



November 2013

November 13, 2013

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. 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!

A few ways you can make a difference:

- + Volunteer to assist with Share A Meal on Thursday, November 21.
- + Support Food for Kidz/Kids Against Hunger by making a donation or helping at a food packaging event.
- + Serve as a First Lutheran Church liaison to Share A Meal.
- + Volunteer to assist with the Community Thanksgiving Meal.
- + Volunteer or provide donations at the Morrison County Food Shelf.
- + Advocate for hunger issues around the world by joining the ONE campaign, a non-partisan effort to end global hunger, go to www.one.org for more information.
- + Deliver Meals on Wheels to homebound persons in the community, call the church office to volunteer during the week of November 25-29.
- + Provide financial support to ELCA World Hunger Appeal.

Jesus said, “Go and do likewise!”

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Pastor Dave's Article

Thanksgiving? Only one day of the year? The day before Black Friday? A day just to eat too much? Or is it a state of being?

For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, provided it is received with thanksgiving; 1 Timothy 4:4

As Christians we're called to live in a continual state of thanksgiving because we have so much to be thankful for. *Praise God from whom all blessings flow...*

We have been given the promise of eternal life and salvation through Jesus Christ, a promise that is "most certainly true." What is this worth to us? What is it worth to you? Everything! We don't have to fear what will happen to us, because "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38-39

As those who live in America nearly all of us have our roots in another country and our ancestors believed that America was the place that they wanted to be. Throughout our short history as a nation we have had a spirit that is reflected in the poem that is engraved at the base of the Statue of Liberty,

"Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free..."

As participants in or through First Lutheran Church we have a church family, the living, breathing body of Jesus Christ in this world. There

are people to talk to, to hug, to listen to, to help us, and to be helped. There are people to love and to be loved by. Isn't this the real meaning of our existence? We were made to be in community with each other. Unfortunately, technology has at the same time connected us better through the internet and cell phones and yet I believe isolated us from human contact. With iPods and texting many people live in a world that revolves around themselves. We know better. We know that our lives are a great and wonderful gift from God. We know that the world doesn't revolve around us, (BUT WE SURE WANT IT TO!) We know that we are called to look outside ourselves to see others and to serve others.

Thanksgiving? A state of mind or a state of being? A purpose in life? A joy unbounded? And, when everything else is considered, thanksgiving is the only thing that we can actually give back to God that God hasn't first given to us.

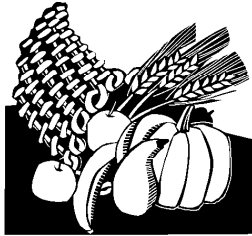
Thanksgiving through prayer, serving and our reaching out to the sick and suffering. Giving of your time, talents, and treasures so that the living body of Jesus Christ through First Lutheran Church might continue to be First... Servants of All.

See you in church!

Pastor Dave Sperstad

Council Highlights

- Heard that a Sunday School Ministry handbook is being developed.
- Heard that new steward/members will be received on All Saints Sunday, November 3.
- Approved a continuing resolution for the Ray Stumpf "His Hand and Feet" Scholarship.
- Heard that the nominating committee consisting of Mark Hanson, Darrell Larsen, Doug Luepke, Paula Monahan, Jim Weiss, 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.



Thanksgiving Eve Worship
Wednesday, November 27
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!

“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

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

**First Lutheran Church
 Congregation Council**

- Stephanie Adams Vice-President 632-3058
- Craig Ahlin, President 632-3951
- Jim Gehant, 632-8619
- John Haas, 320-232-9721
- Mark Hanson, Secretary 632-6505
- Les Hittesdorf 632-2218
- Lora McChesney, 632-6071
- Paula Monahan, 632-3011
- Gail Olson 584-5258
- Deb Scott, 632-8455
- Scott Sobiech, Treasurer 632-8207
- Tanna Stucky, 320-493-1213
- Pastor David Sperstad 632-5930

New Steward/Members

The following people were welcomed into stewardship at First Lutheran on All Saints Sunday, November 3:

- Kris Davick-Halfen
- Wayne and Linda Heath
- Brandon and Trisha Laubach, Lily and Brandon
- Bob and Donella O'Neill
- Earl and Diane Pilloud
- Kent and Jammi Strunk, Nic, Spencer, Vincent, and Hannah

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

Chaplaincy Pizza Party
Sunday, November 24
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

Who Is My Neighbor? Opportunity

The Foster Grandparent Program is recruiting volunteers for Head Start Classrooms in Little Falls. Volunteers must be age 55 and over. If you or someone you know can share unconditional acceptance with children ages 3-5, consider this opportunity. Volunteers would assist in the classroom with a teacher present. Children enjoy the interaction with adults. Teachers in the classroom appreciate the assistance and the extra pair of hands to work with a group of children. Volunteers have an opportunity to give back in the community. Everyone benefits! The volunteer would do such things as read books, set puzzles, help with meal time, and generally be a good adult role-model for the children. Volunteers can receive an hourly tax-free stipend and mileage for volunteering for 15 hours per week (or more if they wish). For more information, call Jean at the Central MN Foster Grandparent Program toll-free at 1-866-895-7992.



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 24, 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 15. 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.



First...Servants of All

How about starting a new family tradition this holiday season? Perhaps you might gather family and friends to provide and serve a meal on a Thursday evening for others in the community at Share A Meal. The meal is served at 6:00 p.m. each Thursday here at First Lutheran, anyone is welcome to attend. Available dates are December 19 and 26. First Lutheran congregation will provide and serve the meal on Thursday, November 21. This is a great way to serve others right here at home and it is a good time for fellowship with others as well! For more information, contact the church office or you may call Oasis Central Minnesota director, Tim Poland at 632-9140. Thank you for using your servant hearts and hands to do God's work!

Thanks!

First Lutheran and Bethel Lutheran hosted another successful rummage sale! The proceeds of nearly \$2,300 and Thrivent matching funds of \$500 support Lutheran Social Service group homes in Little Falls area. Grateful thanks to all who donated items, worked or helped in any way. Start saving now for the next sale in May 2014!

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 26 at 7:00 p.m.

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

November 26: Orphan Train, by Christina Baker Kline.

December: Chateau of Echoes by Siri Mitchell.

January: Room by Emma Donoghue.

February: The Things They Carried by Tim O'Brien.

Happy Reading! 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 3 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 3
- ☞ Assist in the kitchen on December 3
- ☞ 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:

"In Good Company: Stories of Biblical Women: The Widow of Zarephath, a Trusting Follower
1 Kings 17:12

Martha Circle

The Martha Circle meets Monday, November 18 at 10:00 a.m. at the church.

Men's Bible Study Breakfasts Wednesdays, November 6 and 20

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.

Bread for the Day 2014

This year we offer the opportunity to place a group order for the 2014 Bread for the Day books. This is a great way to easily "get into" God's Word on a daily basis. The selected Bible readings, prayers, and a hymn for each day of the year which correspond with the lectionary texts. The book includes prayers for many occasions, a household blessings, and a service for families to use on the anniversary of baptisms. Your cost for the paperback version is \$6.00; First Lutheran will contribute \$1.20 to the cost of each book and cover the shipping cost. These books will make wonderful gifts. We will place our group order early in December. Watch the weekly bulletin for ordering or call the church office at 632-6667.

Taking Faith Home

Faith begins in the home. This fall we continue to offer a resource for your use during the week—look for the insert in each weekly bulletin, it contains daily Bible readings for the week, prayers, blessings, and ideas for your use at home. Our thanks to the donor who provided the gift of this insert material so that we may all grow in our faith. If you are unable to pick up a copy at church, contact the church office to receive a copy in the mail. Take Faith Home!

Adult Study Discussion Group Mondays, November 4, 11 and 18 6:30-7:30 pm.

For three Mondays, November 4, 11 and 18, we will read and study the texts which will be the basis for the message for the coming week. Pastor Dave leads this study. See you there! You may contact Pastor Dave for more information.

Thrivent Choice®

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has made available \$15 million dollars in Thrivent Choice® funds. If you or someone you know is eligible to direct Choice® dollars and have not done so, now is the time to direct your dollars. Between October 1 and November 30, Thrivent will **double** all Choice dollar directions made to congregations, including First Lutheran. Let's not miss out on putting these dollars into use in mission! Thank you to all who continue to remember First Lutheran and "Children First" preschool as they direct their charitable Choice dollars. For more information or for help directing your Choice® dollars, contact the church office.

Keeping Advent

Advent begins on December 1. 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 24, 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 by contacting the church office or Camilla Larson at 612-804-1013, or Debra Yliniemi-Ahlin at 632-3951.

**Advent Wednesday Worship
December 4, 11, and 18 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. Place your order on the order sheet in the gathering space or call the church office. Wreaths will be delivered to church for pickup by December 1. Proceeds support youth ministry programming at First. Thanks for your support!

**Advent Craft Sale
Saturday, December 7
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.

Thanks to all who support the preschool in any way. We are truly blessed!

"Children First" has a float in the Little Falls "Santa Parade" on Friday, November 29, at 6 p.m.

All are welcome to attend the Preschool Christmas Program on Saturday, December 14 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." *Psalms 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 8, 2014.

Sixth Grade: "In God's Image" class for youth and parents begins on Wednesday, November 6. This class is for youth and parents.

Seventh Grade: Mark your calendars for class on the Ten Commandments beginning Wednesday, January 8, 2014.

Eighth Grade: Looking ahead – class on the Old Testament begins Wednesday, January 8, 2014.

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.

Concordia College Admissions Representative Visit Wednesday, November 6

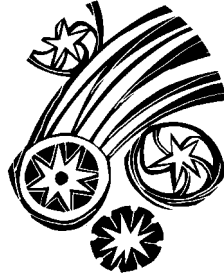
High School juniors and seniors have an opportunity to visit with an Admissions Representative from Concordia College in Moorhead. Concordia is a four-year Liberal Arts College of the ELCA. Erik Carlson will visit Little Falls Community High School from 2:00-2:45 p.m. and will also be at First Lutheran from 6:00-7:00 p.m. to visit with students and parents. For more information, contact the church office.



Sunday School Christmas Program

Lefse-Making

Bring your rolling pin and come to help prepare this favorite treat on Saturday, November 30 at 8:30 a.m. Lefse will be sold at the Advent Craft Sale and Luncheon on Saturday, December 7. This project is open to all ages!



Sunday, December 15



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 info, contact 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.

For more information, contact Gail Hittesdorf, 632-6667.

Thank you to all who teach/lead in the classroom and all who have volunteered to teach or lead a station. Sharing your faith journey is important to children in the congregation. The November rotation is "Creation," followed by "Gift of Jesus" 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!



News of the Family

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Baptism

Samuel Matthew Wappler, son of Matt and Ashleigh Wappler, was baptized on October 13.

Allie Marie Holm, daughter of Jamie and Jessica Holm, was baptized on October 20.

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Sandra K. Kliber died on October 27. Her funeral service was held at First Lutheran on November 1. May God grant peace and comfort to her family and friends.

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Items for the **December NEWSLETTER** are due on **November 20, 2013!**

Daylight Savings Time ends. Remember to set your clocks *back* one hour on Saturday, November 2!

Can Care Collection

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