



November 2015

November 5, 2015

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. A portion of 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:

- ✦ Serve as a First Lutheran Church liaison to Share A Meal or volunteer to assist with a Thursday evening meal.
- ✦ Volunteer to help serve the Community Thanksgiving Day Meal – contact Tim Sumner at 632-2540 – *see page 3*
- ✦ Volunteer your time or provide monetary donations at the Morrison County Food Shelf.
- ✦ Provide a respite meal for fellow servants in need at First Lutheran.
- ✦ 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 to homebound persons in the community, call the church office to volunteer.
- ✦ Provide financial support to ELCA World Hunger Appeal.

Jesus said, “Go and do likewise!”

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A Note from Pastor Hank

The weather has been so lovely lately that it is hard to imagine—as I write this—that November 1st is only four days away. Which means that the end of daylight savings time is only 4 days away as well. Move your clocks back an hour so you can be at church on time! It's All Saints Sunday and there will be a lot going on—we will be welcoming 26 new members (18 adults and 8 children); we will be baptizing our newest little saint, Wesley John Olson; and we will remember and honor our loved ones who have gone before us into the presence of God.

Special events coming up in November:

(1) On November 14th, we will have a guest speaker from *Food for the Poor*, the largest international relief and development organization in the United States providing direct aid serving the needs of the poor and disadvantaged in 17 countries throughout the Caribbean and Latin America.

Food for the Poor is a Christian organization whose work is motivated by the mandate to show God's unconditional love, regardless of race, wealth, or creed, as they minister to the poorest of the poor. Food for the Poor provides lifesaving food, secure housing, clean water, healthcare, emergency relief, micro-enterprise projects and education opportunities that the poor a chance at a better future, and shows them the depths of God's love through the compassion of God's people.

Our guest will be the Rev. Dr. Hans-Fredrick Gustafson, a retired ELCA pastor who is dedicating his senior years to representing Food for the Poor. He will preach at both services and in-between services will present a 30 minute program for adults about the work of Food for the Poor while the kids are in Sunday School.

There will be an opportunity to make a free-will offering in support of Food for the Poor's ministry among the disadvantaged. I did my research, and as you consider making a gift, you should know that, according to an independent study by an organization that rates non-profit charities (Charity Navigator), 95.8% of all contributions go to direct aid to the poor and only 4.2% to administrative and

fundraising expenses. All of which means that your gifts will make a real difference to people in great need.

In Matthew 25, Jesus declares, "As you do to the least of these my people, you do it to me." By inviting Food for the Poor to speak to us, the Church Council has given us an opportunity to serve Christ by serving "the least" of his people.

(2) On November 25th, we will prepare for Thanksgiving Day with a time of worship and praise of the God who has so wonderfully provided for us—followed by pie and ice cream and good conversation.

(3) On November 29th, we enter Advent, a time of watchful waiting, a time of preparing to enter the mystery of Christmas, the mystery of the incarnation, the mystery of God becoming flesh in Jesus and living among us.

As we have in the past, on each Wednesday evening in Advent, we will have worship at 7:00 using Holden Evening Prayer—a beautiful, contemplative service whose haunting melodies will accompany us on the way to Christmas.

It is going to be a good month here at First Lutheran. All are welcome to all we do because together we are the church.

Peace and every blessing to you all.

Pastor Hank

"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



Council Highlights

- Approved the 2015 confirmands who affirm their baptism on October 25.
- Heard that new members will be received on All Saints Sunday, November 1.
- Heard that Food for the Poor representative, Rev. Hans-Fredrik Gustafson, will be present on Sunday, November 14.
- Regretfully accepted the resignation of Merlin Bruns from the council. Thank you, Merlin, for your serving.
- Appointed Cindi Habas to service as Council vice-president for the remainder of the year.
- Heard that the nominating committee consisting of Tulla Enerson, Gail Hittesdorf, Carl Rydeen and Deb Scott will be searching for persons to serve in leadership positions for the coming year. Members are asked to give prayerful consideration to this opportunity to serve.
- Began the process of revisiting the congregation's mission statement. Council leadership will seek input from the congregation as the process continues.

New Members

The following people are welcomed into membership at First Lutheran on All Saints Sunday, November 1: Greg and Andrea Anderson, Claire, Benjamin and Alexis, Jason and Melonie Brown, Bennett and Cullen, John Brutcher, Darlene Chirhart, Dale Gohl, Eric and Brenda Kuehne, Joslyn and Paige, Andre LeBlanc and Stephanie Trutwin, Jack and Jean Lemme, Megan Lenz, Carol Lovdahl, Doug and Amanda Rakow, and Gavin, and Christine Seelen. Check out the bulletin board for photos and information about the new members and give them a warm welcome!



Thanksgiving Eve Worship Wednesday, November 25 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!

Community Thanksgiving Day Meal

Thursday, November 26, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

This annual community event is for anyone who would like to enjoy a meal with others on Thanksgiving Day. Volunteers are welcome and encouraged to assist with the meal. Last year about 425 meals were served. There are many ways to help: greeters, meal prep, servers, dishwashers, meal delivery and more. If you can assist or need more information, contact Tim Sumner, 632-2540, or at cometotheriver@hotmail.com. Financial donations can be directed to Little Falls Area Ministerial Association, and mailed to CPE, PO Box 451, Little Falls MN 56345.

ELCA Malaria Campaign

The ELCA rolled out the Malaria Campaign in 2011. The fundraising goal of \$15 million to work to combat this disease in Africa was undertaken by the ELCA churchwide assembly. Four years later, the goal has been achieved and 13 countries in Africa participate in the campaign. Thank you for being a part of this campaign—members and friends of First have contributed \$837 toward this cause. Together we can make a difference!

Senior Safety: How to Fall-Proof Your House (and Your Favorite Older People)

Each year, one in three people over age 65 falls. Not all falls lead to serious results. But falling is a step toward making older folks more fearful. If they worry they will fall, it can lead them to limit their activity. This can lead, in turn, to decreased physical fitness. And that can lead to – you guessed it—an increased risk for falling.

So, we know that preventing falls is as important for an older person’s mental health as it is for their physical health. Fortunately, there are easy ways to fall-proof your house if an older person is coming to visit. There also are things you can encourage them to do themselves at home to prevent falls.

Preventing falls at home is all about safety. These minor changes can make a major difference in making a house safer for older people:

- **Get rid of things that slip and slide.** This includes throw rugs and the towel you use as a bath mat. Replace them with non-slip rugs.
- **Unclutter the space.** Rearrange furniture so there is a wide, clear path. Pick up and put away anything lying on the floor. Move power cords and wires close to the wall and tape them down.
- **Ensure steps are safe.** Remove items on the stairs. Repair steps that are broken or uneven. If the stairwell is dark, try installing some bright lighting at the top and bottom. And add a light switch at each end for ease of access. If the stairs are not carpeted, we suggest adding a no-skid strip to the edge of each stair; or, paint a contrasting color on each step to make them easier for older eyes to see.
- **Reorganize the kitchen.** Put things that get used the most often on lower shelves. This cuts down on the need to stretch to reach things—or the need to climb up on a step stool. If a person must use a step stool, pick a sturdy one with a handrail on top. Or buy one of those grabbing tools to reach top shelf items without a stool.

- **Spruce up the bath.** Add grab bars in the tub and by the toilet. And don’t forget the non-skid bath mats on the bathroom floor and in the bath tub. Add a few nightlights in the bedroom and along the hallway to light the way to the bath at night.

Help older people help themselves

Home safety is one thing, but older people aren’t always at home (or visiting you). To prevent falls wherever they are, encourage them to:

- **Stay fit.** Exercise is the greatest anti-aging formula ever! Staying fit keeps muscles toned and helps with balance, both of which help to prevent falls.
- **Get screened for osteoporosis.** This disease causes bones to become brittle and break easily. But there are treatments. Diet, drugs and exercise can help combat osteoporosis.
- **Take it easy.** Getting up too fast can cause blood pressure to drop. That can leave someone light-headed or dizzy. And that can lead to falls. Encourage your loved ones to take their time when standing up from the couch or chair, and to have something to hold on to if getting up from sitting on the floor or in the bath.
- **Know their medications.** Encourage them to talk with a doctor or pharmacist about all of the drugs (prescription and over the counter) they take. Some can lead to sleepiness or dizziness. Knowledge is power. If they know about the possible side effects, they can take steps to protect themselves.
- **Get some support.** This might mean using a walking stick, cane, or walker. Or it might just mean always wearing non-stick rubber-soled shoes—indoors as well as out.
- **Keep an eye on Spot and Fluffy.** Pets are one of the great joys of life, and can help to keep a youthful joy in your loved one’s lives. But small dogs and cats can get underfoot and trip up their owners. Larger pets can pull them down in their eagerness to get on with the walk. It’s important to have well-trained pets and always know where they are to lessen the risk of falls.

(Adapted from Blue Cross Blue Shield, Illinois)

Adult Opportunities

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. Watch for the display in the Gathering Space and take a tag from the Angel Tree. Return your unwrapped gifts with their tag to the church by Sunday, December 13. 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.

Annual Lutefisk Dinner Bethel Lutheran Church Tuesday, December 1 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 1
- ☞ Assist in the kitchen on December 1
- ☞ 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. You'll enjoy the evening even if you don't eat lutefisk. ☺

Martha Circle

The Martha Circle meets Monday, November 16 at 10:00 a.m. at the church.

Adult Study Discussion Group Thursdays, November 5, 12 and 19 11:30 a.m.

We will read and study the texts which will be the basis for the message for the coming week. Pastor Hank leads this study. See you there!

Men's Bible Study Breakfasts Wednesdays, November 4 and 18

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 7:00 a.m. at the church. You are welcome to attend any time – come when you are able, leave when you must.

Book Club Tuesday, November 24 at 7:00 p.m.

We meet to discuss *A Painted House*, by John Grisham on Tuesday November 24 at 7:00 p.m. The group will not meet in December. For more information, contact Tifanii Dahl, 632-8207.

Servant Men's Chorus

All men who enjoy singing are welcome to sing with this group. We will meet on Wednesday, November 18 at 8:00 p.m. We will rehearse several times and sing at worship at a date to be determined. For more info, contact Becky Nelson, 749-2336.

Did you know...? There is a connection between health and loneliness. Being with other people actually makes you healthier! Of people age 45 years and over only 25% in "excellent health" reported being lonely, while 55% of people in "poor health" reported being lonely.

Source: American Association of Retired Persons

Keeping Advent

Advent begins on November 29. 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 29, 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 2, 9, 16 and 23 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 25” 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 November 25. Proceeds support youth ministry programming at First. Thanks for your support!

Advent Craft Sale Saturday, December 5 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!

We enjoyed the beautiful October weather and our themes, Community Helpers and Transportation. We had visits from Jason Brown, Highway Patrol, Lisa Lintner, Fire Department, and Adam Surma, Road Construction! Thank you for sharing with "Children First." Please 'friend' our Facebook© page to see photos. We took field trips to Bridgeway and St. Otto's Care Center. The residents are excited for our monthly returns. Thank you to Andy's Charter for bus service. God has provided us with many individuals sharing their gifts to help us—and we are thankful for these helpers. November themes and activities will be Stories of the Bible, Five Senses, Nutrition/Healthy Bodies and Thanksgiving.

"Children First" will participate in the Fishing Museum Christmas Tree Lane. We will collect food items and gift cards for tree decorations. Larger food items will be placed under the tree and smaller items will become tree decorations. Place items in the box by the Preschool entrance and give all gift cards to Preschool staff. It is our hope that the bidder of our tree donates the tree, along with the food, to a needy family.

Parent/Teacher conferences are November 11 and 12. This is a time for teachers and parents to meet one-on-one to discuss your child's developmental stages and to ask and answer any questions you or

the teachers may have regarding your child. Signup sheets will be posted on the parent board by Preschool entry.

"Children First" will have a float in the Little Falls Santa Parade on Friday, November 27 at 6:00 p.m. Watch for us!

You can help us by saving Coborns/Cashwise Food Club points located at the bottom of your receipt when Food Club, Top Care and Full Circle products are purchased. We also collect Campbell's points located on the labels of various products. Place points or labels in the red box on the counter in the gathering space or in the box on the Preschool area.

Registration continues at "Children First" Christian Preschool throughout the year pending class openings. We encourage families to check us out. Visits are welcome! Contact Gail Hittesdorf 320-291-4698 or the church office for more information.

We graciously thank God for our Preschool supporters. We appreciate your kind words, your giving, your sharing of talents, and your prayers. God has blessed us with wonderful families and an awesome loving, caring staff. Happy Thanksgiving!

Yours in Christ's Service,

Gail Hittesdorf, Director

"O 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 6.

Sixth Grade: "In God's Image" class for youth and parents begins on Wednesday, November 4. This class is for youth and parents.

Seventh Grade: Mark your calendars for class on the Ten Commandments beginning Wednesday, January 6, 2016.

Eighth Grade: Looking ahead – class on the Old Testament begins Wednesday, January 6, 2016.

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.

Call Committee Report

Our last newsletter report indicated we had one potential pastoral candidate for consideration. We extended an offer of interview. The interview was declined after some time of discernment by the candidate.

The Call Committee met with Brenda Tibbetts, Assistant to the Bishop in late September. We had the opportunity to show her our church, discuss our mission, our hopes in the call process and for a pastor, her responsibilities and efforts in obtaining a pastor for us, and received insights in revising our Ministry Site Profile. The meeting with Ms. Tibbetts was informative, invigorating, and reassuring. She took pictures of our sanctuary, gathering space, youth room, a bulletin board, and Stolz Hall to use in presenting our church family to potential pastors. We have a strong advocate for us in the Synod office.

We recommended minor revisions to our Ministry Site Profile (MSP). These were brought to the Council who with some additional changes approved a revised MSP. The changes highlight the energy and work of our church. Further, this revision brings our MSP to the forefront again on the ELCA website.

Please contact any Call Committee member with any questions which you might have. The Call Committee members are Doug Anderson, Matt Dahl, Willard Doucette, Darrell Larsen, Camilla Larson, Monica Makela, Cassie Neumann, Mary Pfohl, Will Riitters, and Liz Rydeen.

We ask for your prayers and support as we continue this process.

Submitted in Christ's Peace,
Mary Pfohl
Call Committee Chairperson

Worship and Music Article

written by Paula Monahan

“Children of the Heavenly Father,
Safely in His bosom gather,
Nestling bird nor star in heaven,
Such a refuge e’er was given.

“God His own doth tend and nourish,
In His holy courts they flourish;
From all evil things He spares them,
In His mighty arms he bears them.

“Neither life nor death shall ever,
From the Lord His children sever,
Unto them His grace He showeth,
and their sorrows all He knoweth.

“Though He giveth or He taketh,
God His children ne’er forsaketh,
His the loving purpose solely,
To preserve them pure and holy.”

Except for “Jesus Loves Me,” this is my first memory of a church song. We sang it in Junior Choir, robed in short white surplices with huge red bows. I can still sing all four verses by heart. Precious memories!

This Scandinavian hymn was written by Carolina (Lina) Sandell-Berg. She was born in a parsonage in Froderyd, Sweden in 1832. She was considered “daddy’s girl,” because her poor health kept her inside. She spent hours in her father’s study while other kids were outside playing. At age twelve, she was very ill and became paralyzed. She eventually recovered and out of her experience came her first book of poems—published when she was just a teenager. It is believed that she wrote “Children of the Heavenly Father” during that difficult time of her life.

Another very famous hymn, “Day By Day,” was written by this incredible young woman.

Portions adapted from “Then Sings My Soul” by Robert J. Morgan



Lefse-Making

Bring your rolling pin and come to help prepare this favorite treat on Saturday, November 28 at 8:30 a.m. Lefse will be sold at the Advent Craft Sale and Luncheon on Saturday, December 5. This project is open to all ages!



Sunday School Christmas Program Sunday, December 20, 3:00 p.m. “Unfrozen”



All children are invited to participate in this year’s Christmas program. The program is loosely based on the favorite Disney movie. We will learn the songs during Sunday School opening time in December. Many helping hands are important in order to make the program shine. Most rehearsal time will take place during Sunday School. With the spirit of Christmas in your heart, consider how you can share your gifts to assist with the program. For more info, contact Amber Sobiech in the church office, 632-6667.



Sunday School Ministry each Sunday at 9:35 a.m.

Sunday Morning Education Ministry continues each week at 9:35 a.m. All ages gather in the sanctuary for opening time. Children in Kindergarten through Fifth Grade follow 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 have volunteered to teach or lead a station. Sharing your faith journey is important to children in the congregation. The current rotation is “Teach us to Pray – The Lord’s Prayer.” There are many ways to talk with God, one example we are practicing is making a Prayer Tree. You can help us by adding your prayer to a handprint ‘leaf’ and adding it to the tree in the Education wing. The tree will be up

through Thanksgiving. Our next rotation is “Jacob.” We will learn about brothers Jacob and Esau who had a lifelong struggle to get along with each other. Love and forgiveness brought them together. If you would like to volunteer with a rotation now or in upcoming months, please contact Amber Sobiech in the church office.

Note: *Sunday School will not meet on Sunday, November 29, Thanksgiving weekend.*

Thank you to all the children, parents and teachers who make Sunday School a priority each week!

News of the Family



Miradyn Celine Harris, daughter of Patrick and Melissa Harris, was baptized on October 11.

Wyatt James Woodford, son of Gene and Kristin Woodford, was baptized on October 18.

Scarlett Rose Souder, daughter of Brian and Sheryce Souder, was baptized on October 18.



Megan Kleinfehn and Tylor Lenz were united in marriage on October 24. May God bless their life together.



Items for the **December NEWSLETTER** are due on **November 20, 2015!**

Daylight Savings Time ends. Remember to set your clocks *back* one hour on Saturday, October 31!

Can Care Collection

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