

DECEMBER-JANUARY
NEWSLETTER

THE FIRST MESSENGER

First Lutheran Church



Lutheranism and the Justice of Mercy

By Pastor Joe Skogmo

Depending on the mood you're in this will be one of the lamest Christmas gifts you'll receive this year, or one of the most mediocre. For Christmas, I give you: *A Theological Reflection on the Justice of God's Mercy*.

Recently I had conversation with a friend from a different denomination of Christianity. We agree on a lot, and we disagree on some. One of the things we disagree upon is around this question:

Does God's grace save people who don't believe in Jesus, or those who do grave evils?

As much as we might not like it, I think the answer is *probably yes*. My friend thinks the answer is *absolutely not*. He bases his argument on justice: "If God is just, how could God allow the salvation of the wicked or unbelieving? That wouldn't be fair."

Maybe. Maybe not.

I'd respond with a few questions of my own: *Is it even fair to punish a sinful humanity?* Especially when, according to Scripture, we're born into and cannot rise above it (cf. Genesis 8:21; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 7, et al). Therefore, if sin is inevitable and inescapable, is it really just for God to punish people for doing what they cannot avoid!? To me that's like being angry at the dog that *you* lost.

-continued on next page.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

December 10 & 17

Advent Book Study
Advent Mini Concert

December 14 & 17

New Member Sunday /
Wednesday

December 17

Children's Christmas Program

December 21

Christmas Cantata

December 24

Christmas Eve Worship
3:30pm & 5:00pm

7:00pm is a candlelight service

December 25 & 26

Merry Christmas!
Office Closed

January 1

Happy New Year!
Office closed

January 19

Office Closed

Opening doors to life in Christ.

And what about those who never had a real opportunity to believe? What about those the church has abused and left so wounded that belief feels impossible or painful? Is it truly just of God to punish them!?

My friend thinks that God's mercy and God's justice are at odds. I think God's mercy IS God's justice – and that God's sense of fairness and justice transcends ours. Think of the 'Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard' (Matthew 20:1-16) where all are paid the same wage despite working different hours. God's love and mercy transcends our ideas of fairness and justice.

Lutheranism has historically leaned into this concept. Scripture reveals again and again that God's grace violates our notions of fairness and justice. This, I think, is where Lutheranism makes its most daring claim: there is no earning salvation through works or belief, because it's already been accomplished through the faithfulness and love of God, most clearly in the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Because of this, Lutherans have sometimes been called *antinomian* (that is, anti-law). Others accuse Lutheran theology of *universalism* - that our theology of grace implies *everyone* is saved and no one is damned...which some find offensive, because, again, it appears unjust. But Lutheranism neither affirms nor denies universal salvation. Instead, we emphasize God's incomprehensible grace and leave the rest to God.

So, when the question comes, "Is it fair if the wicked or unbeliever is saved?" – the Lutheran answer doesn't so much solve the problem as it reframes it. God's love, as revealed in Scripture, isn't concerned with fairness; it's concerned with setting people free and restoring relationship. Mercy doesn't erase justice but fulfills it in a different key.

Justice, in God's economy, aims not at balancing the scales but at restoring relationship. The cross makes this plain: a sentence is delivered to a sinful world, and that sentence is merciful love, not punishment. Therefore, mercy is not unjust; it is scandalously just, because it prioritizes gracious restoration over retribution. That's who God is, and it's really hard for a world that doesn't operate that way to understand. As Paul wrote, the gospel is *foolish* according to the world's wisdom (see 1 Corinthians 1:25).

The whole arc of Scripture reveals God's justice bending this direction – toward restoration more than retaliation. After the flood, God's regret (Genesis 6:6) and covenant to never to destroy again (Genesis 9:11) mark a divine turn from retribution to restoration. With Abraham (Genesis 18) and Moses (Exodus 32), God's justice becomes negotiated, relational, and even self-questioning!

And that arc reaches its fullness when God chooses to be united to and born among the world that constantly betrays him (John 1:1-5; 3:16-17). It reaches its fullness again in the cross, where even the murderers of God are forgiven by God (Luke 23:34)! And it reaches its fullness once more in the resurrection, where God returns to a world that just killed him, a clearest sign of God's commitment to grace over revenge.

Throughout the Bible, God's ultimate judgment is mercy, not retribution, showing the ultimate form of divine justice is not balancing scales, but restoring relationship. Through Christ's birth, death, and resurrection, God keeps returning to us, rather than casting us out – despite sin, wickedness, and even unbelief; God keeps returning to us, not with revenge, but peace (John 20:19-23; Romans 5:10).

So, my friend might be right to call it unfair, but if true, then *unfairness* is God's justice, because apparently God would rather be merciful, than fair. And that's the scandal of grace we celebrate at Christmas.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

-Pastor Joe Skogmo



TRANSITIONS

"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." (Colossians 3:1&2)

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year FLC!

'Tis the time of year when many people think about the year just past, and some vow to make changes for the year to come. As our society transitions from Thanksgiving to Christmas to New Year, our lives transition also from the hustle and bustle of the holiday season to January, where the world seems to settle in for a winter's rest.

Perhaps you are among those people who desire to make changes in the next year. Maybe you want to spend more time with family, reconnect with nature, or work on your relationship with your Creator. Often-times, wise investments of time and energy pay off with positive results. Investing time on your faith life has eternal benefits.

In 1988, Phyllis and I attended a weekend retreat. It was unlike anything we had ever been to before. It was life-changing. The entire weekend was a glimpse of life lived in a state of grace. There was lots of singing, worshipful moments, laughter and tears, and many presentations to help us reconnect with Jesus and his free gift of grace.

One of the presentations was entitled Piety. The Cambridge dictionary defines piety as a strong belief in a religion that is shown in the way someone lives. Piety is a devotion. At the retreat, we were told that piety is the way you consider your relationship with Christ. It isn't so much what you do in your life of faith, but rather how you think about the way your actions bring you closer to Jesus. It's a state of mind. When have you felt especially close to Christ?

Another presentation was called Study. I think we can all recall a time when we studied for something in school to help us be successful later on in life. Studying in our faith life can help us as well. Getting to know our Bible and studying what Jesus actually said and did in His ministry can help us navigate our roller coaster lives. One method of study occurs every worship service as we hear the Gospel proclaimed and hear sermons that bring that message closer to home. What have you studied lately that has increased your understanding of faith?

A third presentation was Action. We all learned that action is a process of doing something. We are not to sit quietly at home with our Bibles in our laps and never apply biblical lessons. We are not built that way. How can we apply our piety and study to make a difference in our lives and the lives of others? Is it through volunteerism at FLC or the food pantry? Do we take action to help our neighbor in need? What have you done, as a disciple of Christ, to share Him with others?

As some of you have probably guessed by now, I am trying to prompt and encourage you to transition from being simply a participant in the pew to being an active and vibrant member of the body of Christ. The new year is a time to reflect and renew. Whether you decide to be more attentive to your personal devotional time, attend or start a Bible study, or be more active in FLC or community ministries, you can strengthen your relationship with Jesus this year.

See you at church!



NOVEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

SERVICE PROJECT

This past month, our 3rd graders had their service project. We first learned about FLC's Agape and Social Service ministries with Sara Peterson. We made trail mix bags to be donated to FLC's blessing closet and even had the chance to tour this space.



TURKEY BINGO!

We had our 4th annual Turkey Bingo fundraiser this past month. Each year it's amazing to see the volume of involvement from not only our youth but you all as well.



We can't do events like this of your support. This year we raised just over \$2,000 for the YFM future trips and activities. In addition, YFM designated 10% of funds raised to go toward the Dream Big building project. Thank you to all who came out to support our youth ministries, and to my youth volunteers; we couldn't do it without you. See you next year!



DECEMBER / JANUARY NEWS

December 17

Children's Christmas Program

Mark your calendars! Our Children's Christmas program is moving to Wednesday again this year. With the continued growth of Wednesday night worship and programming, we will be having our Children's Christmas Program on Wednesday, December 17. We will have our typical Oasis meal followed by worship that will feature our prek-5th grade kids. This worship/program will be live-streamed and recorded. This is the only event happening on this night; no PreK-12th grade programming.

December 18

FREE High School Lunch with the Pastors

All FLC high school students who are able to leave campus during lunch are invited to join Pr. Joe and Pr. Matthew at **Pizza Ranch** for a free lunch!



WINTER BREAK

Kids Fellowship| last day; Sunday Dec.14 - Resumes Jan. 11

Wednesday Nights| last night; Wednesday Dec. 17 - Resumes Jan. 7

Youth & Family Ministry

UPCOMING PREK-5TH SERVICE PROJECTS, '25-'26

Service Projects are held on Wednesdays from 6:30-7:30pm in the chapel. Parents and Guardians are encouraged to attend with their child.



January 14: 4th Grade - Helping the Elderly
February 4: 5th Grade - Helping Victims of Abuse
March 18: 2nd Grade - Helping Animals
April 22: 1st Grade - Helping out Planet

MIDDLE SCHOOL RETREAT

Who: 6th-8th Graders

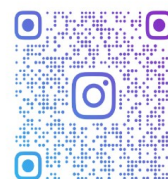
Where: Luther Crest Camp, Alexandria MN

When: February 6th-8th (watch for announcements on how to sign up in January)

Cost: \$215 – FLC will provide meals and transportation

Join us for friends, fun, and a faith-filled weekend at Luther Crest! Come on Friday evening and stay at camp until Sunday morning at camp, playing games, learning, hanging out, and spending the nights in our cabins with your friends and our awesome Luther Crest Staff! Together we'll spend time getting to know one another, enjoying the Minnesota winter, and diving into our theme: "Holy Ground - Where God Meets Us". Check-in is Friday at 7PM and closing worship and pickup is Sunday at 11AM! Family/Guardians are encouraged to join us for closing worship.

****This retreat is available for kids in 3rd-9th grade through Luther Crest Camp. FLC will be attending as a middle school only group.****



FLC_YFM

JOY TO THE WORLD
The Lord has come!

Christmas Eve Worship Service

Wednesday, December 24

3:30 & 5:00pm | **7:00pm**

candlelight service at 7pm only | all services will be livestreamed



Angel Tree

BRING JOY TO SOMEONE IN NEED
THIS CHRISTMAS!

Grab an angel from the tree by the FLC office go
shopping and return your gift by DECEMBER 21!

THEOLOGY ON TAP

QUESTIONS ABOUT LIFE?
QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD?
QUESTIONS ABOUT BOTH?

7:00PM ON THE FIRST & THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH.

OCTOBER - APRIL

BUCKS MILL BREWING | 824 WASHINGTON AVE., DETROIT LAKES

Sweet Sale

sunday, december 14

The FLC Women are hosting this annual holiday
bake sale. Proceeds go to local & area charities.

Wanted: people willing to bake and donate
goodies - lefse is always a big hit (hint, hint!)

HIGH SCHOOL
FREE LUNCH

December 18
@11:30am

AT PIZZA RANCH--
WITH PR. JOE &
PR. MATTHEW

2026 Giving Envelopes are now available,
pick up yours outside of the church office. Envelopes will be mailed
out by request only.



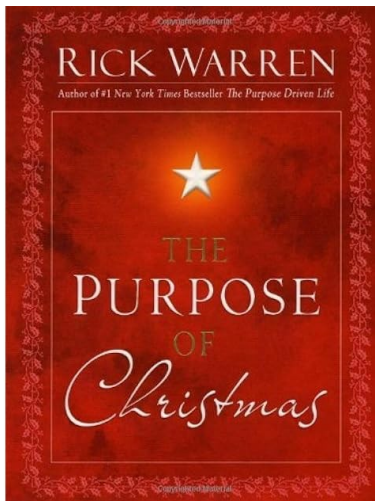
Adult Faith Formation

Advent Book Study | *The Purpose of Christmas*

by Rick Warren

Wednesday, December 10 & 17 from 11:00 – 11:50 a.m., just prior to the Advent concerts, in the church library. 15-minute videos followed by discussion.

Regardless of your background, religion, problems, or circumstances, Christmas really is the best news you could get. In his powerful yet compassionate voice, Rick Warren explains how God designed Christmas to meet your three deepest needs and how understanding and receiving God's three Christmas gifts to you will transform your life forever.



“... learning to love and serve our neighbor”

2025–26 Educational Series

These monthly learning opportunities are sponsored by the Adult Faith Formation team. And are Designed to “foster a community” at FLC that is inclusive and loving. If you have missed any of the previous sessions, they are available on the FLC YouTube channel.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY

Mental Health and Depression

When/Where:

10:30 – 11:30am, Sun, February 1 in the FLC Library

Presenter: Dr. Jonathan Aligada

Topic Summary: Nearly one-in-five American adults have experienced a mental illness according to the National Institute of Mental Health. The most common mental health conditions include anxiety disorders, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Those experiencing these conditions may be family members, friends, co-workers, or other people in your life. They are our NEIGHBORS! How can we as Christians love, include, and respect these neighbors? Dr. Jonathan Aligada, Sanford Health psychologist, will be with us to discuss how we can be good neighbors to those with these conditions. Plan to join us, bring questions, and share your experiences!

***“The Chosen”* | Video Bible**

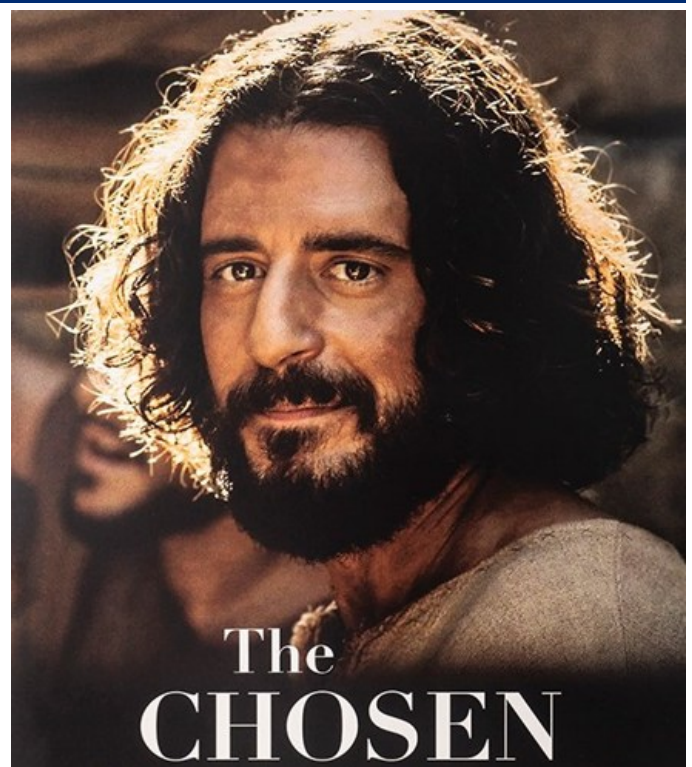
Tuesdays at 1 p.m.

beginning January 13th through March 3rd.

Led by Wade Dutton, see and discuss this acclaimed video series about Jesus and his “chosen” disciples. Using artistic interpretation of biblical stories, the series is meticulous in its historical and theological grounding and wonderful in acting and production. The viewing and conversation afterward can help us discover our own “chosen-ness” as followers of Jesus.

Each of the 8 sessions includes a 40-50 minute video with discussion following. If you are not able to come each week, each video stands on its own. Or you can watch online anytime at: **Home Page | The Chosen**

These sessions are planned for the library and are sponsored by FLC Adult Faith Formation ministry.





Making Connections | Meet the Ohmans!

Hello from The Ohmans! Sam and Tori met in 2018 through mutual college friends and started dating shortly after. They both graduated from North Dakota State University in 2020 (Go Bison!) - Sam with a Bachelor of Science in business and Tori with a Doctorate of Pharmacy. They got married in September of 2022, although Sam says what really made it official was bringing home their Beagle pup, Nova, in January of 2020.

Tori grew up in Hillsboro, North Dakota, and Sam, originally from Colorado, grew up in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Sam's family's cabin on Lake Lida has always made the lakes area "home" for him. Upon graduation from college, Tori began working as a Clinical Pharmacist at White Earth Indian Health Service which brought their family to Detroit Lakes. She also works as an adjunct faculty member at the North Dakota State University School of Pharmacy where she teaches part-time. Sam is the owner of Heartland Commodities and Securities Inc, an agricultural risk management firm in Pelican Rapids, as well as part owner of a spray foam insulation business (Foam Express LLC).



In 2023 they welcomed their daughter, Emerson, who became a big sister this September to the newest member of the crew, Michael! In their free time you'll catch them out at the lake (Emerson is a fish and could spend all day in the water), going on "adventures," watching Twins

baseball and Bison football, and trying to travel when they can. National parks are a favorite destination - seeing the world through little's eyes brings so much joy!



They became members of First Lutheran in the Fall of 2024 and are looking forward to bringing their children up in a community of faith while also growing their own faith. Emerson loves Pr. Joe, and is always very concerned about his whereabouts when she doesn't see him at the pulpit, always asking "Where Joe go?!"

**We are so thankful for our members
and are always ready to welcome new
members into the life of FLC!**



**NEW MEMBER
RECOGNITION &
WELCOME ON
SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 14 &
WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 17.**

**Want to
become a
member?**

**TO LEARN MORE
& REGISTER**

**SCAN, OR CALL
THE OFFICE**





Making Connections | Meet the Fongs

In 2003 my dear husband Kurt agreed to move from Buffalo, NY to my hometown of Detroit Lakes. My father, Don Lynch was living alone after my mother, Shirley, died and we wanted to be near him. A third generation member of First Lutheran, I was baptized and confirmed in the old beautiful sanctuary with wonderful memories of Christmas programs, beautiful choral and pipe organ music, Bethel Bible Series and Luther League. (Larry and Adrienne Buboltz were the chaperones on our trip to Seattle for the national convention!) Graduates of the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph MN and graduate studies at the University of MN, and SUNY, I found my niche as a Psych-Mental Health Nurse practitioner. When I met Kurt I was working at the Minneapolis VA as we were married at Central Lutheran in Minneapolis. We have no children. I am retired and my hobbies include reading novels, (not medical journals!) classical music and trying to keep flowers alive in the summer. In the daylight I attend League of Women Voters and Bible Study Fellowship locally.

~Laurie Fong



Born and raised in Elwood, a small town in south central Nebraska, I was baptized and confirmed in Our Redeemer Lutheran Church. My family operated a cow/calf beef operation and farmed wheat and other crops; the family also owned an incorporated electrical wiring business where I worked as a journeyman while still in high school. After chores, it was off to school and somehow I found time for sports and 4-H. After graduation, I attended College of Engineering at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, where my studies were delayed briefly by the draft. With a degree in Industrial Engineering, I took a position with 3M in Cynthiana, KY and later relocated to 3M in St. Paul. I worked as a project manager at the proprietary machine shop for capital equipment and new resale products. During that time I met my wife Laurie Lynch; relocated again by 3M, we moved to Buffalo NY, where I retired.

~ Kurt Fong

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Melissa Bleyle

Steve Futchko, Mason, Lincoln & Piper

Katie Kraetsch & Saige

Junling Li

David & Linda Rossow

Brian & Geri Skogen

Wang Yongxin

Together

By Patti Cummins

Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians 4:15-16

Oaklyn's birthday falls in the first week of December, which often means celebrating it gets squeezed between Thanksgiving and myriad Christmas events. Not wanting her to think her birthday was overlooked with all the holiday planning, I asked her if there was something special she would like for her birthday.

She sat pensively for a few moments, then cautiously said, "Well, there is something I have asked my Mom for the last two years, but she hasn't gotten it for me. That's the only thing I can think of." She told me what it was, and I wondered if there was a reason her Mom had not given her that before, because she always got "fun" presents amid the more functional ones.

Grandma took too long to respond and that gave her lively mind time to wonder. Thoughtfully, she hinted "Maybe you and Auntie Vanessa and Odelia and Addie could go together on it. I looked the item up online and it was not that expensive at all. After a quick call to get the okay from her Mom, I ordered it.

Her suggestion that family members could come together to make something that seemed out of reach happen stuck with me. We live in a culture that prioritizes independence above almost all else. But that was not God's intent for us, either from Him directly or His Son Jesus.

In loving each other as Jesus spoke to us, together we care for and support those in need. To share God's message of love and grace, we are to come together as the body of Christ, because we can do so much more together to accomplish the work God has set out for us than we could ever do alone.

I sometimes take that independent stance beyond the point where it is helpful. I need to remember Oaklyn's words also, that in unity and with prayerful consideration, we can do all things with God Who strengthens us.



MEMORIALS

Thank you to those who gave in honor or memory of their family and friends.

AGAPE

In memory of Bev Hummel,
given by: Mary Jo & Roger Kuhn, Holly Heisserer, Nancy & Bill Henke, Tom & Betty Schroeder, Kris Tovson, Dolly Tovson, Kevin & Carol Shipley, Janelle Maday, Rodney & Shirley Searls, Denise & Todd Gaard, Garnet Hultgren, Tom & Joyce Klyve, DLCCC Historic Holmes Theatre, Nancy Noben-Trauth, Lauryl Ivers, John & Kim Green, Pat Zurn, LeAnn Erickson, Robert Martinson, Kurtis & Laurie Fong, Jean & Jim Anderson, Joan Westlake, Dean Mickelson, Susie Reitmeier, Anonymous, Jerel Schimmelpfennig, Patti Cummins, Mary Beth & Craig Caulfield, Ann Williams, David & Dee Pretty, Judy Peterson, Bill & Carole Schalow, Jean & Wayne Benson, Mike & Carol Nustad, Sharon Sinclair, Anne Jorgenson, Connie Edwards, Gail Colby, Cindy & Jim Bruflo, Denny & Carolyn Betz, Adrienne Buboltz, Ronald & JoAnn Abrahamson, Gayle Defehr, Henrietta Malchow, Darrol & Grace Nichols, Carla & Howie Hansen, Michael & Mary Stoltman, John & Ruth King, Shan & Rick Manke, Dennis & Judy Kohlman, David & Jeannine Eisland, Maxine Nelson, Mary Olson, Michael & Bette Wammer, Catherine Barner, Viggo & Jo Ann Thomsen, Gerald & Marjo Staehling, Janice & Carl Fingalson, Connie & John Wood, William & Mary Briggs, Jon & Nikki Anderson, Alan Hagen, Judie Cherry, Bonnie Mohs, Wade & Holly Dutton, Joseph Evans, David & Judith Stowman, Marilyn K Leiseth, Kristi & Darrel Pederson, Mike & Dianne Fillmore, Roy & Peggy Hammerling, Tom, JoAnne, & Kriss Saldin, Ann Newgard-Larson & Robert Larson, JoAnna Prokes & Susan Rhoda Hooper, Mary & Charles Musselman, Kent & Patty Mollberg, Robbin & Jennifer Turnwall, Ron Zeman, Catharine & Gaylen Weisenburger, Lynnette Price, Amy Stoller & Michael Stearns, Steven & Susan Przybilla, Matthew & Diana Hedstrom, Peter Hummel, Mike & Lori Hynnek, Mark & Cindy Fritz, Julie & James Hessel, Carolyn Zurich, Law Center, Inc, Paul Heisler, Terry & Linda Beilke, Dave & Jan Mickelson, Mary Ann Evans, Anonymous, Betty Fischer, Ted & Lynn Cihak, Jackie & Mitch Buboltz

BUILDING

In memory of Bev Hummel, given by Darlene Olson

DREAM BIG

In memory of Bev Hummel, given by Rod & Sue Schaffer, Tom & Phyllis Neuenfeldt, Ruth Price, Bob Jernberg

MUSIC

In memory of Bev Hummel, given by: Ardis Hegna, Kathy Larson, Madalyn Sukke, Marilyn Tinjum, Karen & Cliff Bimberg, Christopher & Jennifer Heyer
In memory of Larry Buboltz, given by: Karen & Cliff Bimberg
In memory of Terry Hockett, given by: LaVerne & Judy Maxwell

UNDESIGNATED

In memory of Bev Hummel, given by Arlene Olson

YOUTH & FAMILY ACTIVITIES

In memory of Vonnie Stenger, given by: Denise Hukriede

November Financial Snapshot

YTD Actual Revenue: \$256,402.24
YTD Budget Revenue: \$271,878.00
Favorable/(Unfavorable) (\$15,475.76)
* Unaudited

Noisy Offering Totals

The **October** total, going to:
Churches United is **\$934.64**

The **November** Noisy Offering went to
Fix it Forward **\$1034.49**

The **December** Noisy Offering will go to
FLC Agape Ministry

Reminder: when giving memorials to the FLC Foundation or FLC Quilters, please make separate checks.



ADVENT MINI-CONCERTS

at First Lutheran Church

Wednesdays from 12:00 - 12:30pm

Concerts are free of charge & open to the public.
Everyone is welcome to attend!

December 3

Tim Eggebratten

December 10

Peggy Hammerling, flute solos

Accompanist: Karen Bimberg

Paul Heisler, piano solos, and duets

December 17

Rich Johnson, saxophone

Emma Duncan, vocal solos

Accompanist: Karen Bimberg

A soup & sandwich lunch to follow each concert, with a freewill donation.
Concerts will also be live streamed at: firstlutheranchurch.com

--First Lutheran Church, 912 Lake Ave, Detroit Lakes--



December

Sunday	Mon	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat
	1	2	3 *** 11am Advent Book Study 12pm Advent mini Concert & lunch 6:30pm AFF: Learning to Love Your Neighbor	4 7pm Theology on Tap	5	6 Children's Christmas Store 9am-3pm
7 Communion	8	9 9a Rebekah Circle	10 *** 11am Advent Book Study 12pm Advent mini Concert & lunch	11 FLC Women's Christmas Luncheon	12	13
14 Sweet Sale New Member Sunday	15	16 5:30p Vision Council	17 *** 11am Advent Book Study 12pm Advent mini Concert & lunch Children's Christmas Program New Member Wednesday	18 11:30am HS Pizza Lunch 7pm Theology on Tap	19	20
21 Christmas Cantata	22	23	24 3pm Christmas Eve Service 5:30p Christmas Eve Service 7:30p Christmas Eve Service	25 Merry Christmas! Office Closed	26 Office closed	27
28	29	30	31 No Oasis—Christmas Break			

January

Sunday	Mon	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat
				1 Happy New Year! Office Closed	2 Office Closed	3
4 Communion	5	6	7 ***	8 1:30pm Ruth Circle	9	10
11	12	13 9a Rebekah Circle	14 ***	15 7pm Theology on Tap	16	17
18 Communion Baptism: Christen	19 Office Closed	20 1pm The Chosen Bible Study	21***	22	23	24
25	26	27 1pm The Chosen Bible Study 5:30pm Vision Council	28 ***	29 11:30am HS Pizza Lunch 7pm Theology on Tap	30	31

***WEEKLY ACTIVITIES:

Sunday | Worship service 9:30am Fellowship & kids fellowship 10:30am ~ **Tuesday** | FLC Quilters 8:30am Office Staff Meeting 9am ~ **Wednesday** | Men's Bible Study 6:30am Oasis Meal | Worship Team Rehearsal 5pm Worship Service 6pm Jubilate Choir practice 7:15pm ~ **Thursday** | Women's Bible Study 8am

Women of FLC

PICEMAKERS

By Deb Ormseth

What have the quilters been up to lately? We are always busy, but have been making quilts and other items for a number of donation opportunities. The photo below shows many of baby quilts ready for local donation. We've also been working on items for the Children's Christmas Store which was held on December 6th .

A denim quilt was completed in the last week (80 inches by 90 inches), and is ready for purchase if a Christmas gift is needed.

Quilts for Lutheran World Relief will be on their way to the regional donation site in December.

Pastor Matthew visited the quilters prior to the start of staff meeting. As you can see from the photo, his long reach was very helpful as the center of a quilt was tied. Pastor Matthew; you are welcome to visit us any time, whether or not you have time to participate. We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Baby quilts ready for donation.

WORTHY WOMEN

The Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering will be in Des Moines, Iowa, July 16-19, 2026. The theme is I am Worthy focusing on the work of the women in the church. What a wonderful opportunity for us to attend because it is so close!!! Worship, Inspiring Speakers, Workshops, Singing, and Service Projects are all part of the 3 day convention with plenty of time to see some of Des Moines as well.

Enjoy a few days with friends, learn new ideas, meet new Lutheran friends and relax!!

Registration is available at: womenoftheelca.org with lots more information !
Register by January 5, for a reduced rate!

ALL WOMEN of FLC ARE INVITED to our Christmas Potluck Luncheon, December 11, 2025, 11:30 am. We bring the food, so please join us for a little Christmas Cheer and Fellowship.

The Worthy Women of FLC have compiled 20 Baby Kits, and 40 school kits for distribution to the needy people around the world. Thank you for your contribution and helpful work in getting these ready! You are Worthy! You are Important! See you at women's events!

SWEET SALE | Sunday, December 14 . It's that wonderful time of year when we dust off our prized recipes to share or look forward to special treats someone prepared. This annual event raises funds to support those in our community, the world, and the work of First Lutheran Women, of which we are all a part.

WE CARE RECEIPTS | Save your Central Market! The Rebekah Circle is collecting receipts and turning them in for money. Money raised goes toward the Circle's ongoing support of local ministries and organizations. A collection basket is outside of the church office.



Christmas Poinsettias

If you would like to share flowers please complete this form and return it to the church office by **December 15. or to pay on line, scan the QR Code.**

Cost is \$13 per plant.

Purchased plants can be picked on December 24 after the 7pm worship service.



In Honor of: _____

In Memory of: _____

Given by: _____

Total number of plants purchased _____.

Please make checks payable to First Lutheran Flower Fund.

Attention!

Due to holiday busyness and awkward office schedules at the end of December, and due to challenges in past years meeting end-of-the-year newsletter deadlines, *the next edition of the First Messenger will be a December/January issue.*

Therefore, in December you will receive a combined
December/January newsletter.

(*NOTE: We will continue to post information and updates as usual in the weekly email updates, on social media, and in the bulletins.)

Congregational Staff

Lead Pastor:

Pastor Joe Skogmo

Associate Pastor:

Pastor Matthew Rossler

Director of Operations:

Paul Haarstick

Community Relations Director:

Sara Peterson

Youth & Family Ministry

Director: Olivia Sauer

Office & Volunteer Coordinator:

Sonny Thomas

Worship Music Coordinator:

Karen Bimberg

Adult Choir Director:

Kathy Larson

Bell Choir Director:

Carla Hansen

Vision Council

President: Tom Neuenfeldt

President-Elect: Kari Stattelmann

Secretary: Beth Tinjum

Treasurer: Kevin Shipley

DeAnne Udby, Jon Freeman, Catharine Weisenburger, Jeff Sliper and Sue Quam, Ryan Bjorklund

Foundation Board

President: Ryan Manke

President-Elect: Les Perry

Secretary: Patti Cummins

Treasurer: Susan Schaffer

Shar Arvig, Alex Hagedorn,

Don Busker, Pam Orth and

LeAnn Mouw

Our worship services can be found on:

**KDLM-1340 AM and
93.1 FM radio
Sundays at 10:00 AM.**

**On the church website:
firstlutheranchurch.com**

**on TV: Saturdays at 9:00 AM
on Arvig Cable channel 14.**

First Lutheran Church

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OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Thursday
8:30 AM to 4:00 PM
Friday
8:30 AM to 12:00 PM



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