



November 2012

November 14, 2012



**First...Moving Forward:
Worship Space Enhancement**
Still "First...Servants of All"
Congregational Meeting
Sunday, November 18
12:00 noon

The Church Council has set Sunday, November 18 as the date for a special congregational meeting to vote on proceeding with the Worship Space Enhancement project.

The agenda for the special meeting contains the following motion:

We, the Members (stewards) of First Lutheran Church approve proceeding with the Worship Space Enhancement project as proposed on September 23 by Zerr Berg Architects; and to secure financing with ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) Mission Investment Fund for the project, including the consolidation of existing mortgage debt for a total amount not to exceed \$750,000; and to engage the service of ELCA Stewardship Key Leaders to conduct a capital campaign.

The recommended plans for the Worship Space Enhancement were unveiled at a congregational meeting on September 23. Renderings, samples, and details of the plan are available for all to view and consider in the gathering space.

You are welcome to speak with any of the team members about the plans prior to the meeting. Please plan to be in attendance at this important meeting as we strive to provide a place of welcome, worship, and service for the years to come. Please continue to keep the Worship Space Enhancement team and the congregation in your prayers so that we continue to move forward as *First... Servants of all*.

Worship Space Enhancement team members are:

Stephanie Adams, Dave Buker, LaVerne Hempeck, Bob and Sonya Just, Darrell Larsen, Bruce Moller, Paula Monahan, Becky Nelson, Mary Pfohl, Nancy Ratzloff, Tammy Zwilling and Pastor David Sperstad

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Pastor Dave's Article

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love never ends.

1 Corinthians 13

In a few days we will come to the end of a political cycle. Over the last weeks I have not heard anyone say they truly enjoy this! Yes, some have said they enjoy politics, but not the politics of an election.

1st Corinthians 13... *Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love never ends*

The above text is often read at weddings and known as the "Love chapter." In this text we hear what love is and what love is not.

We know those words, but do we live those words?

Sure, at times I can be patient, at times I can be kind. But there are also times (more often than I'd care to realize and certainly admit) when I am far from kind or patient. So, I am Love sometimes and I am what Love is NOT sometimes.

Now that the political season is over let's move into the next season with what I see and believe are the three most important words of the love chapter... LOVE NEVER ENDS!

We are called to always love. Not just sometimes. Not just the neighbors we like. Not just those who can do something for us. We are called to Love even those of the other political party and even to love our true enemies. Yes we are to always, always, always Love.

Jesus words in three of the gospels—Mathew, Mark and Luke—tell us to Love. To love our neighbors is the second greatest command.

My hope and prayer is that we all live in the Word of God that is Love for *LOVE NEVER ENDS!*

See you in church,

Pastor Dave Sperstad

Council Highlights

- Received a letter from Pastor Tony Oltmann with his decision to not renew his contract with First Lutheran Church for 2013.
- Approved hiring Anna Walker, "Children First" preschool teacher's aide, effective September 17, 2012.
- Heard that the nominating committee consisting of Gloria Kofoed, Doug Luepke, Gail Olson and Debra Yliniemi-Ahlin will be searching for persons to serve on the council leadership team for the coming year. Members are asked to give prayerful consideration to this opportunity to serve.
- Discussed the increase in worshippers.

"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving." Colossians 2:6-7

As your staff ministry team, it is our complete joy and privilege to serve alongside each of you here at First Lutheran. We thank you for the many ways that you minister to each of us and the care and love that you show us. Know that you and your love for the Lord are blessings in our lives. Happy Thanksgiving!

In His abiding peace and love,
Your Staff Ministry Team

Thanksgiving Eve Worship
Wednesday, November 21
7:00 p.m.

Come to give thanks to the God who creates us and all that exists and gives us all that we have. We gather to worship with Holy Communion at 7:00 p.m. Following the service we share a delicious pie fellowship. The Pastor Parish Team will host the dessert time. If you would like to donate a pie, please contact the church office. Give thanks!

**JESUS SAID,
GO AND DO
LIKEWISE** LUKE
10:37

Thanksgiving is a time for considering the ways that we can “go and do likewise” by serving those in need both near and far. Each year we meet for worship on Thanksgiving Eve and give God thanks for the many blessings he bestows. The offering we receive at this service is designated for those less fortunate. ELCA Disaster Response is active with on-the-ground relief in areas throughout the world. Current needs are in the Caribbean through the Atlantic coast of the United States as communities struggle with the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. Gifts designated for “Hurricane Sandy” are used entirely – 100 percent – in response to this disaster. Your offering during the month to support ELCA World Hunger and other hunger needs is encouraged. Special envelopes are available on the greeters’ table, or you may note “Hunger” or “Disaster” on the memo line of your check. Thank you for your generous giving to those in need around the world. Give thanks with a grateful heart!

Jesus said, “Go and do likewise!”

**First Lutheran Church
Congregation Council**

Stephanie Adams Vice-President
632-3058
Craig Ahlin, President 632-3951
Matt Dahl, Treasurer 632-8207
Larry Engel, 632-3167
Jim Gehant, 632-8619
Mark Hanson, Secretary 632-6505
Les Hittesdorf 632-2218
Bill Leisenheimer
Lora McChesney, 632-6071
Paula Monahan, 632-3011
Gail Olson 584-5258
Liz Rydeen 632-5597
Pastor Tony Oltmann 218-825-9053
Pastor David Sperstad 632-5930

New Steward/Members

The following people were welcomed into stewardship at First Lutheran on All Saints Sunday, November 4:

Heidi Allord and Noelle
Steve and Kristin Jones, Noah and Hannah
Mark and Therese Meyer and Brady
Carol Stumpf-Witucki and Emily Witucki
Chris and RaVonne Whitford, Morgan and Madisyn

Check out the bulletin board for photos and information about the new members and give them a warm welcome!

**The Rose Ensemble
Saturday, November 10, 7:00 p.m.
At Sacred Heart Chapel**

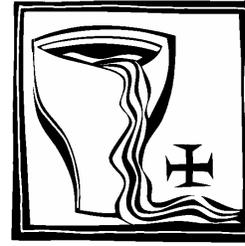
This vocal ensemble based in St. Paul will make a stop in Little Falls on its fall tour of Greater Minnesota. The group tours internationally with a repertoire spanning 1,000 years and 25 languages. You will hear a wealth of vocal and instrumental music that will transport you throughout the world. Tickets for the performance are available at the door for \$12, \$9 for seniors/students/educators. Bring a friend, buy two or more regularly priced tickets and receive one additional ticket free. For more information or to order tickets, call 651-225-4340, or visit www.RoseEnsemble.org.

**Advent in Song
Sunday, December 9, 7:00 p.m.**

Mark your calendars and plan to attend this evening of song at First Lutheran featuring a variety of vocal music groups. The St. Francis Community Chorale under the direction of Barb Stumpf will be present as well as several groups of singers of all ages. Dessert social will follow the concert. There is no charge for this event. For more information, contact Becky Nelson, at 749-2336.

**Chaplaincy Pizza Party
Sunday, November 25
11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.**

All are welcome to attend this fundraiser for the Morrison County Chaplaincy Program at the Little Falls VFW. Bring the whole family and a donation of any amount for a pizza lunch. Your donation of a new or gently used coat for the coat drive is appreciated. Matching funds of \$2,000 are pledged. Visit with Chaplain Gregg Valentine and learn how you can support the program. For more information, call Chaplain Gregg at 320-630-7876



Home-Brewed Faith

Sundays, November 4 and December 2

We continue the series of Home Brewed Faith (HBF). First's Commissions for Education and Youth coordinate this opportunity for people of all ages to continue to develop and enhance their faith and learn how to share their faith with others. Come and share a noon lunch and afternoon session. This event is for everyone—all ages and walks of life!



Angel Tree Gift Giving

You are invited to share your gifts with families and children in our community who are living at or below the federally recognized poverty level. Beginning Sunday, November 25, take a tag from the Angel Tree located in the Gathering Space. Return your unwrapped gifts with their tag to the church by Sunday, December 16. Thank you for your continued participation in the Angel Tree project! Your generosity helps many around us to celebrate this holiday season with thanks and praise. For more information, contact coordinator, Annalee VanDenheuvel at 320-232-9366.



Thanks!

A great big **thank you** to all those who donated items or attended the Lutheran Social Service Rummage Sale held at Bethel Lutheran Church. Proceeds were \$2,443 including \$500 matching grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans will go to the area LSS group homes. Thanks also to those who volunteered their time to help with set up, working the sale days, and take down. Many hands make light work! May God bless you all.
Karen Haaland

Thank you to all who helped to make the fall sale at the care center a great success. Whether you donated baked goods, craft items, quilts, silent auction baskets, or came to work or shop at the sale, it is all appreciated. Proceeds support the needs of the residents.

Donna Hegstrom, Jean Petersen, First Lutheran Church Representatives,
Lutheran Care Center Volunteer Board



Book Club Tuesday, November 27 at 7:00 p.m.

All adult readers are welcome to read with this group. The group has made selections for the next four months to give readers a chance to obtain and read the books. Selections and meeting dates are:

November 27: The Shoe Box: A Christmas Story, by Francine Rivers.

December 18: Christmas Jars by Jason Wright

January date to be determined: The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society by Mary Ann Shaffer.

February date to be determined:
The God Hater: A Novel, by Bill Myer.

For more information, contact Tifanii Dahl, 632-8207.

Music Ministry Opportunities

“Sing to God a brand new song, praise Him in the company of all who love Him!” *Psalms 149:1*

Everyone is welcome to assist in leading worship through music here at First Lutheran. Opportunities include:

- ♪ Senior Choir – rehearses at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesdays
- ♪ Praise Team – rehearses at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays
- ♪ Men’s and Women’s Ensembles
- ♪ Gifts of music, vocal and instrumental
- ♪ Serving as Cantor for worship services

For more information, please contact Becky Nelson at 749-2336 or rpnelson@brainerd.net.

Annual Lutefisk Dinner Bethel Lutheran Church Tuesday, December 4 4:30-8:00 p.m.

Sister congregation Bethel Lutheran has served this annual holiday meal for many years. First Lutheran is offering helping hands for the meal again this year. We will provide support as they host the dinner. Consider how you may assist with this event, here are some possibilities:

- ☞ Setup in early afternoon, or take down following the meal, both on December 4
- ☞ Assist in the kitchen on December 4
- ☞ Serve tables in two shifts, 4:00-6:30 p.m. or 6:30-8:00 p.m.
- ☞ Bake pies – apple or pumpkin
- ☞ Bake white or rye bread
- ☞ Bake holiday cookies
- ☞ Tickets are available soon!
- ☞ Watch for signup information coming soon or call the church office. Contact person for First is Wayne Liljegren. You’ll enjoy the evening even if you don’t eat lutefisk. ☺

Adult Opportunities

**Women's Circle:
"Gathered by God" Nothing Lost**

John 6:11-12

Martha Circle

The Martha Circle meets Monday, November 19 at 10:00 a.m. at the church. Hostess is Mary Larson.

Daily Text 2013

Once again this year we offer the opportunity to place a group order for the 2013 Daily Text books. This is a great way to easily "get into" God's Word on a daily basis. There are selected Bible verses and prayers for each day of the year. The paperback version is \$5.00; First Lutheran will contribute \$1.00 to the cost of each book and cover the shipping cost. These books make wonderful gifts. We will place our group order before December 1. Watch the weekly bulletin for ordering or call the church office at 632-6667.

Library Corner

Do we have an opportunity for you! The library would like your advice on current literature. If you enjoy digging in to books that will strengthen parenting skills and/or young readers' minds, we would like to hear from you. We would appreciate your input on parenting books or series for young readers.

Thank you to all who have contributed books to the Library. Many new titles are displayed on the table at the Library door. Thank you to all who find good reads on the library shelves!

Gloria Kofoed, Linda Weiss,
Nadine Westerberg

**Men's Bible Study Breakfasts
Wednesdays, November 7 and 21**

All men of the congregation and friends are invited to a Men's Bible Breakfast study. The study meets for breakfast on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 6:15 a.m. at the church. You are welcome to attend any time – come when you are able, leave when you must. For more information, contact Pastor Dave.

**Adult Study Discussion Group
on the Gospel of Luke**

**Mondays, November 12 and 19
6:30-7:30 pm.**

For two Mondays, November 12 and 19, we will read and study the Gospel of Luke which will be the basis for the lectionary readings for 2013. The next church year begins on the first Sunday of Advent, December 2. Pastor Dave leads this study. See you there! You may contact Pastor Dave for more information.

**Cornerstones
(Seniors age 55 and better)
Potluck Lunch**

Wednesday, November 21, 11:30 a.m.

We gather for potluck lunch on Wednesday, November 21 at 11:30 a.m. at church. Please bring a dish of your choosing to share—there's always plenty to go around! Bring a friend and come for food, and fellowship!

Visual Arts Team

If you or someone you know enjoys and has a flair for the creative arts consider offering those gifts to assist in adorning the worship space for Advent and Christmas. Please contact the church office. Thank you!

Keeping Advent

Advent begins on December 2. Our culture will have surrounded us with the sounds and signs of Christmas long before that, but it is important for the Church to observe Advent in its richness.

Advent is a time of waiting, preparing, and hoping. Advent means “coming.” During Advent we wait, we hope, we prepare ourselves in anticipation of the coming Messiah:

- ⌚ We anticipate Jesus’ coming in Bethlehem.
- ⌚ We anticipate Christ’s coming daily into our lives.
- ⌚ We anticipate the coming of Christ at the end of the ages.

Advent, like Lent, provides an opportunity for examining our life of faith. How well do we prepare ourselves and our homes and families for the coming Christ? Advent is a good time to begin a worship practice in the home since the spirit of celebration in the air affects us all – older people, singles, middle-aged couples, busy young families, exuberant teens, and excited young children. And so, we invite you to keep Advent with:



**Women’s Event:
Advent by Candlelight
Sunday, November 25, 6:30 p.m.**

All women are invited to set aside the hustle of holiday preparation and focus on the birth of Christ. Beautiful decorations and fellowship provide a delightful atmosphere for you to enjoy music and devotions by candlelight. This event is offered for those high school age and up. First Lutheran table hostesses will set their table and provide dessert for eight guests. Consider inviting someone new to the congregation, someone new to the faith, someone who has experienced a loss or has had a significant life change. Perhaps you’ll invite a co-worker, neighbor, relative, mentee, girlfriend, or ‘soccer’ mom; you get the idea: There is no charge. If you would like to host or co-host a table, you are asked to set a holiday table with your own festive tablecloth, table settings and candles, and provide a dessert for the eight guests at your table. Hostesses or guest attendees may sign up on today’s ministry opportunity sheet or contact Camilla Larson at 612-804-1013, or Debra Yliniemi-Ahlin at 632-3951.

**Advent Wednesday Worship
December 5, 12, and 19 at 7:00 p.m.**

In preparation for the coming of the Christ child we gather to worship each Wednesday during Advent using the service of Holden Evening Prayer. Let the quiet beauty of song prepare your heart for the real meaning of the season. Refreshments will be served following the service.

Christmas Wreath Fundraiser

Place your order for a fresh, fragrant balsam wreath for the holidays. The 22” wreaths are decorated with pinecones and ribbon and are \$20.00 each. See the sample wreath in the gathering space and place your order on the order sheet. Wreaths will be delivered to church for pickup by December 1—the day of the Advent Craft Sale. Proceeds support youth ministry programming at First. Thanks for your support!

**Advent Craft Sale
Saturday, December 1
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

In just one short month the Advent Craft Sale and Luncheon will be here. We trust you are making plans to attend! We are looking for donations of craft and bake sale items. There will be a delicious soup luncheon, musical entertainment and lots of treats and gift items to buy! This year’s sale will benefit youth ministry programming at First. Your support of this great annual FUNdraiser is appreciated.

"Children First" Christian Preschool Update

Greetings from Children First Christian Preschool!
What a fun month October was! Apples, sharing, caring, manners, autumn leaves, and signs of fall were our themes this month. The children took their first field trips. We visit each month at the following places: Bridgeway Estates, St. Otto's Care Center, Pine Grove Manor, and Lutheran Care Center. Thanks to Andy's Charter for transportation to the residences. Chaperones are welcome to ride along and enjoy the fun. Please contact a preschool staff member or the church office for field trip information.

The preschool 2012 Giving Campaign continues. To date we have received over \$1,500 in gifts in support of the preschool. Thank you to the families who have participated, letters can still be sent. Thank you to the anonymous donor for extending the playground caterpillar and to Ty Gangelhoff for his handyman assistance with several preschool projects. Thanks to all who support the preschool in any way. We are truly blessed!

Parent/Teacher conferences are November 27 and 28. Children will bring more information home in their backpacks.

We will participate in the Christmas Tree auction at the Fishing Museum. Preschool families are

asked to bring light-weight, non-perishable food items to decorate our tree. It is our hope that the purchaser of the tree will donate the decorated tree and food items to someone in need. Please bring food items to preschool by Wednesday, November 14. Proceeds from the auction support the Fishing Museum and the preschool.

"Children First" has a float in the Little Falls "Santa Parade" on Friday, November 23, at 6 p.m.

All are welcome to attend the Preschool Christmas Program on Saturday, December 15 at 3:00 p.m. Treats will follow the program.

Registration continues throughout the year pending class openings. Encourage families to check us out. "Children First" Christian Preschool provides a healthy, nurturing environment where children grow in faith, develop social and emotional skills and Kindergarten readiness skills. For more information, contact Gail Hittesdorf at 632-2218, 320-291-4698 or the church office.

Yours in Christ's Service,
Gail Hittesdorf, Director

"Give thanks to the Lord for He is Good! His faithful love endures forever." *Psalm 136:1*

Confirmation Ministries

Third Grade: Thanks to the Third Grade students and parents for completing their Family Devotions on the Gospel of Mark.

Fourth Grade: Looking ahead – four-week class on Holy Baptism begins Wednesday, January 9, 2013.

Sixth Grade: "In God's Image" class for youth and parents begins on Wednesday, November 7. This class is for youth and parents.

Seventh Grade: Mark your calendars for class on the Ten Commandments beginning Wednesday, January 9, 2013.

Eighth Grade: Looking ahead – class on the Old Testament begins Wednesday, January 9, 2013.

Mentor Program: Tenth grade students are in the process of selecting mentors. Mentors are adult members of the congregation who promise to serve as a guide, example, and friend to a confirmand during their last years of high school. If you are interested in serving as a mentor, please contact the church office.



**Sunday School Christmas Program
"God With Us"
Sunday, December 16, 3:00 p.m.**



Lefse-Making

Bring your rolling pin and come to help prepare this favorite treat on Saturday, November 24 at 8:30 a.m. Lefse will be sold at the Advent Craft Sale and Luncheon on Saturday, December 1. This project is open to all ages!



All children are invited to participate in this year's Christmas program. We will celebrate the simplicity of Christmas with familiar Christmas songs. Many helping hands are important in order to make the program shine. Families should watch for information about rehearsal times. With the spirit of Christmas in your heart, consider how you can share your gifts to assist with the program. For more information, contact Amber Sobiech, 616-9626, Beth Cooper, 632-0064, or the church office, 632-6667.



**Sunday Morning Education Ministry
each Sunday at 10:30 a.m.**

Sunday Morning Education Ministry continues each week at 10:30 a.m. All ages gather in classrooms. Children in Kindergarten through Fifth Grade follow their classroom opening with a rotational format experiencing Bible stories and themes through Storytelling/Video, Cooking, Games/Science/Music, and Arts/Crafts. Youth in grades 6-12 meet in the Youth Room.

Thank you to all who teach/lead in the classroom and all who led the first rotation "Out of Egypt." Sharing your faith journey is important to children in the congregation. They are: Wendy Himley, Jasmyne Habas, Cindi Habas, Jay Kiel, Beth and Simon Storkamp, Beth Cooper, Chantelle Anderson, Michelle Dahlberg, Sue Sperstad, Jessica Gustafson, Carol Stumpf-Witucki, Tanna

Stucky, Amber Sobiech, Tracy Moe, Annalee VanDenheuvel, Tonie Dickmann and Ray Stumpf.

The November rotation is "Lost and Found," followed by "Journey to Bethlehem" in December. Signup for each new rotation is posted on the board in the gathering space. Don't miss out on a chance to learn and have fun with kids of all ages!

The preschool classroom is in need of more helpers due to the class size. Please check in with Jessica Gustafson on Sundays to see how you can assist. For more information, contact Gail Hittesdorf, 632-6667.

News of the Family

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Ken Brastad died on October 7. His funeral service was held at First Lutheran on October 10.

Alvina LeBlanc died on October 7. Her funeral service was held at the Lutheran Care Center on October 11.

Angela "Angie" Beaumont died on October 27. Her funeral service was held at First Lutheran on November 1.

May God grant peace and comfort to the family and friends of these faithful saints.

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Items for the **December NEWSLETTER** are due on **November 20, 2012!**

Daylight Savings Time ends. Remember to set your clocks *back* one hour on Saturday, November 3!

Can Care Collection

Keep saving those aluminum cans!
Save a can – Save the earth –
Save our youth budget!
Keep those cans coming!