



November 2011

October 27, 2011

# 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. Drought continues to creep across East Africa, affecting millions. October brought torrential rains, mudslides and flooding to the Central American countries of Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and El Salvador displacing hundreds of thousands of people from their homes and destroying crops just as the harvest was beginning. 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:**

- + Support Food for Kidz/Kids Against Hunger by making a donation or helping at the food packaging event on Sunday, November 27, 8:00 a.m.-12:00 noon here at church.
- + 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](http://www.one.org) for more information.
- + Deliver Meals on Wheels 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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## Pastor Dave's Article

*I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.*

Genesis 12:2

Here is God talking with Abram at the beginning of the history of the people of Israel. Abram would later change his name to Abraham after his encounter with God. It would signify that much has changed by his being blessed by God.

This is also how God speaks to us as he blesses us with all that we have been given. This is the month we think about giving thanks! After all, it is the month of Thanksgiving. So we give God thanks for what He has given us.

Contrary to our general line of thinking that tells us the one with the most toys wins; Luke tells us that our life does not consist in the abundance of our possessions. Our life is in our ability to be with and to share life with others. Jesus goes on to say that *we need not fear*. For it is our Father's good pleasure to give us not just what we need now, but the entire Kingdom of heaven. We have enough to give thanks for. Part of our giving thanks is in our ability to share with others. Share our life, share who we are, and share even our possessions with those God has placed in our lives.

This month as we are giving thanks to the One who gave us everything we have, let us give so that our hearts end up where we want them. Not just giving thanks from our heart, Luke says in 12:34 to say – *where your treasure is there your heart will be also*. This is proactive, not reactive. We don't give thanks from our hearts but we are to give *SO THAT* our hearts end up where we wish they would be. It is important for us to remember that treasure is not just our money, but treasure is whatever we value.

So this Thanksgiving we can truly acknowledge being blessed by God so that we are a blessing to others. Let's give thanks, give praise, give ourselves and what we treasure the most back to God so that our hearts will catch up.

Happy Thanksgiving! See you in church!

Pastor Dave Sperstad

### Thank You!

Big thank you to the terrific crew of folks who raked, blew, pushed around and picked up the leaves in our yard. Special thanks to Larry Engel for organizing the morning and taking care of this while we were out of town. It is much appreciated!

Pastor Dave and Sue Sperstad and Kinbrae

*"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

*Caring Companions* is going GREAT! I could not ask for a better response or support. At the time I am writing this we have ten people who are willing to make visits and ten people who are willing to cook for a total of 17 *Caring Companions*; some people are on both lists. This far exceeds my wildest expectations!

The 17 *Caring Companions* have made two visits to people who were in need (another four people declined a visit request) and have delivered five meals to individuals or families who were in need (another two people declined the offer). In all, the *Caring Companions* have had seven opportunities for serving others in our church!

If you want to give back of your time and talent, either as a member of the Cooking Crew or as a Friendly Folk, let Pastor Tony know. Whether you are on the Cooking Crew or a Friendly Folk, we work around your schedule. Not sure if you have enough time to help? *All you need is one hour a month to be either a member of the Cooking Crew or a Friendly Folk!*

**Friendly Folks:**

These passionate people are the ones to make the visits; either when a need arises or on a regular basis. If you want to give of your time to make visits as needed you will be called when someone is in the hospital, returns home from surgery, has experienced a death in the family, or has another life-altering event. You would be called and you will be able to arrange a time to meet with that person/family that works around your schedules.

If you want to give of your time to make on-going visits you would be connected with a member of the congregation who has mobility or health concerns that limit where they can go. These *Caring Companions* would visit people who are in their homes and or in nursing home; visits do not have to be any more frequent than once every 4-6 weeks. Just like with as-needed visits, you would work with the person to set up a time that works with your schedules.

In either case, as an as-needed Friendly Folk or as an on-going Friendly Folk, you are just asked to be a *Caring Companion*. You are not asked to be anything other than a friend. If you are asked to visit with someone and can not make it work or are too busy that particular week, you can just say “no” and we call you when another need arises.

**Cooking Crew:**

These passionate people are the ones who make and deliver meals when a need arises. In the past meals have been delivered after a death in the family, when someone returns from surgery, or when someone returns from a hospital stay, but there are many more reasons a meal is sent. If you would like to give of your time to be a member of the Cooking Crew, you would be asked from time to time to cook and deliver a meal for someone in need. When you are called a pastor will have already made contact with the person receiving the meal to make sure it is wanted, all you have to do is call the family/person to setup a time and date for the meal to be delivered...it is totally around your schedule. If you can not cook a meal this time...just say “no” and we’ll move on to the next person on the list...but we will ask again.

If you know of someone who has a need for a visit or a meal, please contact the church office or Pastor Tony. Thanks again for the wonderful support and response to *Caring Companions!*



**Thanksgiving Eve Worship  
Wednesday, November 23  
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 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!



**Luther Crest Bible Camp  
Christmas Trip to Branson  
Tuesday-Sunday  
November 29-December 4**

Kick off the Christmas season with Luther Crest on an adult travel event to Branson. Holiday sights and sounds come alive as we experience wonderful shows including Andy Williams, Shoji Tabuchi, Tony Orlando, The Lennon Sisters, the Miracle of Christmas stage presentation, and a tribute to John Denver. The event closes with the traditional Concordia College Christmas Concert. You will enjoy delicious food, comfortable transportation, great stops, and great people. For more information, contact Paul Hanson at Luther Crest, 320-846-2431 or via email at [paulh@luthercrest.org](mailto:paulh@luthercrest.org).



**First Lutheran Church  
Congregation Council**

Stephanie Adams 632-3058  
Craig Ahlin, Vice-President 632-3951  
Matt Dahl, Treasurer 632-8207  
Michelle Dahlberg, President  
632-9073  
Lola Faufau, Secretary 632-4662  
Mark Hanson 632-6505  
Les Hittesdorf 632-2218  
Bill Leisenheimer  
Paula Monahan, Past-President  
632-3011  
Gail Olson 584-5258  
Nancy Ratzloff 632-9729  
Liz Rydeen 632-5597  
Pastor Tony Oltmann 218-825-9053  
Pastor David Sperstad 632-5930

**Council Highlights**

- Approved hiring April Kiffmeyer, part-time Child Care Attendant, effective October 1, 2011.
- Heard that the nominating committee consisting of Jeff Bigalke, Lola Faufau, Ken Johnson, Doug Luepke, and Nancy Ratzloff 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.
- Heard that the Worship Space Enhancement Team is meeting to begin discussion about the worship space.

## Thanks!

A great big **thank you** to all those who donated items or attended the Lutheran Social Service Rummage Sale held at Bethel Lutheran Church. Sales of \$1,540 plus a matching grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans will go to the area LSS group homes. Thanks also to those who volunteered their time to help with set up, working the sale days, and take down. Many hands make light work! May God bless you all. Karen Haaland

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

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



### **Adult Book Club Tuesday, November 29 at 6:30 p.m.**

All adult readers are welcome to read with this group. The selection for November is "The Cross Gardener" by Jason Wright. Readers, please secure your own copy of the book. The group meets Tuesday, November 29, at 6:30 p.m. to share and discuss the book and select the next book. 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 7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays
- ♪ Praise Team – rehearses at 6:30 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](mailto:rpnelson@brainerd.net).

### **Annual Lutefisk Dinner Bethel Lutheran Church Tuesday, December 6 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 6
- ☞ Assist in the kitchen on December 6
- ☞ 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 Bill Leisenheimer. You'll enjoy the evening even if you don't eat lutefisk. ☺

## Adult Opportunities

**Women's Circle:  
"To Follow and Serve:  
The Gospel of Mark"**

Power and Authority  
Mark 4:1—6:29

**Martha Circle**

The Martha Circle meets Monday, November 21 at 1:30 p.m. at the church. Hostess is Mary Larson.

**Daily Text 2012**

Once again this year we offer the opportunity to place a group order for the 2012 Daily Text books. This is a great way to easily "get into" God's Word on a daily basis. There are selected Bible verses and prayers for each day of the year. The paperback version is \$5.00; First Lutheran will contribute \$1.00 to the cost of each book and cover the shipping cost. These books make wonderful gifts. We will place our group order before December 1. Watch the weekly bulletin for ordering or call the church office at 632-6667.

**Library Corner**

Do you have a passion for reading? Do you enjoy cracking open a brand new book or thumbing through a well-loved volume? The Library Team has a deal for you. We ask for your time (one hour meeting per month) and your enthusiasm for searching out new books and promoting one of First Lutheran's assets. Please contact Nadine Westerberg, 632-5084, Gloria Kofoed, 632-3926, or Linda Weiss, 632-1733 for more information.

We are THANKful this month for all who: donate books, give financial support, check out and read the books and media.

P.S. The suggestion box had a request for books about horses, we found some!

**Men's Bible Study Breakfasts  
Wednesdays, November 2 and 16**

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

**Adult Study Discussion Group  
on the Gospel of Mark  
Mondays, beginning November 7  
6:30-7:30 pm.**

For three Mondays, November 7, 14 and 21, we will read and study the Gospel of Mark which will be the basis for the lectionary readings for 2012. The next church year begins on the first Sunday of Advent, November 27. Pastor Dave leads this study. See you there! You may contact Pastor Dave for more information.

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

**Tuesday, November 15, 11:30 a.m.**

We gather for potluck lunch on Tuesday, November 15 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!

**Who is my Neighbor? Opportunity:**

The Salvation Army of Morrison County is recruiting bell ringers for the Red Kettle Christmas Campaign which helps to support people in poverty who turn to the Army for assistance with needs. The campaign will take place at Little Falls Wal Mart store on Fridays, November 25 and December 23, and Saturdays, December 3, 10, 17 and 24. If you are available to volunteer as a bell ringer for one hour or more, or would like more information, please contact Deanna Thompson at 632-1657, or Michele Henifin at 468-6451.

## Keeping Advent

Advent begins on November 27. 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:

### **Advent Wednesday Worship November 30, December 7, 14, and 21 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.

### **“Children First” Christian Preschool Christmas Program Sunday, December 11**

On Sunday, December 11 we present a preschool Christmas Program. Refreshments for all will follow the program. All are welcome!

#### **Visual Arts Team**

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

### **Christmas Wreath Fundraiser**

Place your order for a fresh, fragrant balsam wreath for the holidays. The 22” wreaths are decorated with pinecones and ribbon and are \$20.00 each. See the sample wreath in the gathering space and place your order on the order sheet. Wreaths will be delivered to church for pickup by December 3—the day of the Advent Craft Sale. Proceeds support youth attending the 2012 ELCA National Youth Gathering. Thanks for your support!



### **Advent Craft Sale Saturday, December 3 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 attending the 2012 ELCA National Youth Gathering in New Orleans. 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:

- ☺ Second Monday, 10:00 a.m. – Lutheran Care Center and Bridgeway Estates
- ☺ Second Thursday, 10:00 a.m. – St. Otto's Care Center and Pine Grove Manor

The 2012 Calendar Fundraiser is underway through Tuesday, November 8. Each wall calendar is \$10.00. Orders will arrive before Thanksgiving – they make great gifts!

"Children First" participates in the Little Falls "Santa Parade" on Friday, November 25, at 6 p.m.

All are welcome to attend the Preschool Christmas Program on Sunday, December 11 at 3:00 p.m.

Thank you to parents and friends who support "Children First" with financial gifts, directing Thrivent Choice dollars, sharing of time and talents and by keeping the school in your prayers. God's blessings!

Yours in Christ's Service,

Gail Hittesdorf, Director

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### 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 4, 2012.

**Sixth Grade:** "In God's Image" class for youth and parents begins on Wednesday, November 2. This class is for youth and parents.

**Seventh Grade:** Mark your calendars for class on the Ten Commandments beginning Wednesday, January 4, 2012.

**Eighth Grade:** Looking ahead – class on the Old Testament begins Wednesday, January 4 2012.

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

### Sunday 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 Stoltz Hall for opening time. Thanks to all who participated in the first T.R.E.K. rotation by leading or assisting with a station or serving as a shepherd. The second rotation, "The Tabernacle" begins on Sunday, October 30. The Hebrew people gave generously of their possessions, skills, and time to build the Tabernacle, a sacred place to worship God. During this rotation, children will learn about the Tabernacle, and take part in building a Tabernacle here at First Lutheran! Come and learn along with the children through cooking, storytelling, games, science and art. For more information or to get involved, contact Gail Hittesdorf, 632-2218, or Beth or Simon Storkamp, 632-4747.





**Sunshine Chairperson** is Mary Larson. Please call 632-8203 if you know of someone who is ill, hospitalized, etc., so that she may send them a card.

Items for the **December NEWSLETTER** are due on **November 18, 2011!**

**Daylight Savings Time ends. Remember to set your clocks *back* one hour on Saturday, November 5!**

### **Can Care Collection**

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