



The First Messenger

DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Drive Up Communion Wednesdays

December 2nd & 16th

Drive up Communion Sundays

December 6th & 20th

Advent Mini Concerts Begin

December 2nd

Children's Online Christmas Program

December 13th

10:45 Parking Lot Worship Services

December 20th & 27th

Volume 29

December 2020

Issue 9

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Christmas Eve Services

3:30 PM Parking Lot Live Nativity Worship Service

(Animals will be provided by the Trowbridge Zoo and will include a camel, ox, goats and sheep.)

5:00 PM Online Live Streamed Worship Service

7:00 PM Radio Broadcast Worship Service

9:00 PM Parking Lot 'Candlelight' Worship Service

Christmas Day Service

11:00 AM Online Live Streamed Worship Service

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

An important announcement regarding Indoor Worship Services at First Lutheran Church can be found on page 5.

Please continue to reach out to the church office via email or phone if you are in need of anything. If you are calling, please leave a message and we will respond ASAP.

What's Inside?

Calendar	Page 19
Children's	Page 13
Creation Care	Page 16
The Link	Page 15
Memorials	Page 15
New Member List	Page 7
Pastor Joe's Message	Page 2
Pastor's Lauryl's Post	Page 3
Parish Health	Page 9
Pillars	Page 6
President's Post	Page 4
Stewardship Update	Page 17
Youth News	Page 12



PASTOR JOE'S UPDATE

Update from Lead Pastor Joe Skogmo

There is something that my uncle Loren, a retired ELCA pastor, says often in response to Jesus' command: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39). In response to hearing that command Loren says that he often wants to respond, "But, Jesus, I can't. I can't do that perfectly."

In other words, we can try and love our neighbor well, but our broken, sinful nature always impedes and limits us (see Genesis 8:21, Psalm 51:3, Romans 7:14-26, 1 John 1:8, and about a billion other verses in Scripture). As broken, inclined-toward-sin human beings there will always be things that make love complicated, or even as we try to love there will often be lingering jealousies, rivalries, resentments, passive aggressions, prejudices, shortchanges, or self-serving motives present, or we might not say it perfectly or do the perfectly right thing, and our efforts to love will often if not always be incomplete. We can't escape it. It's our nature. And yet God graciously loves us, and without ceasing.

Because of the nature of humanity and because of the inescapable web and condition of this broken world, it is impossible to love each other perfectly. This goes for our family lives, our friendships, our parenting, our grandparenting, our jobs, for all of our ways of being, and therefore includes our congregational life.

We see that now more than ever as we try to navigate faithfully and lovingly this pandemic period as a church family. For instance, with indoor worship—as a congregation, what is the right thing to do? What is the loving thing to do? With local case rates surging to a level not yet seen, with hospitals and clinics short-staffed, with cold and flu season ramping up, with hospitals filling up and maxing out, there is undeniably a loving, commonsensical, and morally justifiable reason to suspend everything with regards to in-person worship and in-person ministries. AND...at the same time, with spiritual, social, and mental health needs being especially paramount in this dark period, with the fundamental human need to physically gather, with the need for some stability and centering ritual in this unstable and de-centering time, there is loving, commonsensical, and morally justifiable reason to at least try and continue some level of in-person worship and in-person ministries.

So, what do we do? Suspend completely? Open up wider? Meet in the middle? What is the middle?

What do we do? We want certainty, but there is no such thing.

What do we do? We are trying to love perfectly, and we can't.

What do we do??

We need a lot of grace and a lot of help.

Thankfully, Jesus has promised us both.

And I have seen the shining light of that promise. I have seen Jesus show up – I have seen him in the determination and creativity of the FLC staff. I have seen him in the agonizing, heartfelt discernment of the Restart Team. I have seen him in the lay leadership's resilience and competence. I have seen him in all of you when you've been gracious and encouraging to one another. I have seen him in our community's defiant generosity. I have seen him in the examples of this community seeking to do their best to be faithful and just. Despite unhappy times, I have seen the joy of Jesus' promises show up in a troubled world, just as he promised (John 16:33).

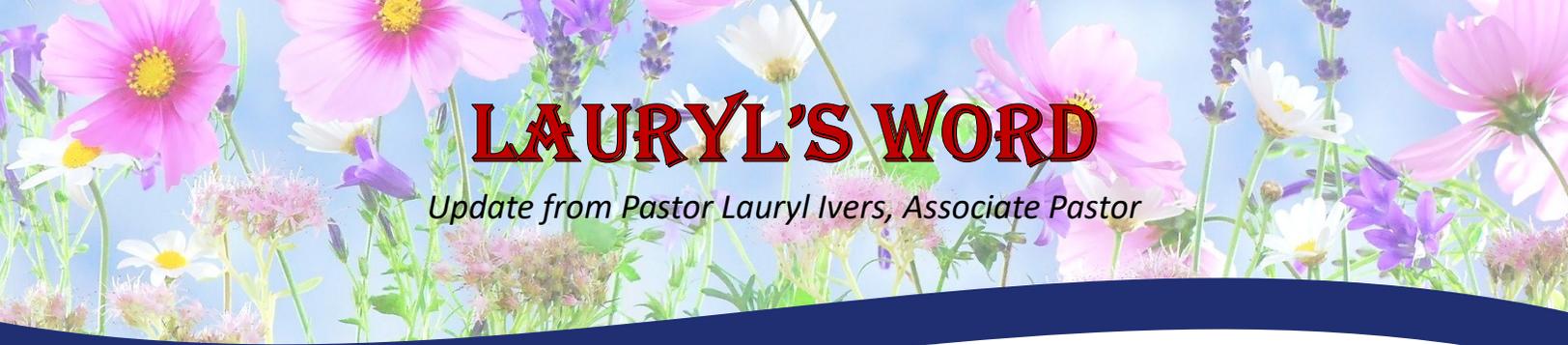
As a community, I invite you into this tension, to sit in this place where we can only "see through the glass darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12), and to do it together, in faith, hope, and love...knowing that we can't and we won't do it perfectly, to extend the grace to one another that has been given to us, and to trust that we are not alone, but accompanied by the Creator of the Universe, whose Son has redeemed us, and whose indwelling Spirit empowers us.

And we will soon receive one of the greatest proclamations of all these promises in the form of a child born in a manger, a Prince of Peace delivered to a troubled, volatile world, and stilling it with wonder, joy, and hope. Unto us, into this bleak winter of life, a child is given. Behold, the light of the world, which no darkness can overcome.

Advent blessings and Christmas peace to each of you and yours, my friends.

Grace upon grace in the Body of Christ,

Pr. Joe



LAURYL'S WORD

Update from Pastor Lauryl Ivers, Associate Pastor

Dear First Lutheran Family,

It feels like we've been waiting a long time already! And now we're entering the Church Season of Waiting – the Season of Advent. God's people have waited, through many seasons, over many centuries. We might think we'd have gotten good at it, but we're not. Waiting is hard. When I was a child, I had to wait until my parents had their "last cup of coffee" after dinner with relatives, and until they had spent an inordinate amount of time saying good byes.... before we could finally be on our way home. Not that there was anything for me to do at home, but I just didn't like waiting when I was ready to go.

Now we're in the 2020 Waiting Room – and we're not wanting to wait here anymore either, it doesn't feel good. But, we can apply some of what we've learned as Christians over the centuries to help us Wait well, and to wait with hope, and with joy, and with love.

"O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive (put your name here), that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear....."

O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer, O Sun of Justice, now draw near; Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight....."

O come, O King of nations, come; O Cornerstone that binds in one; refresh the hearts that long for you, restore the broken, make us new..... Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel, shall come to you, O (put your name here.)"

Over the centuries, families have found ways to honor the Advent Season at home, helping us wait with hope and anticipation for the "Good News of Great Joy" - the birth of Jesus, our Emmanuel – God with us through this present darkness.

Maybe you already have some special rituals you observe, great! But if not, here are some ideas you might incorporate at home this year:

- Print out an Advent Devotional to read each morning or evening with your family at home (e.g., Luther Seminary Advent Devotional – if you can't download this at home, ask the church office to download one for you. Or look up Advent Devotionals or Advent Family Ideas on the Internet and find resources.)
- Make your own Advent Wreath or Advent log for your table at home, put 4 candles in safe holders in the wreath or log, and each night of the first week in Advent, light one candle as you read a scripture verse and pray; the second week, light the second candle each night..., etc.
- Set up a "home Bethlehem manger" scene, and every night in Advent add something special to the scene (a lamb, a donkey, a favorite rock, a treasured item, a doll, a picture of a loved one, shepherds, angels...). Or draw a Bethlehem manger and add something new and meaningful to you each day.
- Involve the family in creating a stage, putting on costumes, and acting out your own Christmas pageant – telling and singing the Christmas story in your own unique way (optional: video this and send it to us!)
- Make a bird feeder for your winged neighbors, watch as they visit, keep a list of their names and numbers, and give God thanks for the variety in Creation.
- Bundle up and go outside at night, identifying and learning new constellations. If you have snow, make a Snow Angel every day until your home is surrounded by angels (who are bringing you Good News of Great Joy!).
- Create a "Reverse Advent Calendar" – instead of taking out a surprise piece of chocolate each day, decorate a grocery bag and put a non-perishable food item or paper product in the bag each day. When you reach December 24, bring it to the food pantry or deliver it to church where we'll bring it to a crisis shelter.
- Bring out an old Christmas Story book and read it again as a family, or buy a new one and read a little each day.
- Write an encouraging letter, to someone in our Church Directory or your family, about what you're hoping for in this Advent Season.
- Practice justice and kindness at least once every day.
- Watch for the special surprises God gives you during this Season of Waiting, and write them down in your Family Advent Journal.

Remember, dear family, we are waiting together, and even as we wait, we know that this old, old story ends very well! So we are hopeful, and joyful - because our Savior Jesus, the light of the World, comes to us again, and again, and again, and our waiting will be rewarded -- and we will rejoice!

Trusting that "those who wait for the Lord renew their strength,
Pastor Lauryl

PRESIDENT'S POST

Update from Vision Council President Jackie Buboltz

Thank you, Pastor Joe, for reminding us in your sermon that we are always and forever, lovable and loved, forgiven and set free. And it is not because of what we have or have not, what we have done or left undone but because we are loved unconditionally. It is difficult to comprehend that kind of love. Jesus does not judge us but rather accepts us as we are, imperfect and unworthy.

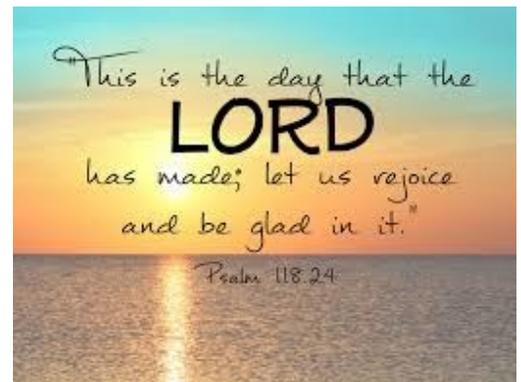
During these difficult times, experts and others tell us to practice gratitude. There was a study done by Dr. Bryon Sexton at Duke University that measured people's happiness before and after practicing gratitude. The exercise consists of writing down 3 good things that happen in that day two hours before you go to bed. The study concluded that this practice focused your mind on good things prior to sleeping, helping to relieve your mind of negative thoughts and you start to look for the positive things each day because you know you will write them down later. It flips the normal human response of focusing on the negative to focusing on the positive. It is an interesting study of what you focus on can transform your thought process. (more information - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZ4aT_RVHCs and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYMQYhey08w>)

There is so much negativity in the world between the pandemic, politics, concerns of the economy, financial worries, school – the list is endless. No doubt it is difficult to find the good and to practice gratitude. But one thing that we can be grateful for consistently and unequivocally is that unconditional love of Jesus. Every day, without fail, no matter what, we can be grateful we are lovable and loved.

I have many things to be grateful for but for today, one of the things I am grateful for is the curiosity, courage, and compassion of our restart team in navigating these difficult times and decisions for our church. Nothing about these decisions are easy. The restart team asks questions to ensure all the information is considered. Meetings are often and long in order to discuss and deliberate to allow each person to be heard with their different perspective and opinion. I appreciate the courage it takes to make these decisions because no matter what is decided there will be congregational members that will be upset and frustrated. And in these difficult meetings, there is compassion for one another and our church community.

How we celebrate the holidays will likely be different because of the pandemic but my hope for you is you are able to find joy, stay well and know there are good things during this difficult time. As you rise each day, remember that you are lovable and loved.

In your service,
Jackie



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING INDOOR WORSHIP

Dear friends, after prayerful and heartfelt discernment, we have decided to pause indoor/in-person worship on Sundays through the remainder of 2020.

This was a challenging and agonizing decision, made with heavy hearts. We take so seriously the fundamental need to physically gather and worship. That is why we have taken such diligent and meticulous measures to make our in-person worship services to this point as safe as possible. Yet, at this time, we have determined that the current state of the pandemic in our local area necessitates extreme measures of caution to slow the spread and to protect the health of all of you and our community at-large.

Our local Covid-19 cases are surging. Our hospital systems are under-staffed and nearing capacity. Our governmental agencies on local, state, and national levels are urging us to proceed with the utmost caution in the weeks to come. This is an especially dangerous period of this pandemic, and in pressing pause on our indoor/in-person worship at this time we join a public health effort determined to combat this deadly disease.

Sisters and brothers, we love you. We are resolute and ready to still provide accessible and as faithful worship as we can. We ask for your patience and grace, and we pray fervently for your safety and health. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your pastors if you would like to talk through any of this.

On behalf of the Restart Team, peace be with you.

Pastor Joe and Pastor Lauryl



PARKING LOT WORSHIP SERVICES

First Lutheran Church will offer Parking Lot Worship Services on Sunday, December 20th and Sunday, December 27th at 10:45 AM in the FLC parking lot. These will be in place of the indoor worship services that have been suspended at this time. Please join us in your car in the FLC parking lot so we can continue to worship together safely. More tips and information regarding parking lot worship can be found below.

- You will need to arrive in a vehicle. There will be no outdoor speakers so the service will only be heard over the radio in your vehicle.
- Please enter the parking lot off of Minnesota Avenue.
- Parking Attendants will be guiding attendees to a parking spot and handing out disposable communion cups (on communion Sundays).
- Please WAIT to take communion (on communion Sundays) until indicated during the service. We hope to take communion together after the pastor says the communion blessing.
- Please be sure to wear a mask when interacting with the parking attendants. If you do not have a mask, we will have a limited number available to share.
- Once you are parked. Tune your radio to 95.9.
- Please stay in your car with your windows up to ensure the safety of those around you.
- Please drop any offering you wish to give into the offering barrels when exiting the church parking lot.
- Please be patient and kind with those volunteering.

Parking lot communion services that are scheduled for the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month at 10:00 AM and the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month at 6:15 AM will still be held as scheduled in the church parking lot.

Pillars

*Ministries that support our pastors and one another
in faith growth through worship and fellowship.*



By, Mackenzie Hamm

I hope November brought you much joy with the coming of winter & time at Thanksgiving. Thank you to everyone who signed up to help with the Food Pantry & for those who rang the bell for Salvation Army. Your volunteerism is a great gift to so many!

It is hard to believe we are now onto December! December marks the beginning of the church calendar and it starts with Advent! The Season of Advent is the time of preparation for the coming of Christ. Thank you to Shan M & Jeannie G and those who signed up to help decorate the church for Christmas. The beautifully decorated church puts everyone in a cheerful mood!



CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP ASSISTANTS NEEDED to help with assisting with parking in the parking lot. Assistants are needed on Christmas Eve at 3:30 PM & 9:00 PM



Christmas Poinsettias

The Advent and Christmas season is made more beautiful when the church is filled with beautiful poinsettias. If you would like to share flowers please complete this form and return it to the church office by Sunday, December 14th. Cost is \$12.00 per plant.

In Honor of: _____

In Memory of: _____

Given by: _____

Attached is \$_____ for the total order above. Please make checks payable to First Lutheran Flower Fund.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



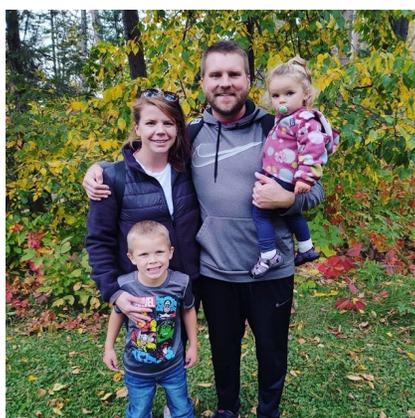
Chris & Bishop Bill Tesch



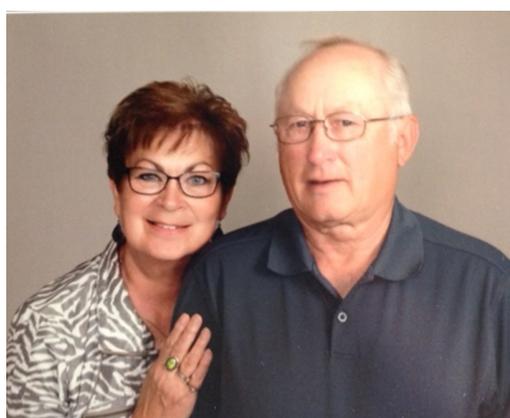
Dean & Jo Leen Eklund



Daniel & Janelle Disrud



Carly & Ben Pedersen
Children: Owen & Noelle



Linda Silseth



Pr. Joe & Margaret Skogmo
Children: Jefferson, Holden & Solveig



Eric & Jennifer Hellekson
Children: Dane & Audrey



Janice Jarboe

Congregations Helping Protect the Homeless During Severe Weather Months (Dec through March)

As a result of individuals losing their jobs, COVID sicknesses, domestic violence, evictions, and many other factors, there are individuals in our Detroit Lakes Area and the region seeking permanent, stable housing. A number of these individuals and families are living in vehicles, rest stops and couch hopping in the community. The FM shelters and local shelters have been at capacity for a while. As winter approaches, these shelters need assistance with meeting the needs of those who are hungry and/or homeless. A community response is important to reduce the risk for injury or death as the cold winter weather sets in.

Church doctrine commands people of faith to welcome the stranger and love the neighbor and to help those without shelter or other basic resources needed to sustain life.

First Lutheran Church, with other local churches and County services like Mahube-Otwa, are looking into safe options for people who are homeless this winter in our area. Some of our local churches are considering being host sites for overnight emergency sheltering. If you are interested in volunteering to provide bag meals for homeless people, or being available for a night shift to watch over the homeless guests, please call the church office: 218-847-5656, for more information. And here are some effective ways we can all support our homeless neighbors:

1) Volunteer: The most productive way to get started helping the homeless is to join forces. **Please call if you would bless us by being a volunteer! 218-847-5656**

2) Respect: One of the best ways to help a homeless person is to show them respect. As you look into their eyes, talk to them with genuine interest, and recognize their value as an individual, this will give them a sense of dignity that they rarely experience. By identifying with the real person behind the face on the streets, your ministry will be much more effective and rewarding.

3) Give: Giving is another great way to help. Some of the current needs are:

- Personal hygiene kits—"grab & go" Ziploc bags that contain body wash, toothpaste, a toothbrush, disposable razor and deodorant which can be dispensed as individuals check into the shelter.
- Gently used warm winter clothing-especially coats, boots, hats and mittens.
- Grab & Go snacks. Fresh fruits and vegetables in limited amounts are also appreciated.
- Financial support-help purchase mattresses, linens and other essential items to prepare a bed for the night.
- A donation to the First Lutheran Church Agape fund. This fund is used to help people who reach out to the church for help.

4) Pray: Lastly, prayer is one of the easiest and most positive ways you can help the homeless. Because of the harshness of their lives, many homeless people are crushed in spirit. But Psalm 34:17-18 says, "The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Pray that God will bring healing to broken lives. Pray for our neighbors now as we have 6 individuals who are in need of shelter for an extended period of time. We are helping them as best we can with our Agape Fund and Ministerial Fund. This is a need that is going to be increasing as winter gets colder.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS STORE



Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we will not be able to hold our yearly Children's Christmas Store. It is our hope is to be back next year! We encourage you to take part in this year's Christmas Angel Tree project if you're looking for a way to give back to the community. More information on the Angel Tree can be found on page 12.



Parish Health

Denise Gaard ♦ 218-847-5656 ♦ denise@firstlutheranchurch.com

Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

As you all know, our country is in a crisis currently due to a pandemic. We have been preparing for this crisis since March and now it is here. Our hospitals and long-term care facilities are short-staffed. Hospital staff are working extra shifts to care for patients. ER's are overflowing and hospitals are having to decide if they provide their last open hospital bed to someone who is severely ill from COVID-19 or to the person who just had a severe stroke. Surgeries such as replacing a hip or having a mastectomy are being rescheduled for a later time. This is happening not only in the big cities but also right here in our region!

I recently visited with an ICU nurse that works in Fargo, ND. When she is at work, she not only wears a mask all day but also a surgical cap, and goggles (over her glasses). When she is in a COVID patient room, she also wears a gown over her uniform, gloves, and protective head/face gear. It is extremely hot and cumbersome but keeps her safe. She is a mother of four and it is especially important for her to remain healthy, not only for her patients but for her family. She states that because of all this gear, she feels safer at work than out in public.

When asked what it is like to work with COVID patients this is what she said: "It pains me to tell you that I have patients begging for death because they have been suffering through this virus for many days. They ask us first to help them and do everything we can to save them and then many days later, after they have been suffering alone in their hospital room, they ask us to end it, because they cannot handle the suffocation and feeling as if they cannot breathe. Visitors are not allowed to come and see these patients because at the hospital we are trying to do everything we can to stop the spread. Therefore, the nurses and hospital staff are the only ones that get to spend time with these patients, and we are dressed from head to toe in protective personal equipment so all they can see is our eyes. We help them make virtual calls to family members as time allows." This nurse then went on to say, "Please pray for all the healthcare workers who are working double what they usually work because of the number of sick patients that need us right now." She also is begging us to "please wear your mask and practice physical distancing."

This nurse is my daughter. Every day I pray for the safety of her and all hospital staff. I also pray for all those who are suffering from COVID. And I pray that we can all do our part by wearing our mask, staying home when possible and keeping our distance when we are in public.

Remember as God said in Mathew 22:39, *Love Your Neighbor as Yourself.*

For local and state information regarding COVID-19 visit the Becker County website: https://www.co.becker.mn.us/dept/public_health/covid19.aspx and the Minnesota Department of Health website: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html>. Download the COVIDaware MN app to track your exposures.

GIVE THANKS

Thank you to all healthcare workers for the care you provide for all of us. Your sacrifice, love and care are appreciated! Thank you also to our law enforcement, firemen, and all who work to provide care and necessities for us during this time.

A PLEA FROM OUR LOCAL HEALTH LEADERS

Dear Community,

On behalf of the people we care for and our teams, we want to thank all of you for your efforts in keeping our community safe. Your use of science-based methods, including wearing face masks, social distancing, practicing good hand hygiene and quarantining when necessary, make an absolute difference in reducing the spread of COVID-19.

We also thank our teams for their innovation and flexibility. Their dedication in going beyond their traditional roles to cover needs throughout healthcare as we see record demand for our services has been extraordinary. They continue to rise to the occasion by working long shifts in the hospital and long-term care facilities to care for the complex needs of our patients and residents.

Despite all that we are doing, we anticipate that our pandemic cases will continue to increase as cold weather, more indoor activities and holiday gatherings happen. We ask that you be even more diligent with social distancing, wearing face masks, and practicing good hand hygiene during this most critical time. We know everyone misses family and friends, are experiencing fatigue and long for a return to normal; our hearts ache for the patients or residents struggling, distressed families, and healthcare staff working around the clock. Please, do not let your guard down. We are making headway. We and the community need your help now, more than ever.

We are all in this together. Please continue to take care of yourselves, support one another, and mask up to safeguard our family, friends and community.

Thank you,

Breanna Adams

Director of Operations
Sandford Health Detroit Lakes

Dr. Brian Gatheridge

Primary Care Department Chair
Sanford Health Detroit Lakes

Dr. Andrew Johnson

Surgical Department Chair
Sandford Health Detroit Lakes

Ryan Hill

Interim VP of Operations
Essentia Health St. Mary's

Dr. Andrew Moen

Physician Division Leader
Essential Health St. Mary's

Christy Brinkman

Administrator
Essentia Health Senior Care

Katie Lundmark

Regional Director of Operations
Ecumen

Danielle Olson

Executive Director
Ecumen

Bridget Okeson

Director of Nursing
Ecumen

RESOLUTION REGARDING RESUMPTION OF IN-PERSON WORSHIP

The Vision Council of First Lutheran Church hereby resolves that the following resolution is approved on November 17, 2020 and remains in effect until such time FLC is able to conduct worship services and activities without regard to the pandemic of 2020.

Consistent with our calling to love and care for one another and for the health of our neighbors, any person attending in-person worship (including weddings and funerals) or other church activities must (1) sign-in providing their name and phone number, (2) wear a mask at all times, and (3) maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet.

Those who are ill, have tested positive for COVID-19, or who are in vulnerable populations should refrain from attending in-person worship or other church activities. Persons exposed to COVID-19, or who have previously tested positive for COVID-19, must refrain from attending in-person worship or other church activities until at least 14 days after exposure or testing positive and 24 hours without a fever of higher than 100.5. This will be subject to change to adhere to guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health.

Persons who choose to attend in-person worship or other activities within the church agree to inform the church promptly if they learn they have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been exposed to COVID-19. Notice of COVID-19 exposure should be made by calling the FLC parish nurse at 218-847-5656 and should provide the relevant date(s) of in-person church attendance or other activities occurring in the church.

The church will then make appropriate notifications to others who may have been in attendance on the same date, keeping the name of the person anonymous who reported a positive COVID-19 or exposure, so they may take appropriate steps to protect their health and safety. The church will assist public health authorities with the process of contact tracing if requested.

This action should not be considered as a substitution for individuals own responsibility to contact public health officials for more detailed contract tracing.



By, Maddie Hanson

Youth Ministry News



YOUTH SERVICE PROJECTS – Every year the youth spend 3-5 weeks doing various service projects around the holiday season. But since we are not in person for classes this year, we will be doing these projects a little differently. The youth can sign up to do at least one project this year on Wednesday, December 2nd or Sunday, December 6th. They can either do Angel Tree Shopping, send in a Christmas video, help make decorations, help decorate, or wrap shoeboxes. Please remember to sign your youth up for a Christmas project on our online form!



CONFIRMATION CLASSES – Because of COVID numbers rising in our community and schools moving to virtual learning, we will be remaining virtual with our classes on Sundays and Wednesdays until the middle of January. We will then reassess and decide how to hold our classes from there. Thank you all for your patience and understanding during this time we are in. Our weekly Zoom classes have been going great!



SHOEBOXES NEEDED! – We are in need of prewrapped shoeboxes for a local gift organization! If you have any shoeboxes at home, we invite you to wrap them in Christmas wrap and bring them into the church by Sunday, December 6th. The boxes need to be wrapped so that they can open for gifts to be placed inside. If you are unable to wrap boxes but have some to donate, we will take those too!

No Sunday or Wednesday Confirmation classes from Wednesday, December 23rd through Sunday, January 3rd for Christmas and New Year’s break!



Good news! We will have our Angel Tree at FLC this year with 295 angels! Our pick up and drop off will be different so please read the plans below:

For angel tree shopping this year, we will not have a physical angel tree set up so we can practice safe social distancing. We will instead have everyone who would like to shop for angels sign up online!

To sign up for angels, please call the church office and talk to Mackenzie. We have two angel pick up dates left for you to drive up and collect your angel(s) in the church parking lot. These dates and times are listed below. We will have angel gift drop off times every Sunday in December. To drop off your gifts, please come to the church parking lot where we will have volunteers to help collect gifts and place them in our trailer to be delivered! If you prefer to donate money rather than shop this year, we have “Angel” shoppers who will do the shopping for you!

Angel Pick-Up Dates:

Immediately following drive-up communion

- Wednesday, December 2nd @ 6:30 PM
- Sunday, December 6th @ 10:15 AM

Angel Gift Drop-Off Dates:

Immediately following our 10:45 worship service

- Sunday, December 6th @ 11:45 AM
- Sunday, December 13th @ 11:45 AM
- Sunday, December 20th @ 11:45am



Children's Ministry

By, Emma Duncan



THE CHILDREN'S VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM will be on Sunday, December 13th and will be playing at both services! Our awesome kiddos have been recording their parts at home, and sent them in so that they could be pieced together to create a program that tells the story of Jesus' birth!



LESSONS & WINTER BREAK—Our week of Sunday and Wednesday School Lessons will be Sunday, December 13th and Wednesday, December 16th! After this, PreK-5th graders will have a winter break.

Sunday and Wednesday School lessons will resume the week of January 3rd and 6th of 2021. Watch for emails and updates towards the end of December with how faith formation will work in the upcoming year.



THANK YOU—I want to extend a very special thank you to our families of FLC. I know this year is not as we imagined, but I want you to know how much I appreciate your willingness to work with me and the church as we navigate the best way to move through this crazy season. I, personally can't thank you enough for your patience, support, prayers and love through this time, as it hasn't been easy for anyone.



Blessings to you all and a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY JC!
Emma

Christmas Nativity Word Search

X	S	M	B	I	Y	L	V	Y	Y	J	U	H	O	L	Y	S	F
D	O	S	E	C	A	M	E	L	S	O	J	G	S	Z	S	T	G
J	V	T	T	Z	A	M	A	N	G	E	R	T	Y	F	J	A	I
O	B	A	H	Z	O	Y	S	C	T	Z	G	J	J	I	Q	B	F
S	D	R	L	N	A	T	I	V	I	T	Y	C	R	E	P	L	T
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P	A	J	H	J	Y	X	E	E	J	H	U	V	A	N	J	U	G
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|-----------|-----------|
| ADVENT | KINGS |
| ANGEL | LOVE |
| BABY | MANGER |
| BETHLEHEM | NATIVITY |
| CAMEL | PEACE |
| CANDLE | SHEPHERDS |
| DONKEY | STABLE |
| GIFTS | STAR |
| HOLY | MARY |
| JESUS | PEACE |
| JOSEPH | |



VIRTUAL ADVENT MINI CONCERTS

Wednesday's in Advent mini-concerts will be held, during the season of Advent, and hosted by First Lutheran Church. These concerts will be held virtually, via live-stream on the First Lutheran YouTube page. The mini concerts will begin on Wednesday, December 2, and continue through Wednesday, December 16 from 12:00 PM to 12:30 PM. Performances will be given by several Musicians from First Lutheran Church, along with our good friend, Tim Eggebraaten. You're invited to tune in on Wednesday's in Advent, beginning Wednesday, December 2. You'll be given a sense of "joy" for the Holiday season!



PARKING LOT COMMUNION SERVICES

We are excited to announce that we will be increasing our Drive-Up Holy Communion opportunities! Drive-Up Holy Communion is now being offered at 10:00 AM on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, and at 6:15 PM on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month! RSVPs are appreciated, but not necessary to attend.

With these additional communion offerings, comes the need of more volunteers. Parking Lot Communion Assistants are needed to distribute communion to cars. The time commitment would be about 30 minutes. Please sign up to help by emailing Mackenzie at Mackenzie@firstlutheranchurch.com



CHRISTMAS AT OUR HOUSE CANCELLED

The Annual Christmas at Our House event held at First Lutheran Church on Christmas Day has been cancelled this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are very saddened to have to make this decision, but there is no way to efficiently and safely hold the dinner at this time. Please pray for those who have relied on this event for their Christmas meals in the years past.



SAIL'S UP DONATIONS NEEDED

2021 is Detroit Lakes' 150th anniversary. The city is planning a community art project for public display in DL in 2021 called 150 Sails Up in DL! There will be 150 sailboat sculptures available for sponsorship.

FLC would like to purchase one of the smaller \$900 statues to decorate and display in support of our community. Please help us celebrate Detroit Lakes' 150 years by donating to the FLC sailboat fund. Checks or money can be dropped off in the bin with the yellow lid outside the church doors or mailed to the church office. Please indicate sailboat fund in the memo.

BRENT BLAKE BENEFIT POSTPONED

The Brent Blake fundraiser has been postponed due to the increasing COVID-19 numbers in the area. The hope is to reschedule for January 9th. Further changes and details will be announced as we know more. If you signed up to provide baked goods, we will contact you when we have more details.

The Link

Update from the Women of First Lutheran Church—Written by Norma Smith

It's December, another covering of snow and cold temperatures feels like winter has arrived. It is time to start preparing for Christmas. Christmas will not be canceled, we just have to prepare in a different way this year.

TAKE TIME TO SEE—trees lighted around town, decorations in the stores, how creative our neighbors are in their yards, maybe a nativity scene along your way to remind you of a baby born in a manger in Bethlehem.

TAKE TIME TO HEAR—the Advent mini concerts at noon on Wednesdays, listen to your favorite Christmas songs on a CD while you drive, or greetings exchanged over a counter.

TAKE TIME TO FEEL—the tingle of cold air as you walk, buying gifts for someone from the Angel tree makes one feel good, friendly smiles on the faces of those you meet, as the spirit of Christmas is renewed in each one's heart.

And pray once again there will be "Peace on earth, good will towards all men".

Global Health is still shipping so if anyone has rolled bandages, or any medical supplies such as crutches, hand or ankle braces, adult diapers, etc.—Ardys Horner will take them to Minneapolis in early December. Arrange with her to pick them up at 218-850-2912.

May Peace, Love, and Joy fill your hearts this Christmas Season!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!
Norma Smith



FLC acknowledges with grateful appreciation these memorials which have been received this past month.

GENERAL FUND

In Memory of: Peggy Leegard

Given by: Suzanne & Erik Osterberg

KITCHEN FUND

In Memory of: Peggy Leegard

Given by: Arlene Olson

Given by: Rod & Carolyn Boyer

MUSIC FUND

In Memory of: Karol Carlson

Given by: Arlene Olson

RADIO FUND

In Memory of: Peggy Leegard

Given by: Jan & Carl Fingalson

Given by: Delroy & Liz Mathison

In Memory of: Patty Aasen

Given by: Ruth Circle

UNSPECIFIED FUND

In Memory of: Peggy Leegard

Given by: Debra Rethwisch

Given by: Kent & Nancy Utke

Given by: Patti Cummins

Given by: Paul & Debra Woodward

Given by: Ken & Marlys Christianson

CREATION CARE UPDATE

I moved to Detroit Lakes in the winter of 1985. I started as a veterinarian with the Detroit Lakes Animal Hospital. We were doing a lot of farm work then, which involved emergency calls in the middle of the night. I remember how dark it was between farms, a lot of times you did not see the yard lights until you were entering the driveway. Now a days, you are rarely in the dark. The glow of the next yard light is readily available.



This buildup of light volume is what is called light pollution. This can be excessive light, misdirected light or obtrusive light. There are 5 main categories of light pollution:

Light trespass, think of this as your yard light interfering with your neighbors. This can be from too many lights, lights that are directed outward versus downward or light placement.

Over illumination, is one of the biggest problems faced in the United States. This is consuming a lot of unneeded energy. It is estimated that over illumination in the United States is consuming the energy of 2 million barrels of oil per day. The light intensity per space in United States has been measured to be 3-5 times the intensity in all of Germany.

Light glare, there are 3 major intensity levels. Blinding, the worst, would be like looking into the sun or at a welding torch. Disabling, the middle range, like the high beams of a car light coming at you or your headlights being scattered in our snowstorms in the winter. Discomforting, the lower range, is the annoying level that decreases the contrast making you concentrate more, leading to earlier fatigue.

Light clutter is the excessive buildup by overcrowding and grouping the light sources. This can be to many lights in one area of the yard. Or it can be all the lights adding up in a city leading to a glow that can be seen from miles away.

Sky glow is natural light, mostly this is scattered or reflective light from the moon and the stars. There is also some glow produced by the ultraviolet rays coming through the upper atmosphere and ionizing at the lower levels. This may become more evident as we lose more of the ozone layer. You can see this in our winters, especially with the waxing and waning of the full moon that is reflected back from the snow cover.

The effects of light pollution are minor to begin with and are never directly seen but they accumulate. Increasing light pollution is directly associated with fatigue, increasing stress levels and disrupting our sleep cycle's. This is highly associated with anxiety issues, disruption our basic circadian rhythms both of which are associated with chronic disease and cancer.

This light pollution also disrupts the ecosystems surrounding us. The increasing day lengths and decreasing nighttime has been shown to affect insects like moths, fireflies (when did see them last), and studies are also looking at how this is affecting the honeybees. The light intensity is also association with these algae blooms smaller ponds and lakes. It definitely has changed the behavior between the prey and predator relationships. Studies are also suggesting it may be interfering with the navigation of the insects and bird as they migrate.

All this extra light does not come free. It is using up energy that is needed elsewhere. This is especially true in the United States, squandering these resources is not a good example of stewardship and conserving our resources for the generations to come.

Last of all, all this extra light is spoiling the aesthetic quality of the dark. This makes it very difficult to step outside and see the moon and the stars. When was the last time you have actually seen the northern lights?

Controlling light pollution is not extremely difficult. The goal is to minimize the total volume of light. Decreasing the time that the lights are on is the simplest. A simple switch, using a timer or motion sensor. Controlling the direction of the light will take more forethought. Lighting up just the area you need, directing the light to the area you needed in and preventing the light from spreading over and beyond. Decreasing the intensity of the light by choosing the right type of light is a more involved science. But there are a lot of resources out there to help you choose this. A good resource to start with, is the International Dark Sky Association or IDA.

Submitted by Jim McCormack

STEWARDSHIP TEAM MESSAGE

Advent – Lord, Stir Us To Dream

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." (Isaiah 40: 3-5)

In the season of Advent, we watch and prepare for the arrival of Christ. As the days get shorter, it is easy to look around and see so many things going wrong in the world. Yet, in this season of lament, there are signs of hope. The prophet Isaiah told the people to prepare for the coming of the Lord. That message, spoken so long ago, speaks to us today. The time has come for reflection and action.

As we reflect on the year 2020, it is easy to get caught up in all the headlines and heartaches. However, there were some constants keeping us grounded. Our faith community at First Lutheran was one of those constants. We can celebrate that our faith family continued to serve in ways big and small throughout the chaos. Through acts of service, words of affirmation, and gifts our brothers and sisters in the faith continued to show the love of God to those in need. Thank you all for all your gifts this past year. There is still time to consider year-end gifts to help the mission of First Lutheran.

Looking forward to 2021, the list of those in need may get longer. The needs may seem like mountains, hills, and rough places. But, through your gifts of service and generosity, the Good News will be proclaimed in word and deed. Take time to dream and commit to the future God has envisioned for us. Consider the resources you have been given and are willing to give back to God to further His work through First Lutheran Church. God works through His people bringing resources together to bring faith to those in need. Let us each commit to partner with God in creating His kingdom here, as well as looking to that final glorious return of Christ. May God bless your future ministry and strengthen you for the tasks, big and small, ahead.

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40: 28-31)

CHURCH FINANCIAL UPDATE

Total year to date giving \$166,602.95 (7/1/2020-10/31/2020)

Total year to date expenses \$187,593.54 (7/1/2020-10/31/2020)

Ending balance year to date -\$20,990.59

Update From Trinity Hope



News from Trinity HOPE

This is one of a series of articles which we make available each month to keep our supporters informed about our activities. Trinity HOPE, a not-for-profit charitable organization, raises funds and administers feeding programs that provide a noon meal for the hungry children who attend our schools in Haiti where the Good News of Jesus is shared daily.

2024 Hunters Place, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122 ● admin@trinityhope.org ● (615) 394-4950
Web Page: www.TrinityHope.org ● Facebook: [trinityhopehaiti](https://www.facebook.com/trinityhopehaiti)

YOU STILL HERE

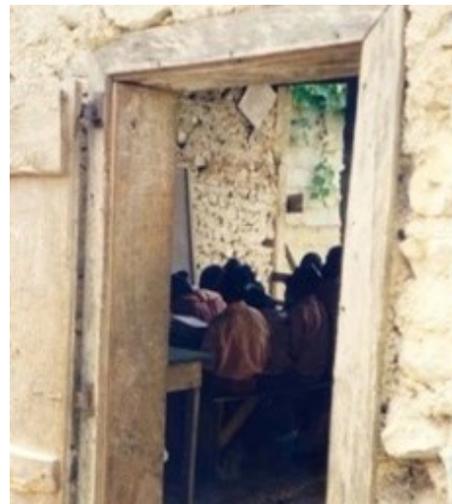
Written by Jay Brinkmeyer

“For we are God’s handiwork created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do.”
Ephesians 2:10

A little over a month ago, a pair of Illinois neurosurgeons and an ENT shoved two small medical devices into my nose, down the nasal passage and with great care, removed a benign tumor from my brain, and in a couple of weeks from now, I’m reluctantly going to step into my seventh decade of life. Like you...I am still here. There must still be something that God wants you and I to accomplish on this side of Heaven.

God didn’t create anything without a purpose; if you’re breathing, you still have a purpose. In and through Christ, you have something to offer to this world. When God made you, He wired you in a certain, special way and uniquely shaped you for a contribution...for HIM. Nobody has been you in the past or will be you in the future; God doesn’t create clones or copies. If God hadn’t wanted you to be you, then you wouldn’t exist. The same is true with this group of students in Font Baptiste...God has a purpose for each of them.

I read a quote this week while writing this article by M.T. Collins that said “the pain of regret is worse than failure” and the timing was a ‘God’ thing as I have learned that to be true on many occasions during my journey. It is better do something that seems to have been a ‘God’ nudge, than to just do nothing and kick yourself later...for what might have been if you had done something...like feed that child in Haiti who brought the Gospel to a lost soul. God has a purpose for you and that is why you are still here. Seek His direction and follow His nudge. There is a child in Haiti with an empty stomach who needs your help. God be with you...Jay



December

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 9:00a Office Staff Mtg 9:00a AA (Rec Room) 5:00p Crisis Center Mtg, Zoom	2 12:00p Online Advent Concerts 6:00p Worship Team Rehearsal 6:15p Drive Thru Communion 6:45p 6th Grade Conf, Zoom 7:15p 7th Grade Conf, Zoom 7:45p 8th Grad Conf, Zoom 8:15p 9th Grad Conf, Zoom	3 7:30 a Women's Bible Sty, Lib 11:00a Worship Planning 4:00p Personnel Team Mtg	4 12:00p AA, Rec Room 12:00p Prayer Team	5
6 Sunday Schedule <i>Communion</i> 8:30a Traditional Online Wship 9:30a Children's FB Live 9:45a Confr Class, via Zoom 10:00a Drive Thru Communion	7 5:00p Al Anon, Library 5:30p Restart Team Mtg	8 9:00a Office Staff Mtg 9:00a AA (Rec Room) 5:00p Crisis Center Mtg, Zoom	9 12:00p Online Advent Concerts 6:00p Worship Team Rehearsal 6:45p 6th Grade Conf, Zoom 7:15p 7th Grade Conf, Zoom 7:45p 8th Grad Conf, Zoom 8:15p 9th Grad Conf, Zoom	10 7:30 a Women's Bible St, Lib 11:00a Worship Planning Com 12:00a Executive Committee	11 12:00p AA, Rec Room 12:00p Prayer Team	12
13 Sunday Schedule <i>Children's Xmas Program</i> 8:30a Traditional Online Wship 9:30a Children's FB Live 9:45a Confr Class, via Zoom	14 5:00p Al Anon, Library	15 9:00a Office Staff Mtg 9:00a AA (Rec Room) 5:00p Crisis Center Mtg, Zoom 5:30p Vision Council	16 12:00p Online Advent Concerts 6:00p Worship Team Rehearsal 6:15p Drive Thru Communion 6:45p 6th Grade Conf, Zoom 7:15p 7th Grade Conf, Zoom 7:45p 8th Grad Conf, Zoom 8:15p 9th Grad Conf, Zoom	17 7:30 a Women's Bible Sty, Lib 11:00a Worship Planning	18 12:00p AA, Rec Room 12:00p Prayer Team	19
20 Sunday Schedule <i>Communion</i> 8:30a Traditional Online Wship 9:30a Children's FB Live 9:45a Confr Class, via Zoom 10:00a Drive Thru Communion 10:45a Parking Lot Worship	21 5:00p Al Anon, Library 5:30p Restart Team Mtg	22 9:00a Office Staff Mtg 9:00a AA (Rec Room) 5:00p Crisis Center Mtg, Zoom	23 <i>No Faith Formation</i> 6:00p Worship Team Rehearsal	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 3:30p Parking Lot Service 5:00p Live Stream Worship 7:00p Christmas Radio Srvc 9:00p Parking Lot Service	25 CHRISTMAS DAY 11:00a Christmas Day Service	26
27 Sunday Schedule <i>No Faith Formation</i> 8:30a Traditional Online Wship 10:45a Parking Lot Worship	28 5:00p Al Anon, Library	29 9:00a Office Staff Mtg 9:00a AA (Rec Room) 5:00p Crisis Center Mtg, Zoom	30 <i>No Faith Formation</i> 6:00p Worship Team Rehearsal	31 7:30 a Women's Bible Sty, Lib 11:00a Worship Planning	1 12:00p AA, Rec Room 12:00p Prayer Team	2



The First Messenger

First Lutheran Church
912 Lake Avenue
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
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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.

Office Hours:

Office Closed Until Further Notice
Office Phone: 847-5656
Fax Phone: 847-7009
flc@firstlutheranchurch.com
www.firstlutheranchurch.com

Vision Council

Chairman: Jackie Buboltz
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Kevin Shipley, Dan Berg,
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& Patti Cummins

Congregational Staff

Lead Pastor:

Pastor Joe Skogmo pastorjoe@firstlutheranchurch.com

Associate Pastor:

Pastor Lauryl Ivers pastorlauryl@firstlutheranchurch.com

Children's Ministry Director:

Emma Duncan emma@firstlutheranchurch.com

Director of Youth Ministry:

Maddie Hanson maddie@firstlutheranchurch.com

Business Manager:

Susie Reitmeier susie@firstlutheranchurch.com

Office Administrator, Support Ministries:

Mackenzie Hamm mackenzie@firstlutheranchurch.com

Office Administrator, Communications:

Melissa Christianson melissa@firstlutheranchurch.com

Information Technology/Media:

Cory Oswald cory@firstlutheranchurch.com

Parish Nurse:

Denise Gaard denise@firstlutheranchurch.com

Worship Music Coordinator:

Karen Bimberg karen@firstlutheranchurch.com

Adult Choir Director:

Kathy Larson klarson@detlakes.k12.mn.us

Bell Choir Director:

Carla Hansen Hansencarla62@gmail.com

Missionary Pastor:

Rev. Chandran Paul Martin

**Worship is broadcast on KDLM-1340 AM and on
93.1 FM Radio each
Sunday Morning at 10:00 AM.**

**Worship is also webcasted on the church website
www.firstlutheranchurch.com.**

**Worship is also broadcast on T.V. on Saturdays at 9:00 AM
on Arvig Cable channel 14.**