



First Lutheran Church
Annual Meeting
Sunday, January 30, 2011

*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 2011 Mission Plan
- Annual Reports

The 2010 Nominating Committee submits the following names for leadership positions for 2011. We thank these members for prayerfully considering being of service to God and First Lutheran in the coming years:

Church Council: *four 3-year terms will be filled by the following individuals*

Stephanie Adams
Paula Monahan

Mark Hanson
Gail Olson

Lay voting members to Heartland conference and NE Minnesota Synod Assemblies: Doug and Michelle Dahlberg
one additional voting member, and three alternates

Lay delegates to Luther Crest Bible Camp Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 13, at 3:00 p.m.: Monica Makela
two additional delegates to be elected

2011 Nominating Committee:

Jeff Bigalke

Ken Johnson

Doug Luepke

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 16 at the church for review before the Annual Meeting.

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Pastor Dave's Article

He (Jesus) himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.
Colossians 1:17-20

The year was 1891 – and God called together, perhaps around a kitchen table, some individuals named Swen, A.B., Andrew, Morris (*aka Moe*) and Bracke, and most likely their wives (who were the real brain trust ☺) for an organizational meeting. These individuals were Norwegian immigrants living in the Little Falls area and were being called to build a church that was of the same faith they had left back in Norway – and so *First Lutheran Church* was born. Not because they got together but because God called them together to further His Gospel.

Luther taught that the church should speak in “*the vernacular*,” that is a fancy word that means: the language of the people, the language the people understood. These young men and their wives desired just that. A church with a pastor who spoke Norwegian (and yes English too). This small group of the minority in the community wanted to hear the Gospel in their own language, from someone who spoke their language and understood what it was to be a Norwegian immigrant living in America. Yes, it was initially largely a Norwegian congregation. (Although a Swede or two were welcome...)

This first group served as the trustees and one of them was even the first pastor (he got up to go to the outhouse for that portion of the meeting). It was J.A. Korvik who served as pastor for the first two years. Through the years, the church has been served by numerous pastors and more importantly,

by many, many folks. Some may have been your ancestors, and so some of you may have been baptized here, some of you may have been married here, and some of you may have had relatives buried here.

From the beginning of God calling this church into existence, He has blessed it with a desire for Him and a desire for the care of others. These Norwegians wanted to be in service to others, not just themselves, and so *First... Servants of all* was born. As far back as 1891, all were welcome!

This year, we celebrate 120 years as First Lutheran Church. First has been blessed by God through so many people, just like yourself. People who may have thought “I am not qualified” or “I am so busy.” Yet here we are in 2011, 120 years later and still alive. Still proclaiming the message of God’s love and God’s desire for ALL people! It is an amazing thing to be part of such a place that has such a tremendous history of being led and fed by Jesus.

Yes, the names have changed—from First Scandinavian Lutheran to First English Lutheran to First Lutheran; from Swen to Jim, from J.A. to Dave, from Andrew to Paula. But the church is still in good hands. Not because of the individuals, but because it is the same Lord who called us together so long ago and is still holding us together. It is the same Lord who spoke to Job in the days of the Old Testament, who was with Job throughout his ordeal. It is the same Lord who is with us and leads us into the future – and from the vantage point I have, I believe and trust that it looks to be GLORIOUS!

The LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning;
Job 42:12

In Christ,

Pastor Dave Sperstad

WORSHIP LIFE

Bell-Ringing Service

Sunday, January 2, 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 are 8:00, 9:30 and 10:45 a.m.



Council Highlights

- Heard that the Thanksgiving offering of \$420. was received and given to the NE MN Synod in support of mission partners.
- Heard a report from the Nominating Committee of the nominations for council leadership positions for 2011. *see page one*
- Approved personnel for “Children First” Christian Preschool; April Kiffmeyer hired as teacher, and Aisha Thompson hired as teacher’s aide.
- Heard that the Advent Craft Sale and Luncheon proceeds were approximately \$2,500. Proceeds support the youth fund.
- Heard that a donation was received for the purchase of chalices for white grape juice.



Lutheran Men in Mission 2011 NE MN Synod Men’s Retreat Revelation and the End of All Things Friday-Saturday, February 25-26 Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Brainerd

Men, don’t miss this retreat featuring Dr. Craig Koester, professor of New Testament at Luther Seminary, Bishop Tom Aitken, and Doug Haugen, Director of Lutheran Men in Mission. There will be several great breakout sessions and lots more. Several of ‘the guys’ from First are planning to attend as commuters. For more information, ask in the church office.



Worship Serving Opportunities Signup for 2011

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! Coordinator for January is Mary Larson, 632-8203.

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

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!

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 Wednesday, January 26. Sessions are at 9:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. For more info, contact the church office, 632-6667.



Women's Circle:

“The People of God:

Unity in the Midst of Diversity”

Race and Culture Acts 10:34-35

Martha Circle

The Martha Circle meets Monday, January 17, at 1:30 p.m. at the church.



Adult Study Discussion Group Revelation and the End of all Things Mondays, beginning January 24 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Contrary to popular belief, the message of the book of Revelation is not scary or confusing. In contrast, the message is one of comfort and encouragement to all believers: To remain strong in the faith! To take courage and persevere! Things are not as they seem! It may appear that the forces of evil are triumphant on every side in the world, but that is not true. Revelation reminds us of such.

The Book of Revelation has inspired countless sermons, theological statements, artistic works, books and musical compositions. Books such as the Left Behind series are a recent phenomenon. Music ranging from Handel's triumphant “Hallelujah Chorus” to the gentle strains of “Jerusalem My Happy Home” are based on Revelation texts. Some individuals and groups are attracted to Revelation's prophecies of the end-times fulfillment as a means of pinpointing a date of Jesus' return. Revelation is sometimes intriguing and sometimes disturbing, yet gives the modern reader an opportunity to think about the

same questions our predecessors asked about the end of times.

In studying Revelation, we will be reminded that God remains in control of His universe and all that takes place within it. Past, present, and future are in His hands alone. We need not despair. With the eyes of faith, we can look behind the facade of things as they appear and see things as they truly are. We will come to learn and trust that Christ has won the victory and through faith in Him, that victory is ours!

Come for a Bible Study that will allow us to consider the perspectives of others, that may challenge us, and consider the assumptions that we bring to the text in 2011.

Pastor Dave leads the six-week study, beginning Monday, January 24, at 6:30 p.m. Please contact the church office if you plan to attend so that materials may be prepared.

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 74,000 baptized members, 147 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 140 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

**Coming up:
Souper Bowl of Caring
Sunday, February 6**

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 2010, 260,000 young people including those at First Lutheran, donated over \$10 million to local charities! Thanks for your support!

Fair Trade Products

You can make a difference in the lives of people around the globe by paying attention to the products that you buy and use. Purchases of fairly traded products help small farmers receive a fair price for their crop. First Lutheran serves fair trade coffee at all church functions. This is a simple way that we can be involved in mission in day-to-day life.

Fair trade items are available for purchase in the church office. We have a variety of coffees, priced from \$5.50 to \$7.25 per 12 oz. bag; teas, at \$3.25 per box, organic hot cocoa mix, \$5.25 per 12 oz. can; organic baking cocoa, \$5.25 per can; organic chocolate bars, \$3.00 per 3.5 oz. bar; and organic dried, sweetened cranberries, \$4.00 per 5 oz. bag.

Donations to defray the cost of purchased coffee are also welcome. Thank you for making a difference!

What keeps you from giving now? Isn't the poor person there? Aren't your own warehouses full? Isn't the reward promised? The command is clear: the hungry person is dying now, the naked person is freezing now, the person in debt is beaten now—and you want to wait until tomorrow? "I'm not doing any harm," you say. "I just want to keep what I own, that's all." You own! You are like someone who sits down in a theater and keeps everyone else away, saying that what is there for everyone's use is your own. . . . If everyone took only what they needed and gave the rest to those in need, there would be no such thing as rich and poor. After all, didn't you come into life naked, and won't you return naked to the earth?

The bread in your cupboard belongs to the hungry person; the coat hanging unused in your closet belongs to the person who needs it; the shoes rotting in your closet belong to the person with no shoes; the money which you put in the bank belongs to the poor. You do wrong to everyone you could help, but fail to help.

Basil, Fourth Century

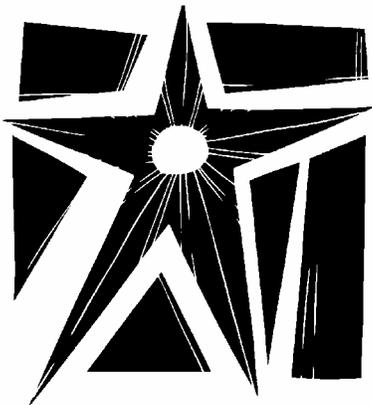
Basil, known as one of the Cappadocian fathers, was born into a wealthy family and became known as a Christian theologian and monastic. He was also known for his care of the poor and underprivileged, having distributed his personal family inheritance to the poor of his diocese. The church recognizes Basil the Great on June 14.

The writings of Basil, who died in the year 379, continue to hold lessons for the modern reader as well.

**Kids Against Hunger
Food Packing Day
Sunday, January 2
9:00 a.m. to noon (or so)**

Kids of the congregation (all ages – five-year-olds on up!) can help to break the burden of world hunger with a food-packaging opportunity. We gather in Stoltz Hall to package nutritious meals for shipment to starving children around the world. Bring your family to Bell-Ringing worship (8:00, 9:30 or 10:45 a.m.) and stick around to lend a hand with food packing.

The supplies for each serving cost about \$.16, or about \$25.00 for a full box of packaged meals. Your donation to help with the cost of supplies is welcome and encouraged. Thank you for using your hands and feet to serve!



**"Children First" Christian Preschool
Update**

Happy New Year!

December was busy and wonderful with preparations to celebrate the birth our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Thank you to everyone for their participation and contributions towards the Preschool Christmas Program, Share A Meal supper and various homework projects. Thank you to the families who chose to donate money towards Christmas gifts for the Preschool. Your donations will provide tuition assistance to families in need.

Thank you to all who support "Children First" with financial giving, sharing time and talents, and with prayer. On behalf of the Preschool Staff and Advisory Team, Happy New Year and God's Blessings to you all!

Yours in Christ's Service,

Gail Hittesdorf, Director

Confirmation Ministries

Fourth Grade: Four week class on Holy Baptism meets on Wednesdays, January 5 through January 26, at 7:00 p.m. Families should have received a letter about this class. On January 5, students will make a keepsake baptismal banner. A parent, grandparent or guardian is encouraged to help with this project. Please bring a fabric scissor if you have one.

Seventh Grade: Ten Commandments class begins Wednesday, January 5 at 7:00 p.m. and continues through January 26. 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

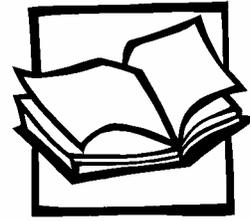
Save a can – Save the earth –
Save our youth budget!
Keep those cans coming! Thank you!

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 5 through February 11. 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 Relationships. The retreat is scheduled at Luther Crest Bible Camp on Sunday-Monday, January 23-24, 2011. Families should watch for a mailing about this retreat.



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

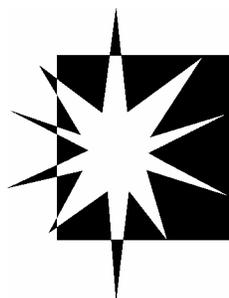
McKayla Ann Meyer, daughter of Gabriel and Stacia Meyer, was baptized on December 19.

Funerals

Martha E. Koester died December 17. Her funeral service was held December 22 at First Lutheran. May God grant peace and comfort to her family and friends.

Annual Report Deadline

Deadline for reports to appear in the Annual report is January 7, 2011. Annual Reports will be available for review on January 16, 2011.



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, 2011!**