles are available for purchase if students do not have their own.

Confirmation Mentor Program:

With changes underway to the confirmation schedule, students currently in eighth, ninth and tenth grade will soon be selecting a mentor to share in their life of faith. Adult members are asked to give prayerful consideration to serving as a mentor for a student. Students in these three grades will be confirmed on Reformation Sunday, October 29, 2017 at a special service at 2:00 p.m. If you could serve in this important way, please contact the church office.

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!



Gospel Gang (Grades 3-5)
Three Bears Waterpark
Sunday, January 15
1:00-5:00 p.m.



Get your swimsuit and towel! Kids in grades 3-5 and families are going to Three Bears Waterpark in Baxter for water park fun! We will meet at church at 1:00 p.m. travel to Baxter and be back at 5:00 p.m. Your cost of \$10.00 includes swimming, pizza, beverage, and transportation. Sign up on the youth table at church or call the church office. Parents are encouraged to drive and indicate how many youth you can transport in a seat belt. Thank you! Contact Daniel Ditmanson for more info.

Sunday Worship Schedule



- 8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship using a variety of liturgical settings
- 9:30 a.m. Coffee Fellowship Time
- 9:35 a.m. Sunday School Hour
- 10:30 a.m. Contemporary worship led by a Praise Band

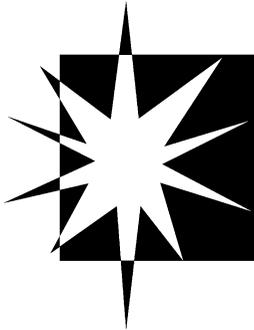
Holy Communion is received at all services.

Come and worship!



Annual Report Deadline

Deadline for reports to appear in the Annual report is January 9, 2017.



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, 2017!**