

**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

Ministers: All God's People at FLC  
Tony D. Oltmann, Pastor  
David J. Sperstad, Pastor



**“Servants of All”**

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January, 2012 Newsletter

January 6, 2012

**First Lutheran Church**  
**Annual Meeting**  
**Sunday, January 29, 2012**

*Following the 10:45 a.m. Service*  
*Share a fellowship meal*  
*child care will be provided*

- Election of Council members, voting members, and other leadership positions
- Adoption of 2012 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:**

Les Hittesdorf      *3-year term*  
*Three additional 3-year terms to be elected*

**Lay voting members** to Heartland conference and NE Minnesota Synod Assemblies: Craig Ahlin, Ted and Mary Pfohl  
*three alternates*

**Lay delegates** to Luther Crest Bible Camp Annual Meeting on Saturday, October 13, at 3:00 p.m.: *three delegates to be elected*

**2012 Nominating Committee:**

*three members to be elected*

Please plan to attend this important meeting. Share in a fellowship lunch to be provided following the 10:45 a.m. service. Child care will be provided. Annual Reports will be available by January 15 at the church for review before the Annual Meeting.

**Pastor Tony's Article**  
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**Worship Life**  
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## Pastor Tony's Article

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In the last few years I have begun to believe something my parents used to tell me frequently: "you are really creative". I never used to believe that I was creative and never really liked to express my creativity...that is until I met my wife. The first Christmas present I gave her (back when we were dating) was a photograph I took just for her; it was the first time I *ever* let anyone see a photograph I did not take for a newspaper or magazine; one that was more artistic.

In the time since our first Christmas, she has never wavered in her encouragement and praise. With her in my corner, I have begun to embrace my creative side and even show some of my work to others. Currently, I have three images hanging in my office that are all expressions of who I am and are things I am proud of; believe it or not but these used to be in my closet when I was in seminary because they are so personal.

I get a lot of enjoyment out of creating and I love to express my creativity through a wide variety of ways: sketching, cooking, graphic illustration, my sermons, writing, wood work, carving, but mainly through photography. I am always looking for new ways to foster my creative side; I would love to learn how to paint but no matter how many times I watch Bob Ross paint a "*happy little tree*" I just can't seem to pick it up. I love to take pictures, create new recipes, or sketch because being creative helps me encounter God in new and wonderful ways. And as I encounter God, more of who I am is revealed. Creating, being creative, taking photographs, manipulating them in some way, creating new recipes, carving a block of wood...what ever it is...they all have helped me

discover who I am and have helped me develop my own voice. More than that, they have helped me discover God in the midst of my life and as I create I am reminded of *The Creator*.

Lately, I have felt called to help others discover who they are through being creative and to help others feel they can share their creative side at church...whatever that creative side may be. I have spent some time thinking and praying about how to help others express their creative sides and what I have come up with is to challenge the congregation...ALL stewards (members) are included in this challenge. Over the next year I will give a *theme* and your job is to do something creative based on that theme. Here's what I mean:

The *theme* for the first part of 2012 is LOVE. So think about LOVE. Let it roll around in your brain. Then take January and February to create something that has to do with LOVE; a painting, a photograph, a scrapbook page, a dance, a song, needlepoint, some wood working thing...it does not matter...just create. It could be about unconditional love, God's love, unrequited love...whatever you want...just create something inspired by LOVE and how you see LOVE. When your project is finished bring it to church because in March we will have a potluck so talk about our projects and share them with the congregation. All you need to do to participate is to do something creative around the theme of LOVE.

In Christ,

Pastor Tony Oltmann

## WORSHIP LIFE

### Bell-Ringing Service

Sunday, January 1, we worship with a joyful and casual service of lessons and carols for the twelve days of Christmas which ends on Epiphany, January 6. Bring a bell (or use one at church) and come and worship! Service times is 9:30 a.m.



### Council Highlights

- Heard that the Thanksgiving offering of \$789. was received and given in support of mission partners.
- Heard a report from the Nominating Committee of the nominations for council leadership positions for 2012. *see page one*
- Extended the contract for Pastor Tony Oltmann for 2012.
- “Noisy Offerings” will be received on the first Sunday of each month. Bring your change on Sunday, January 1 and let it clang in the offering bucket!
- Heard that Food for Kidz food packaging will continue in 2012.



### Burning of the Greens Epiphany Service

**Friday, January 6, 6:00 p.m.**

First Lutheran’s traditional “Burning of the Greens” is Friday, January 6. Bring a friend and/or your family and come at 6:00 p.m. We’ll share supper, worship, and gather around a bonfire of our church’s Christmas tree, as we celebrate Jesus Christ, the Light of the Nations. Bring your Christmas tree or a bough or branch! A freewill offering will be received to defray the costs of supper.

### Worship Serving Opportunities Signup for 2012

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; sign-ups for March and April will be posted in 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!

Signup sheets are posted now, so *now is the time* to sign up! Thanks for signing up to be *First...Servants of All.*

**Women’s Circle:**  
**“To Follow and To Serve:”**  
**The Gospel of Mark**  
**Session 5: Confessing Christ**

#### **Martha Circle**

The Martha Circle meets Monday, January 16, at 1:30 p.m. at the church. Marlene Williams is the hostess and gives the reading.

## 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 6:15 a.m. at the church. All are welcome – come when you are able, leave when you must. For more information, contact Pastor Dave.

### Women's Winter Bible Study

Watch for information about a new women's study beginning Wednesdays in January. Sessions are at 9:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. For more info, contact the church office, 632-6667.

### Book Club

All adult readers are welcome to read with this group. The next selection is the The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis. Readers, please secure your own copy of this book. The group will meet in the church library on Tuesday, January 31, at 6:30 p.m. to share and discuss the book and select the next book. For more info contact Tifanii Dahl, 632-8207.

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

**Tuesday, January 17, 11:30 a.m.**

We gather for potluck lunch on Tuesday, January 17 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!

### Adult Study Discussion Group Gospel of John Mondays, beginning January 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Bring a friend and come to dig into the Gospel of John. Pastor Dave leads the six-week study, beginning Monday, January 9, at 6:30 p.m.



## Sunday School News

All Sunday School classes resume on Sunday, January 8, at 10:30 a.m.

**Preschool-PreKindergarten:** class meets in the Moses Room in the education wing.

**TREK Rotation (Grades K-5):** meet in Stoltz Hall for opening at 10:30 a.m. On January 8, 2012, we finish the rotation theme "In the Manager." The mission project for this theme is collecting items for a baby shower. Please consider placing a new or gently used baby item in the box located in the gathering space. All baby shower donations will be given to local families in need.

Our next rotation theme, "Peter," begins Sunday, January 15 for four weeks. The signup for this and future rotations is located in the gathering space. Rotational Sunday School allows you to give a short-term commitment to Sunday School. One lesson is prepared and taught four times. Could you share your faith, time and talents with the children of First Lutheran?

If you have questions about the rotation theme or Sunday School in general, please speak with Beth Storkamp or Gail Hittesdorf.

**Youth Sunday School (Grades 6-12):** meet in the Youth Room (located off of Stoltz Hall on the south) each Sunday morning at 10:30am.



## **A Look at Our Ministry Together in the NE MN Synod of the ELCA**

The ELCA is organized into geographic areas called synods. The word 'synod' comes from two Greek words, 'syn' (together) and 'hodos' (a way) meaning 'a way together' or 'walking together.'

'Together' is an important idea for understanding Christianity and the Church. In Christ, Christians are joined together in a common fellowship. God has intended us to function at our best in relationship to each other.

Some things can't be done alone, but must be done together. Practically speaking, this requires organization. The Northeastern Minnesota Synod includes 13 counties in the northeast corner of the state. It represents: over 72,500 baptized members, 144 congregations, 250 rostered leaders, and over 1,500 elected lay leaders. To lead and oversee its ministry together, our synod elects a bishop, provides an office staff, elects a synod council and other volunteer leaders, and organizes task forces, much as a congregation does. Much of our synod's work falls in two areas: support and development of pastors and lay leaders for their congregational ministry, and extending and coordinating ministry beyond the local setting.

Congregations base their budgets on regular giving by members. Each congregation decides annually what amount will be passed on to the synod as 'mission support.'



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

Here are some examples of what we do together as a synod:

### **ELCA National and Global Ministries:**

- ✦ Support 240 missionaries in 46 countries
- ✦ 120 companion synod relationships (such as India, Russia, and Honduras in our synod)
- ✦ 28 ELCA colleges and universities
- ✦ in 2008, supported 49 new congregations and 33 under development
- ✦ One out of 50 Americans are served by Lutheran Social Services of America (LSS).
- ✦ World Hunger Appeal
- ✦ Lutheran World Relief

### **NE MN Synod Ministry Partners:**

- ✦ Luther Seminary
- ✦ Lutheran Campus Ministry
- ✦ Minnesota Council of Churches
- ✦ Twin Ports Ministry to Seafarers
- ✦ CHARIS

Our synod staff organizes and supports many events and activities that our congregation participates in:

- ✦ Learning and Sharing Day
- ✦ Middle School Youth Gatherings
- ✦ Synod Journey to the National Youth Gathering – back to New Orleans in 2012
- ✦ School of Lay Ministry
- ✦ Fall Theological Conference
- ✦ Mission trips to Honduras

These are just a few of the ways we are in ministry together in our synod and beyond. If you have any questions about our ministry together as a part of the ELCA, please call the church office.

\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\* **Mission Life** \*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*

**Angel Tree Thank You**

Thank you for your continued support of the Angel Tree Project. Because of your caring and commitment, over 100 Morrison County families will know the true peace of Christ this holiday season. Thank you for making the difference in the life of a child. Sincerely, Annalee VanDenheuvel

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

Join with others around the nation in a simple act of caring. On Sunday, February 6, youth will hold large soup pots in the Gathering Space and ask worshippers for one-dollar (or greater!) donations to be sent to a local charity. In 2011, 15,835 groups of young people including those at First Lutheran, donated over \$9 million to local charities! Thanks for your support!

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**† Silent Steward †**

*Larry Sharon*

Another silent steward among us is surely Larry Sharon. His quiet, gentle presence and his faithful commitment to serve and give back to his church and the broader community are abundant in a variety of activities. He and his wife Pat are regulars at the 10:45 a.m. service where Larry is often the worship coordinator, which gives him plenty of opportunity to read the lessons of the day, usher and serve communion, and he sings in the choir. He also enjoys the Men's Group Breakfast. For years, nine actually, he served on the church council and has been a member of every commission save for the Commission for Youth. But that doesn't mean he's not interested in young people: for fun and to be with the kids, he often goes on the annual hayrides in the fall and sledding at Camp Ripley in the winter. And, for the first time, he was asked to be a mentor for the 2011 confirmation class.

Larry is also very busy beyond First Lutheran, and says he has a passion for many different causes and wants to see them succeed. He serves on the boards of directors for Friends of the Lindbergh Heritage and Friends of Linden Hill. Every spring

you can find Lumber Jack Larry entertaining third-graders when they tour Linden Hill to learn about local history. With Pat as his *boss*, Larry volunteers weekly at St. Clare Library on the campus of the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, where he is much loved by all the sisters. (He'll often sneak in a game of cribbage with Sister Mary Lou right after lunch.) As a veteran, Larry recently visited Talahi Elementary School in St Cloud for their Veteran's Day program; the diverse community of the classroom he visited loved his sense of humor and his sense of honor to his service. Larry also finds time to give blood for the Red Cross and sing in the Community Chorale, which is sponsored by St. Francis Music Center and directed by another of First Lutheran's stewards Barb Stumpf.

Thank you, Larry, for your commitment to living out your faith, and sharing with your church family at First Lutheran and to the greater Little Falls community.

## Children First" Christian Preschool

Greetings,

January is here! December was a month of Christmas preparation and celebration. The Jesus' Gems Preschooler's talked about Christmas traditions at home and in other countries. The Noah's Animals classes talked about angels and shepherds. Both classes finished December with projects, games, stories and songs focused on the Nativity and celebrating the birth of Jesus. The last day before Christmas break was celebrated with family and friends during a class time Christmas gathering. Thank you to all parents, grandparents, guardians and friends who attended!

Classes resume on January 3 and 4, 2012 with themes of snow, snowmen and transportation. We will continue our field trips to St. Otto's and Pine Grove Manor on the second Thursday of each month and Bridgeway and Lutheran Care Center on the second Monday of each month. All visits begin at 10:00 a.m. and all are welcome to visit, assist or participate in stories, songs and craft. Thank you to Andy's Charter for providing the bussing service at a donated reduced cost.

"Children First" Christian Preschool welcomes new preschoolers! We are excited to have our license extended increasing the size of our Noah's Animals (33 mos-3 yr old) classes to 12 students per class—we have room for children! Jesus Gem's (4-5 yr old) has openings in both classes.

Children may begin at anytime during the school year. Friday Friends is also has openings available. This class is intended to create a 3-day preschool week and children may begin this class any time during the school year. Please contact Gail Hittesdorf, Preschool staff or First Lutheran Church office for more information.

We are pleased to announce that we have received a \$1,800.00 Child Care Resource and Referral Network grant to assist us in our new classroom with dramatic play furniture, educational materials and staff training so that we may continue providing area preschoolers with quality education.

Thank you to our teaching staff, April Kiffmeyer, Peggy Rekstad, Jessica Gustafson, and Stephanie Kiel for their hard work and dedication to "Children First" children and families. Adding a new classroom involves work, sacrifices, and support. These teachers and aides have been wonderful! Please thank them and pray for their commitment to the ministry and mission of "Children First" Christian Preschool.

Thank you to all who have blessed "Children First" Christian Preschool in 2011, with financial giving, giving of time and talents, and including the school in your prayers. God's Blessings!

Happy New Year!

Yours in Christ's Service,  
Gail Hittesdorf, Director

### Thank you!

First Lutheran Church participated in 'Making a Joyful Noise' fundraiser at Coborn's for the Morrison County Foodshelf in December. Over \$5,000 was raised for in support of the hungry in the community. Thank you to those who 'made noise' at Coborn's, to Ron Hinnenkamp for coordinating the project, and to all who supported this effort through your donations!



## 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.

**Seventh Grade:** Ten Commandments class begins Wednesday, January 4 at 7:00 p.m. and continues through January 25. Parents, please attend the first session. Bring your Bible, Luther's Small Catechism and your great attitude! Thanks to Linda Weiss for teaching this class.



### Can Care Collection

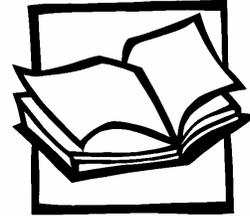
Save a can – Save the earth –  
Save our youth budget!  
Keep those cans coming! Thank you!

### 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!

**Eighth Grade:** Old Testament class meets Wednesdays, January 4 through January 25. Pastor Dave will teach this class. A Study Bible is used in this class, cost is \$12.00.

**Ninth and Tenth Grade Retreats:** This year's Ninth Grade and Tenth Grade retreat will be a combined retreat on the Created Human. The retreat is scheduled at Luther Crest Bible Camp on Saturday-Sunday, January 21-22, 2012.



### Advent Craft Sale and Luncheon Thank You!

The Commission for Youth thanks everyone who participated in this successful fundraiser for Youth Ministry. Over \$2,500.00 was received from sales, donations. Thanks to everyone who donated food, crafts, baked goods and their time in support of this event. Thanks also to all who attended this event. Your generosity is an inspiration to us all!

### Thank You

Thanks to all who contributed in any way to adorning the sanctuary for Advent and Christmas worship. Thank you for the gift of the beautiful Christmas tree, to those who labored to hang garland and lights, and to all who donated poinsettias. Your efforts enhance our worship and are much appreciated.



## **News of the Family**

### **Baptism**

Maxwell Thomas Meier, son of Aaron and Elizabeth Meier, was baptized on December 4.

Braxton McHale Rothleutner, son of Jonathan and Christina Rothleutner, was baptized on December 11.

### **Funerals**

Patrick Kronbeck died November 28. His funeral service was held December 2 at First Lutheran.

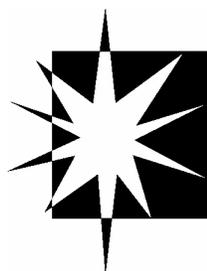
Harry "Paul" Bochow died December 1. His funeral service was held December 9 at Shelly Funeral Chapel.

Mark Jon Grosso died December 26. His funeral service was held December 29 at First Lutheran.

May God grant peace and comfort to their families and friends.

### **Annual Report Deadline**

Deadline for reports to appear in the Annual report is January 6, 2012. Annual Reports will be available for review on January 15, 2012.



*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, 2012!**