



The First Messenger

FEBRUARY 2025



Finding Beauty in the Ordinary

By Pastor Matthew Engum

This time of year is my least favorite. Christmas is done, Lent/Easter is far off, and there isn't much to look forward to, whether in the church or society. Plus, while we are gaining light, it doesn't feel like we gain that light quick enough, as many days remain dark and cloudy and cold. This time of year is always a reminder for me to look to the small and mundane in my life with gratitude. That it isn't huge events and activities that life is lived for, but really, the small and mundane. Where beauty breaks through in the things that occur everyday, without pomp and circumstance. So, I invite you to find (in gratitude) where beauty breaks through the ordinary.

Thoughtful Tidbits, by Pastor Matthew , continued on page 2

Dates to Remember

February 4

Theology on Tap

February 7-9

Middle School Retreat

February 12

No Wednesday meal/worship/
confirmation, Wednesday
school

February 16

No Sunday School

February 17

Office closed—President's Day

February 18

Theology on Tap

February 20

High School FREE Pizza Lunch

February 23

High School Hangout Lunch

Game Show Night at Confirmation Class!



Thoughtful Tidbit *continued from page one*

What I've been doing:

I offer here the books, films, and other art forms I'm engaging in for the month. These are in no way a recommendation for anything listed, just an offering of what I've explored in the last month. I believe art and the imagination to be a Truth telling device as we live out the Gospel together. Engaging in and consuming art together is a way to be the Kingdom of God, here and now, together. So here is what I've been reading, viewing, and listening to this month:

- *Game of Thrones* (A series on HBO Max; not recommended for under 18 year olds!)
- *Stick Season* (Forever) (Music album by Noah Kahan)
- *Bury The Moon* (Music album by Ásgeir)
- *The Anthropocene Reviewed* (Book by John Green)
- *The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance* (Book by Dorothee Soelle)

As always, my door is always open, stop in for a chat and a warm or cold beverage.

Best, Pastor Matthew Engum



Dream Big Update | Carla Solem, Vision Council President

After an unplanned break due to Vanman Associates closing, the Dream Big Committee has selected a new architect, YHR from Moorhead. YHR created three preliminary drawings which the committee reviewed and provided input on. YHR took the input and made adjustments, bringing updated drawings and ballpark estimates to a meeting at the end of January. The council will review work to date on January 28th and determine a path for congregational input. Initial meetings with our capital campaign consultant also started in January, with the goal of a 2025 campaign. Since our congregation is so amazing at dreaming BIG, our renovation plan and capital campaign will likely have to be completed in phases. It has been so fun to see the awesome ideas and enthusiasm members and staff have for First Lutheran Church!

234 Fellowship



Family Open Gym

The 234 Fellowship is sponsoring a family open gym afternoon on Sunday, February 16 from 3:30-6pm at the Boys and Girls Club

This event is FREE! Bring a friend! This is a great opportunity to invite someone who is new to FLC. Perhaps you have never attended a 234 event—pack the kids in the car and come on over — we can't wait to spend the afternoon with you!

January Highlights

Service Project

In January our 4th graders had the opportunity to help the elderly. They created fleece tie blankets to donate to FLC homebound and nursing home members. Thank you 4th grade for keeping our eldest generation warm during these cold, cold months.



February News

High School

Feb 20th - Lunch w/Pastors @ Pizza Ranch
Feb 23rd - HS Hangout 4:30-6

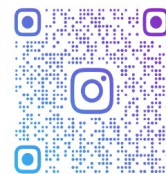
Service Project

Feb. 5th - 5th Grade - Helping victims of abuse
Held on Wednesdays 6:30-7:30 in the chapel; Parents and Guardians are encouraged to attend with their child

Middle School Retreat

Who: 6th-8th Graders
Where: Luther Crest Camp, Alexandria MN
When: February 7th-9th
Pr. Matthew and Olivia are so excited to be attending Luther Crests winter retreat with 6 fantastic FLC middle schoolers. Check back next month to hear and see how our adventure was.

Follow First Lutheran Youth and Family Ministry on Instagram!



FLC_YFM



President's Day Break

February 12 - No Wednesday School or Confirmation
February 16 — No Sunday School

If you have any questions or concerns, or want more info, contact Olivia at: 920-860-4655 or email: olivia@firstlutheranchurch.com | Typically in office M-Th 8:30am-4pm

Looking Ahead

Middle School Lock-In

March 8th/9th, 8pm-8am - 6th-8th graders, get ready for a night to remember. Join us for an epic filled Lock-in here at FLC, with tons of activities, games, fellowship, and pizza!

*Still have the energy to pull an allnighter? We will be gathering volunteers to help with this event in the coming weeks.



Service Projects

Held on Wednesdays 6:30-7:30 in the chapel; Parents and Guardians are encouraged to attend with their child.

March 19th | 2nd Grade - Helping Animals
April 2nd | 1st Grade - Helping out the Planet

March 5th Ash Wednesday

Join us for worship at 6pm

*No Wed school or
Confirmation*

Sign-up

By Patti Cummins

Be devoted to one another ... not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulations, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. Romans 12:10-13

We were on our route from Oaklyn's house to mine when our path deviated slightly.

"Grandma, where are we going?"

"I'm just dropping something off for a friend." Oaklyn's natural social instincts and curiosity kicked in, so she was fairly frustrated when our knocks on my friend's door got no response.

"Where is she, Grandma?"

"Oh Oaklyn! I just remembered that my friend works today!" We found a spot where the package would be safe from birds and squirrels but still visible to my friend when she arrived home.

"What work does your friend do, Grandma?"

"She visits people who are sick and maybe alone. She gives them comfort and lets them know they are not alone or forgotten, and that God is with them and loves them. She prays with them."

If you didn't know better, you would have thought she'd won the jackpot.

"That's what I want to do!!! Where do I sign up, Grandma?"

I explained that she had to be a little older for that particular job, which resulted in a very disappointed sigh. We talked about doing that "work" even if it wasn't our "job." It is no wonder Jesus loved having the children nearby. Their joyful hearts are good medicine, and they are open to others.

Sometimes we may forget the joy found in serving one another through love, the love for which we can serve as a conduit from God to our neighbors. Whether it's something that requires us to "sign-up," show-up, or just respond in love to the neighbor in front of us, these opportunities to share God's love bring true joy to us and others, faithfully serving and helping grow His kingdom on Earth.

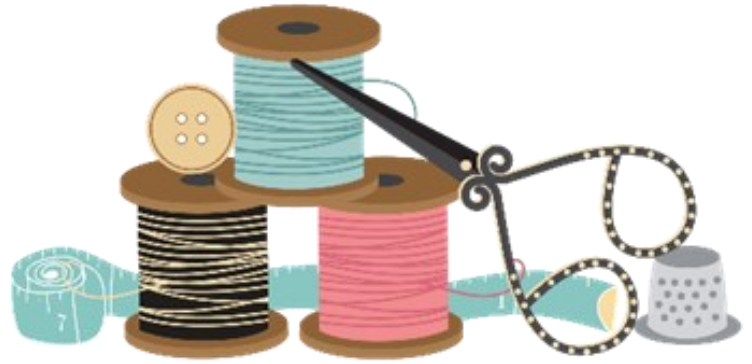
serve
One another in
love 

Women of the ELCA | Piecemakers

PIECEMAKERS

The quilts we make are fabric and thread. We enjoy each other's company and making the quilts. As the quilts are finished, we count and pack them and send them on their way. Most go to Lutheran World Relief. Some are donated locally and, as I noted before, 12 large quilts and 8 baby quilts were mailed to Ashville, North Carolina, following Hurricane Helene.

The quilts were sent to Andy and Tonya Marthaler who own a store in Ashville and agreed to act a liaison between the First Lutheran Quilters and those in need in Ashville. (You may remember Mark and Vicki Marthaler, Tony and Andy, who were members of First Lutheran Church.)



Recently the Quilters received a Thank You letter from Tonya and we wish to share portions of the letter with you:

"To each and every precious person who contributed to the quilts sent for the people tragically affected by the flooding from Hurricane Helene.... Thank you!"

"Your generosity of time and talent in the presence of so much loss is a blessing that means more than words could ever say."

"So many quilts were found when the waters receded. Everyone did their best to try and find the original owners. I think it's because everyone understands the labor of love and how many memories are tied to each and every piece of fabric and stitch."

"Currently there are 11 families we are partnering to help for Christmas. We will be sharing the quilts with these families. Please keep these families in your prayers. Two in particular stand out to me."

"A mom with four children; their father was killed in the flood waters. She is struggling to come to terms with the trauma they experienced, and losing her husband. Unfortunately, she tried to kill herself – thank the Lord she wasn't successful. She is currently in treatment while the kids are with grandparents. I am praying they are all together again soon. Some of the quilts will go to this family."

"Another family is a single Mom of two kids; one is a fourteen-year-old boy. He courageously helped his family to safety in all the flood waters. They will also receive a quilt."

"Prayers for each of these 11 families would be such a gift."

"There are so many tragic stories, but just as many stories of heroism and the kindness of strangers. Opening the boxes made my eyes water – knowing people so far away care so much is genuinely a blessing that brings us all right back to Jesus."

"Thank you again for thinking of the precious souls here in Western North Carolina, thank you for praying."

The letter was read to us during coffee break. There was a moment of silence when the reader finished. To say we were touched is an understatement. As quilts are packed and mailed, we hope the quilts will bless the receivers. Actually, hearing the stories of recipients is humbling.

We are preparing another box of quilts for Ashville as the Marthaler family is willing to connect the quilts with needy recipients. There will be need for some time to come in Ashville, as in many other areas of the country and world.

- Submitted by Deb Ormseth

Stewardship Team

February Noisy Offering Recipient – Global Health Ministries



Global
Health
Ministries

Noisy offering collected in February will help support Global Health Ministries (GHM).

GHM is an independent Lutheran nonprofit established in 1987, and specializes in capacity-building for Lutheran health systems in under-resourced countries, serving some of the most vulnerable people in the world.

They believe all people should have access to a healthy life.

Each year thousands of volunteers gather in a Minnesota-based warehouse to help sort and pack medical equipment and supplies to share around the world. At the request of international partners GHM also offer grants and volunteer consultants to help build local health care organization capacity to move the needle on health in their communities and effect sustainable and enduring change.

Global Health Ministries journeys together with our brothers and sisters in Christ, where Lutheran churches manage hospitals, clinics, and grassroots efforts - all focused on improving the health of even the most vulnerable. They focus on strengthening health systems through three integrated strategies: Leadership, Medical Supplies, and Grassroots Efforts.

GHM has active projects in thirteen lower-income countries around the world, where they work with partners who last year touched the lives of more than 1 million people. Their work takes them to Africa, Asia, and Central America, where each of their partners shares a commitment to serve those on the margins, and has asked GHM to collaborate with them to improve community health.

Thank you for your generosity in support of Global Health Ministries.

NOISY OFFERING TOTALS

The total from the December Noisy Offering, going to: **FLC Agape Fund is \$1638.38**

In the month of February the Noisy Offering will go towards: **Global Health Ministries**

Fiscal Mid-Year Financial Snapshot

Actual Revenue*, Year to Date:	\$360,041.91
Budget Revenue, Year to Date	<u>\$391,985.00</u>
Favorable/(Unfavorable)	(31,943.09)
Actual Expenses*, Year to Date:	\$356,202.42
Excess/(Loss) Revenue over Expenses:	\$3,839.49

*unaudited



Adult Faith Formation - Bible Study

The four-session study on the book of Daniel continues in February and the final two sessions will be held on **Thursday February 6 and 13**, from **2-3 p.m.** in the FLC Library.

*"Pastor Matthew and I will be leading this four-part series studying the **Book of Daniel**.*

*Daniel is considered a minor prophet of the Old Testament. In this study we will lift up both the well-known and lesser known parts of the book, survey some of its historical context, and touch up-on the widely misunderstood and sensationalized category of "Apocalyptic" literature. Whether you know a lot about the **Book of Daniel** or absolutely nothing, we hope you feel welcomed and encouraged to attend whatever parts of the series that you can. We look forward to wrestling with Scripture together!" - Pastor Joe*



Lenten Devotional Book 2025!

Calling All Ages! You have an opportunity to write a devotion for a Lenten Devotional Booklet which will be distributed to the congregation by Ash Wednesday. Please consider being one of the authors of the booklet to inspire others as they read a daily devotion from it during the Lenten season . . . and beyond. You can be as creative as you wish: poetry, narrative, personal experiences . . . this year's Lenten theme is "How Does Your Faith and Play interact in Your Life:".

Please email your devotion book submission to Gary Goreham, from the Adult Faith Formation team, by **February 20**. Please email your devotional to Gary Goreham: garygoreham@outlook.com



Memorial Gifts Received

GENERAL

In memory of Lorraine Tyberg,
from Amber Decker

YOUTH & FAMILY PROGRAM

In memory of Lorraine Tyberg,
from Ted & Holly Heisserer

MUSIC

In memory of Louise Berg,
from Ted & Holly Heisserer

In memory of Louise Berg,
from Pam & Paul Orth

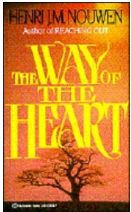
In memory of Louise Berg,
from Sandy & Dan Berg

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

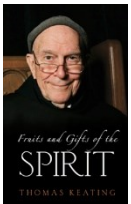
NEW AT THE LIBRARY | Submitted by Patti Cummins



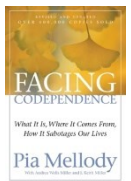
Twelve Steps to Inner Freedom: Humility Revisited by Joan Chittister. This practical, yet profound guide re-examines the timeless 12-Step program of Saint Benedict. Step by step, Joan Chittister shows how humility can bring harmony to the soul and peace to the world.



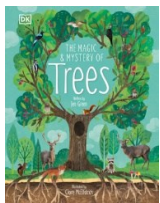
The Way of the Heart by Henri Nouwen. Noise is scientifically proven to stress you out. Distinguished theologian, spiritual thinker and author Henri Nouwen writes about the importance of silence for spirituality and presents the invitation to "pray always". What makes us human is not our mind but our heart, not our ability to think but our ability to love. Nouwen encourages people to take the disciplines of solitude, silence and prayer more seriously. This uplifting read is for anyone looking to: Renew their spirituality and find faith within simple practices. Learn more about continuous prayer and pursue a deeper relationship with God. Create solitude and find comfort in silence.



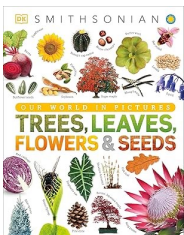
Fruits and Gifts of the Spirit by Thomas Keating. The spiritual journey is a gradual process of enlarging our emotional, mental, and physical relationship with the divine reality that is present in us. The spiritual journey teaches us, first, to believe in the Divine Indwelling within us, fully present and energizing every level of our being; second, to recognize that this energy is benign, healing, and transforming; and third, to enjoy its gradual unfolding step-by-step both in prayer and action.



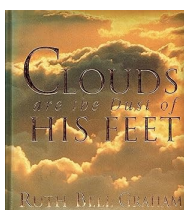
Facing Codependence: What It Is, Where It Comes From, and How It Sabotages Our Lives by Pia Mellody. Pia Mellody creates a framework for identifying codependent thinking, emotions, and behavior and provides an effective approach to recovery. Mellody sets forth five primary adult symptoms of this crippling condition, then traces their origin to emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical, and sexual abuses that occur in childhood. Recovery from codependence, therefore, involves clearing up the toxic emotions left over from these painful childhood experiences.



The Magic & Mystery of Trees by Jen Green. From the highest branch and leaf down to the complex "wood wide web" of roots, it is no wonder every part of a tree plays an important role in its own growth and the habitat of the whole forest or woodland. Did you know that trees can communicate with each other and warn each other predators? Or that they can record the past, and anticipate the future to ensure their survival? Discover exactly how trees nurture their networks, and explore extraordinary trees from all around the world.



Trees, Leaves, Flowers & Seeds, from Smithsonian. Have you ever wondered which plants eat insects? Or how cacti store water? How about which flowers look like bees? Or where is the tallest tree in the world? If you find yourself seeking the answers to these quirky questions and so many more, then Trees, Leaves, Flowers & Seeds may be the book for you! Explore the smallest seeds to the tallest trees. Discover the weirdest, smelliest and deadliest flowers on our planet,



Clouds are the Dust of His Feet by Ruth Bell Graham. Born in Qingjiang, Kiangsu, China on June 10, 1920 to medical missionaries. She was 17-years-old when she returned to the United States to attend Wheaton College in Illinois where she met future Evangelist Billy Graham. Though married to a famous Baptist minister, she remained a Presbyterian and often taught Sunday school classes. Beautiful and soulful poems that chronicle her life including travels throughout the world.

Check out these new reads!



Meet the Pladson family!



Mike and Kim have been members at First Lutheran since 2006. We both grew up in small towns in North Dakota, Mayville-Portland and Clifford-Galesburg. Ironically those towns are combined in one school district today. We have been married 41 years. Most of our married life we spent living in West Fargo, ND. We have one daughter, Leslie. She is married, and Tim, Leslie, and their children Scarlet (4) and Lucy (2) continue to live in West Fargo. We absolutely adore our grandchildren and enjoy being grandparents.

In 2006 we made Cotton Lake our last move. Mike retired a few years ago from Supervalu, a job he had had for 38 years. Kim continues to work in Fargo at TNT Kid's Fitness. A non-profit and one of the founders. She continues to commute to Fargo each day. We both enjoy being active. We love to take 10-20-mile bike rides, walk, workout, downhill ski, slalom ski (Mike barefoots), snowmobiling, snow shoeing, and love being active with our family at the lake.

Mike serves on the Vision Council for First Lutheran, volunteers at the Becker Food Pantry, and grooms trails for the Ultra Snowmobile club. Kim serves on the West Central Essentia Innovis Board of Di-

rectors. Service has always been a part of our lives, and we divide our time into both the communities Fargo and Detroit Lakes. Family is especially a significant part of our lives. Through Kim's work our whole family all volunteer to support individuals with special needs. Kim's vision is to grow awareness so children with special needs can integrate more in public schools, community, and through extra-curricular activities, ABLE Games. An annual functional fitness competition for students in public/private schools, average person who enjoys being active, or the Cross Fit community. Its purpose is to bring awareness of ability! Held in Fargo, ABLE Games and ABLE In School continues to impact regional-area communities and growth! Definitely a passion of Kim's work and Mike is a strong advocate as well.

We are blessed to be a part of First Lutheran in Detroit Lakes. Our daughter got married here, we have made many friends, and surprisingly many families we grew up with either live around the area or have a lake home and we have rekindled many relationships and started new ones. Faith has always been an important part of our lives. Through Christ, all things are possible! We continue to grow in faith and are grateful for the many people in our lives that have shaped our faith and service. We look forward to 2025 and count our blessings for our health, family, and every sunrise and sunset!





Meet the Olsons!

Hello members of First Lutheran Church! Nathan, McKenzie, and Brennan Olson would like to introduce ourselves in this month's Making Connections Column. Nathan grew up in Gettysburg, South Dakota, which is 60 miles north of the capital of Pierre in the north-central part of the state. He is a proud alumni of South Dakota State University (GO JACKS!) and Montana State University. Nathan started his career with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as a fisheries biologist in the Twin Cities where he met his lovely and awesome wife, McKenzie. McKenzie grew up in Moorhead (GO SPUDS!), attended Moorhead State University, and is a die-hard hockey fan. We got married in 2007 and new jobs took us to Milbank, South Dakota and Fergus Falls before coming to Detroit Lakes in 2013. Nathan works in the Section of Fisheries for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources at the office near Dunton Locks County Park. McKenzie works in the Becker County Auditor/Treasurers Office. She plays a large role in making sure elections are completed correctly. Brennan will be 13 years old this month and is in 7th grade at Roosevelt Middle School. He enjoys gaming, the outdoors, and playing pickleball with his dad.



We have been members of First Lutheran Church for almost ten years. Nathan has served on Vision Council, the Personnel Committee, a Call Committee, was Vision Council President in 2022, and helps as much as he can with the sound board. Brennan is in his second year of confirmation and is slowly learning the ropes of handling the slides for worship. McKenzie has served on a call committee and all of us enjoy volunteering at the Children's Christmas Store. As a family we love to go camping and spent almost every weekend last summer somewhere in our camper. Itasca State Park is our favorite spot with all it has to offer. Thanks for reading and see you at church!

Looking Ahead Lent 2025

March 5: Ash Wednesday |

Wednesday Lenten noon services & meal begin

April 13: Palm Sunday

April 18: Good Friday

April 20: Easter Sunday



An illustration of Uncle Sam and an elderly woman celebrating the 4th of July. Uncle Sam, wearing his iconic top hat and striped pants, is on the left, holding a small American flag. The elderly woman, with white hair and a red bow, is on the right, also holding a small American flag. They are surrounded by red and blue balloons and falling confetti.



CONGREGATIONAL STAFF

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pastorjoe@firstlutheranchurch.com

Associate Pastor : Pastor Matthew Engum
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Communications Director: Sara Peterson
sara@firstlutheranchurch.com

Youth & Family Ministry Director: Olivia Sauer
olivia@firstlutheranchurch.com

Worship Music Coordinator: Karen Bimberg
karen@firstlutheranchurch.com

Adult Choir Director: Kathy Larson
kathrynmyrom@gmail.com

Vision Council

President: Carla Solem

President-Elect:

Tom Neuenfeldt

Secretary: Paula Schulz

Treasurer: Kevin Shipley

Erin Erickson, Mike Pladson,
DeAnne Udby, Jon Freeman,
Catharine Weisenburger &
Matt Ask

Foundation Board

President: Ryan Manke

President-Elect: Les Perry

Secretary: Patti Cummins

Treasurer: Susan Schaffer

Shar Arvig, Alex Hagedorn,
Don Busker, Ted Heisserer &
Pam Orth

Our worship services can
be found on:

**KDLM-1340 AM and
on 93.1 FM Radio
each Sunday Morning 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-Friday)
8:30 AM to 4:00 PM



Opening Doors to Life in Christ!



The First Messenger is published monthly and mailed to the members and friends of First Lutheran Church. The purpose of this publication is to inform the congregation of church activities and upcoming events.

**Articles for publication are to
be submitted to the church
office by the 20th
of each month.**