



First Word

The monthly newspaper of First Lutheran Church

Epiphany

Standing In The Light of the Christ Child's Presence

By Pastor John Christopherson, Senior Pastor



The snow-capped mountains cradled tall open stands of aspen, all aglow under the fullness of an early January moon. Soon the “swishing” sounds of three munchkin snowsuits and a duo of goose-down parkas began to break the still winter’s night. ... Meandering trails were being formed behind them

in the exhaust of freshly fallen powder – especially those made by the small but impressive footprints created by the munchkins’ pint-sized Patagonia boots.

Yes, it was a “winter of mostly contentment” and Epiphany’s “more” (John 1:5; 10:10) ... as our little family was taking an evening stroll out under the big starry night of Bozeman, Montana. Our neighborhood was close to the outskirts of town. And so, as we wandered south, it quickly became dark, very dark – except for the guiding light of the moon. Our little pack of snowsuits and parkas started to form a huddle – not only for gathering warmth, but for reasons of living “where the buffalo roam” as well as an occasional moose-on-the-loose! (Earlier in the fall, a physician friend had been “treed” by one of the latter critters. And this before cell phones. Fortunately he was On Call. No, not the moose. And people came looking.)

Well, after making a big southerly loop, moving slowly in parabolic fashion toward the foothills of the Rockies ... we then turned back north, making our way home. An hour or so later, we turned the final corner of our block – moving off of Kagy Avenue onto Spring Creek Road. There, a large street lamp shined its big, beaming beacon of light down upon our stocking-capped heads – casting long...liquid... shadows on the snow-packed street.



Sarah and her brothers, Johnny and Matt
(Bozeman, Montana 1998)

Our little trinity of munchkins began to run around – trying to jump on each other’s shadows. A New Revised Standard Version of the old classic: “Playing Tag.” Suddenly, our then five-year-old Sarah experienced the wondrous living symbol of *epi-phany* (Gk. “light-upon”). “Wow!” she exclaimed. “Look how tall I am when I stand under the light. I feel SOOOO BIG!” Catching the light just right, she stood with arms outstretched – quickly pointing-out to her little urchin brothers that they were now in the grasp of *her* shadow.

Recently, I was taking another mid-winter’s stroll through a newly published edition of *The Poetry of Robert Frost* (New York: Henry Holt and Co.). As the serendipity of the spirit would have it, I opened the book to page 303

(literally the heart of this 607 page masterpiece) and my eyes were met once more by the genius of Frost’s poetry. The poem is entitled, “Afterflakes.” I share this marvelous poem with you, in the newness of this Epiphany Season, because it pictures the wondrous way in which earthly experience points ever heavenward through the questioning of the human spirit; especially for our “winters of dis-content” (ala William Shakespeare’s opening lines of “Richard III”).



*“In the thick of teeming snowfall
I saw my shadow on the snow.
I turned and looked back up at the sky.
Where we still look to ask the why
Of Everything below*

*If I shed such a darkness,
If the reason was in me,
That shadow of mine should show in form
Against the shapeless shadow of storm
How swarthy [and powerful] I must be.*

*I turned and looked back upward.
The whole sky was blue;
And the thick flakes and floating at a pause
Were but frost knots on an airy gauze,
With the sun shining through.”*

(R. Frost’s “Afterflakes.” Emphasis added.)

Now ... if I’m quiet, I can still hear that little voice of my daughter, Sarah singing in mid-winter’s wonder: “Wow! Look how tall I am when I stand under the light. I feel SOOO BIG!”

Friends and family of First Lutheran Church ... in the many moments that our lives can feel rather small and insignificant, may the Light that spirited these words enfold you in the warmth of a wondrous *bene-diction*; that is, God’s gospel “good-news” word that’s especially *for you* ... as you enter into this New Year. Here it is: “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to SHINE ON YOU and be gracious to you.” In this Season of Epiphany, and always ... You have God’s Word on it: “*I am the light of the world,*” says Jesus (John 8:12; 9:5)

Go, tell it on the mountain!

In Christ’s service ...

j.r. christopherson
Senior Pastor



Celebrating the Birth of Christ

Festival of Light – the Epiphany of Our Lord

Saturday, Jan. 6 at 6 p.m., Sanctuary
Meal at 4:30 p.m., Reformation Hall

Join the Sioux Falls community as we trace the Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany story with brass, timpani, flute, organ, choirs, and tableau. We celebrate the Epiphany of Our Lord and conclude with the visit of the magi to the Christ-child.

Join us prior to the Festival for a meal (\$5) of chicken and wild-rice soup, chili, macaroni and cheese and bread in Reformation Hall.



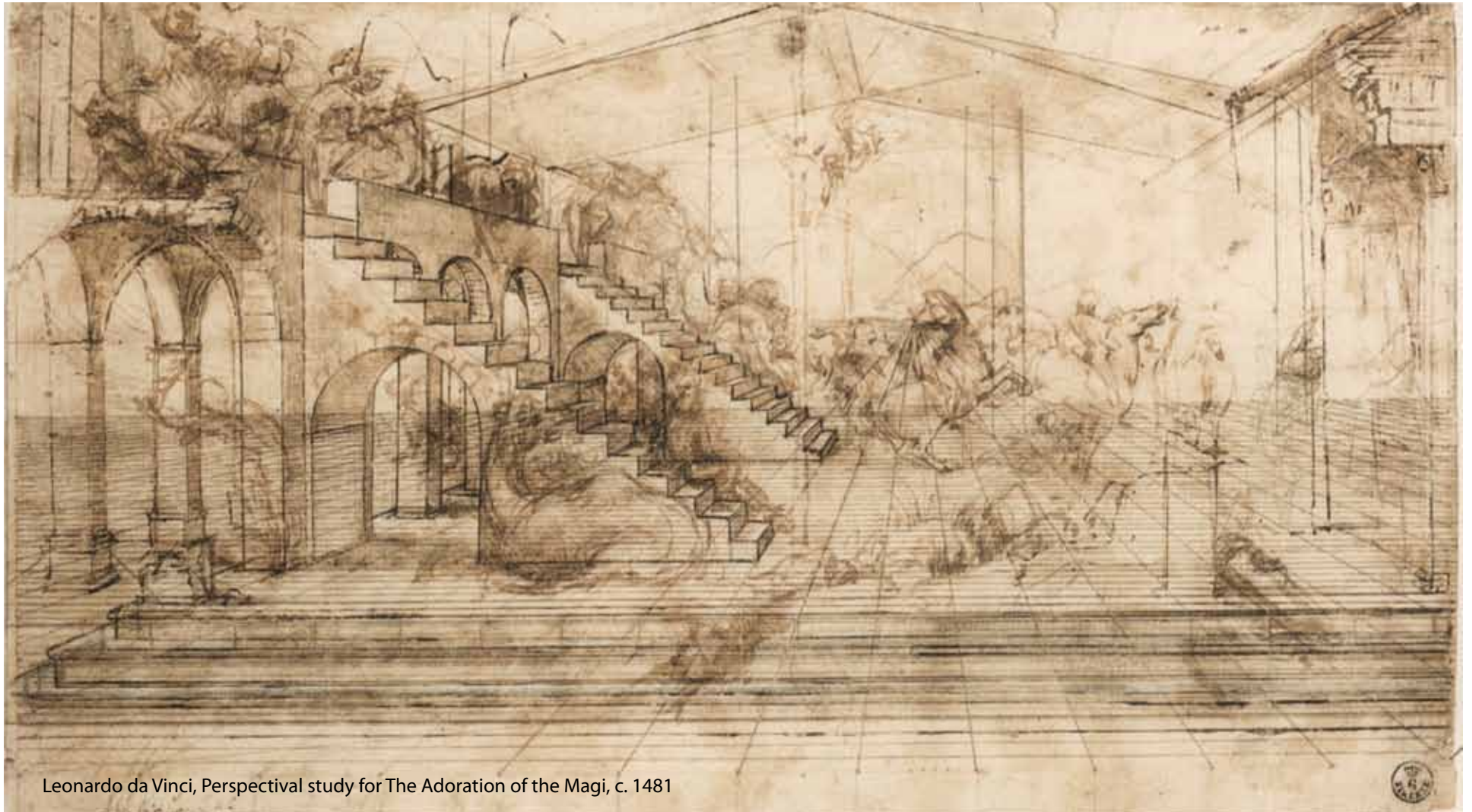
Joy Ranch Family Retreat – Jan. 19-21

Join us at the beautiful Joy Ranch Lutherans Outdoors Bible Camp near Watertown, SD for a weekend of family time: meals together, games, friends to make, horses to visit, faith to share. What a great way to share community together. Go online to lostd.org to learn more about Joy Ranch and see some Joy Ranch photos!

The cost is \$260 (2 night stay) plus \$40/person for meals. We will gather by 7 p.m. on Friday night and return early afternoon on Sunday. Sign up in the Youth & Family Office, 336-3734.

Congregational Meeting

You are encouraged to attend the
First Lutheran Church Annual Meeting on Sunday, Feb. 4,
following the 11 a.m. service in the Sanctuary.



Leonardo da Vinci, Perspectival study for The Adoration of the Magi, c. 1481

“What Does the Star of Epiphany ‘Shine on Us’ ... ‘Tell Us’ ... Where Does It ‘Lead Us’?”

By Pastor John Christopherson

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him ...’” (Matthew 2:1-2)

The story of the magi ranks right up there with the Christmas and Easter stories in terms of snaring the human imagination. Poets as diverse as William Butler Yeats and Garrison Keillor have sought to wrap words around the visit of the Magi (i.e. the Three Wise Men). Henry Wadsworth Longfellow even gave them names: *Melchior, Gaspar, and Balthasar*. Hundreds of artists as well have sought to capture the mystic scene: including Botticelli and Rembrandt. So much has been made of this story of which we know so little ...

And yet, a very telling commentary can be found in a faintly drawn sketch by Leonardo Da Vinci, entitled, *“The Adoration of the Magi.”* Its backdrop is that of a ravaged world – with ruined buildings, fighting horsemen and war. Like the star that hangs overhead, the picture’s meaning is clear and manifest: the world into which the Messiah comes is in chaos and decay, a time filled with war ‘n ravaged rumors of war. Yes, our world is ill, terminally ill. It needs a Savior.

So, let me ask you ... where does the star lead the wise men and their camels in St. Matthew’s nativity account ... and yes, us? Bethlehem? ... No. It leads the wise men to Jerusalem. For based on their reading of many of the Old Testament prophecies, Jerusalem would make all the sense in the world. Why? Listen in with me to Isaiah 60 for example ...

“Arise [Jerusalem], shine, for your light has come (v.1) ... all the nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising (v.3) ... the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you (v.5-6a) ... They shall bring gold and frankincense and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD” (v.6b; emphasis added).

Wow! Sound familiar?! ... Jerusalem. The capital city of Judah. Right? This is where they thought they’d find the new king of peace and prosperity. Only the king they found in Jerusalem was old and fat and he had terrible

breath! King Herod. His skin was so yellow as if not only his bile but also his guile had gotten the best of him. And then come the only words in this little story from the wise men: *“Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him?”* (Matthew 2:2). Note the radical undoing of human pride and presumption here. I mean, how wise were these guys anyway?! Really?! Going to King Herod, the poster child of paranoia – who had killed off many of his own family members for fear he’d lose his crown – and asked about a NEW KING?! Herod’s reputation for brutality had traveled even as far as Rome. As Caesar Augustus even observed, with a play on words: *“Better to be Herod’s pig [hys] than his son [huios]”* (Frederick Dale Bruner; Matthew 1:65).

Asking the wise men if they’d please excuse him for a moment, while he took a powder, Herod conferred with his think tank of clergy. They began to whip out their scriptures and concordances. And out of fear of losing their jobs, if not their heads, they told Herod what he wanted to hear. *“King. These wise guys are off by a mile! Actually more like nine miles”* (cf. W. Bruggemann; *“Off By Nine Miles”* in *The Christian Century*, Dec. 19-26, 2001, p.15). *“Close, but no rubber cigar for our visitors!”* Incensed, Herod shouted: *“Wipe that smirk off your faces and tell me what you’re blabbering about.”* And they started to tremble as they pointed to a text in the 5th chapter of Micah. There was a little something there about a promised ruler for Israel, to be born in the dinky sheep-town of Bethlehem... But nothing for King Herod to get excited about. It had been there for a long, long time; but sure ... why not? Send the wise guys to Bethlehem to do the reconnaissance work and save a bit on the budget. You know, they were in a Recession after all. Can’t do much or give much. You know. Gas prices. Even though King Herod had plenty of that!!!

So, after hearing from the clergy, Herod gargled, combed his greasy hair and went back to tell the wise men they should go to Bethlehem at once – with his blessing – on the condition they come back his way and tell him who his successor was so he could send flowers. Herod’s breath smelled like *Pine-Sol* and the wise men left feeling queezy; but once they were out in the night air they could see the star clearly again ... moving their gaze further south. And so they finally arrived in Bethlehem and saw Jesus and his mother, Mary (v.13).

Ponder this with me: How far south can our gaze go but to our feet in humility ... When the gravity of God’s grace weighs on us so amazingly ... So that we can’t help but bow in worship before the manger? ... Look what happens to people when they finally come into contact with the living Christ. What does the Bible say? *“When they saw the star [over Bethlehem] they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy”* and *“they fell down and worshiped him ... opening their gifts of gold, and frankincense and myrrh”* (Matthew 2:10-11).

Family of First Lutheran Church, and all who have ears to hear ‘n’ eyes to see ... Let’s take a step back, out under the star of Bethlehem that is the lead-in for this Epiphany Season ... What does this light *“shine on us,”* and *“tell us”*? Where does it *“lead us”*?

1) That to do the work of ministry is to do the work of the star. *“And the star came and stood pointing and shining toward the place where the Christ child lay”* (Matthew 2:9). My friends, point people to where Christ is present: in worship, in baptism, in the Lord’s Supper, in the Word that is read and proclaimed, in the needs of others ...

2) That we ask ourselves what it is we lay before Him who is the greatest gift-giver of all ... Who’s given his very life for us ... Do we come on bended knee? Do we offer our finest? ... *“And opening their treasures the wise men offered him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh”* (Matthew 2:11). Let us begin this New Year by giving the Christ Child our very hearts ...

3) That when we do this ... we continue in the journey, the very steps of the wise men and their camels, as they *“go home by another way”* (Matthew 2:12) – humbly, thankfully, with comfort and joy ...

May the Lord’s face SHINE ON YOU and be gracious to you,

j.r. christopherson

Senior Pastor

WOMEN'S MINISTRY



Stretched out hands and hearts

By Kathy Stelzer and friends

The women of First Lutheran Church have their hands and hearts in many activities of our church, their homes, our community, our nation and the world. Some of these events and adventures take interesting turns. They involve God's work in amazing ways. This past year gave us several experiences.

Sleeping Bag. At a rummage sale of daily and seasonal use items, a lady appeared and asked for a sleeping bag. None was available, but in visiting we learned her husband was hospitalized at Sanford with West Nile and she was in need as she slept on the floor of a friend's home. Sharyl Wolf said she had one at home and she could bring it in about three hours. The lady agreed to return.

The Hannah Circle members working that day all agreed we were a Mission Project and that we should give her \$25 when she returned. Two hours later she returned to tell us that she had obtained a sleeping bag and she wanted to thank us for our concern for her. We, in turn, gave her the money and she began to cry as she said, "This is the second time." Questioning her meaning, she went on to explain that Lutheran Social Services had helped her at a younger age when her child was adopted. (Today, he is happy with his adopted family in Georgia; and they are still in minimal contact.) Tears flowed in joy and relief as she left. Not knowing her name we prayerfully wished the lady and her husband the best.

Yarn. Many things happen at the bazaar each year, but what happens to the remaining yarn? Some goes to on-going projects of the quilters and volunteers who again begin the making of next year's treasures. (Yes, the FLCW Board voted in November to have the Bazaar in 2018.) However, according to Lillian Carlson, three full bags of yarn will be taken by Intern Pastor Jeff Backer to the Penitentiary for their inmate knitting program.

Wedding Dress. Now for the tear jerker involving a seriously ill child, a doting grandmother, and a caring nurse. The rummage sale was in progress as a customer asked if we had a wedding dress for sale. Not having one, we asked about the nature of the need. The grandmother told us of her ill granddaughter's desire to have a "fairy dress with puffy sleeves," and that she thought she could remake a wedding dress to fit the child's desire. All of this sparked WELCA member and nurse, Lisa Bean's attention because, when recently cleaning a closet, she had found her wedding dress, removed a stain and left it hanging, wondering what she should do with it. With what was like a nudge from God, Lisa offered her dress if the grandmother would wait as she went home to get it. Sympathy and concern was with everyone as Lisa tearfully, but willingly, gave her dress to the grandmother knowing it would cheer a sick child. Weeks later, just after the bazaar, Lisa received a letter with pictures of the skillfully redesigned "fairy dress" and a description of the joy it had brought to an ill child among her family and friends.



Lisa in her wedding dress.



Another afternoon, the rummage sale was visited by members of a Twin Cities Church Youth Group who were witnessing in Sioux Falls. The mission of the FLCW was explained and, appropriately, the important role of Lutherans and Martin Luther was discussed as they seemed completely unaware of the Reformation. Before they left, there was prayer together, thanking God for our mutual service in His Name.

So goes some amazing examples of God's use of *stretched out hands and hearts*. God gives us so many opportunities. If you would like to join us and be a part of these helping ministries, we would be blessed as we prayerfully welcome you. Please contact, Marcia Huffman at 360-4168, or Kathy Stelzer at 332-1820.

Women of the ELCA



2018 programs begin January 4

By Marcia Huffman, WELCA President



All women of First Lutheran are invited to join us on January 4 at noon when we welcome Dusty Hoffman who will share with us how the Word of God is being spread around the world by CRU. Formerly known as Campus Crusade for Christ, CRU is now a worldwide organization in 191 countries with a staff of 25,000. We will gather for a luncheon in the Gathering Room as we begin an exciting new season with speakers, fellowship, singing, devotions, food and fun.

Would it surprise you to hear that amazing things are happening through God's word in Nepal, Russia and Afghanistan? Would you like to learn how CRU is reaching out to young people on our college campuses? We cordially invite you to join us for this inspirational presentation by a young man who has dedicated his life to spreading God's word. Please bring your Bible as we join Dusty in his passion for Jesus!

Visit www.flcsf.org/welca for a listing of all the programs for 2018.

For further information, please contact Kathy Stelzer at 332-1820, or Marcia Huffman at 360-4168. As 2018 co-presidents of WELCA, we are excited about our new season and pray that you will join us for our monthly meetings. All women are also encouraged to join a WELCA Bible Study Circle to dig deeper into God's Word with fellow members of First Lutheran. There are ten Circles that meet monthly on various days and times:

- Dorcas Circle – Third Thursday, 9:30 a.m.
- Elizabeth Circle – Third Thursday, 9:30 a.m.
- Hannah Circle – Third Thursday, 6 p.m.
- Katie Circle – Third Tuesday, 9:30 a.m.
- Lois Circle – Third Tuesday, 9 a.m.
- Lydia/Rachel Circle – Third Thursday, 9:30 a.m.
- Martha Circle – Third Thursday, 1 p.m.
- Rhoda Circle – Third Thursday, 1 p.m.
- Ruth Circle – Third Thursday, 7 p.m.
- Sarah Circle – Third Thursday, 9:30 a.m.

We invite you to take this opportunity to grow in your faith, meet new people, develop lasting friendships and be part of an organization whose goal is to serve God in thought, word and deed.

**Your Christmas "trash"
is our treasure**



Collecting Christmas ornaments and decorations

During January WELCA's Hannah Circle will be collecting Christmas decorations and ornaments for the 2018 Bazaar. As you put away your decorations this year, please bring those you no longer want to the church. A collection box is located near the Atrium elevator. Please be sure to wrap and box your donations for storage to prevent breakage.

CARING MINISTRY



Compassionate Connections thanks you... and invites you to learn more!

By Pastor Katherine Olson, Associate Pastor



On behalf of our Compassionate Connections ministry at First Lutheran, I'd like to thank all of those who donated to our church's Healthy Snack Drive, held in December. The items collected will be given away by our receptionists, staff, and Compassionate

Connections volunteers to those who are experiencing hunger and need as we prayerfully assist them in connecting to other ministry partners for longer-term needs.

First Lutheran's Compassionate Connections volunteer ministry launched this past summer, in order to help our church better welcome and serve those in our community with crisis needs. Interested to learn more? Attend the Wednesday Night Adult Forum on January 3rd (in the Friendship Room at 6:30 p.m.), as I will present more information about this growing ministry in our congregation. You'll hear from some of Compassionate Connections' volunteers, what we've learned in these past few months of active ministry, and how you can partner with First Lutheran as we live into our mission of being a "welcoming home in the heart of Sioux Falls."

With gratitude,
Pastor Katherine



Grieving with Grace continues January 6

Grieving with Grace group participants learn about the grieving process and are gentle with themselves as they work through the grief of a loved one's death, together with others. Grieving with Grace sessions usually take place on the first Saturday morning of the month in the Gathering Room at First Lutheran Church. Social Time begins at 9:30, and the group sessions last from 10-11 a.m. All sessions are open to first-time participants. Led by Pastor Katherine Olson, sessions include video clips on topics relating to grief, comfort from Scripture, prayer, encouragement, and access to additional resources for support.

Please join us for any or all of the following scheduled dates:

January 6 – Moving Forward In Grief
February 3 – Growing Spiritually Through Grief
March 3 – Living Beyond Grief

If you have questions about Grieving with Grace, reach out to Pastor Katherine at kolson@flcsf.org or 339-1983, ext. 214.

Volunteer Ministry

by Jean Hoff

Doris Bushard exemplifies the volunteer way that First Lutheran Church strives to follow. She works with the Altar Guild to find monthly volunteers to come to church and wash communion glasses. Doris also recruits volunteers who take one month out of the year to clean the chancel. She has taken the initiative to recruit, build her team, show appreciation to the volunteers on a regular basis, and empower her volunteers. Doris takes time whether she is in Sioux Falls or wintering in Arizona to follow up with her volunteers. While she is in Sioux Falls, she finds ways to show her appreciation by hosting a tea party or light brunch for her volunteers. We appreciate her work, her dedication to living First Lutheran's volunteer ministry model. Thank you, Doris.



Births

- June 8 Clara Lynne Johnson, daughter of Travis and Stephanie Johnson
- Aug. 10 Edison Christopher Wangsness, son of Christopher and Brittany Wangsness
- Nov. 15 Paizleigh Faith McGraw, daughter of Daymian and Chelcie McGraw

Baptisms

- Nov. 19 Celina Hoffman
- Nov. 25 Kessler Jordan MacRandall

Deaths

- Nov. 14 Fern Skrabuha

January Special Offering: Companion Synods

The special offering envelope for January will go to support the ministries of our Companion Synods: The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon, and the Faith and Hope Lutheran Church of Nicaragua. First Lutheran Church has been an instrumental partner in supporting the ministries in these synods over the years.

Most recently we have provided funding for the hospital in Garoua Boulai and the work of Dr. Solofo. In Nicaragua, we have provided funding for Cedro Galan Retreat Center and Farm to establish an updated and safer facility for visitors and church retreats to happen in that place.

Special offering envelope monies will go to support the Green Project Agricultural Development. In Cameroon, funding gathered will be used to install a new X-Ray machine coordinated by ELCA Global Health to the hospital in Garoua Boulai.

Please consider making a gift to support these ministries in Cameroon and Nicaragua using one of the special offering envelopes provided by the church, or by writing "Companion Synods" on the memo line of a check made out to First Lutheran Church. Unless otherwise indicated, your donation will be divided equally between the two synods. No matter what you do, please remember the Lutheran Churches of Cameroon and Nicaragua in your prayers. Thank you for your support! Special offering envelopes are included with your regular offering envelopes.

If you do not have one, please use the yellow envelope in the pew, bring your donation to the Information Desk at church, or visit flcsf.org/give to make an online donation.

Senior luncheon

All First Lutheran senior adults and their friends are invited to join us for lunch Tuesday, Jan. 9, at noon. The program will be by a representative of Paramedics Plus. Please remember to RSVP by calling the church receptionist at 336-3734, by Wednesday, Jan. 3. Need a ride? Please call Project CAR, 332-2777, by 9 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 8.

Church Council highlights – Nov. 2017

If there is an item that you as a church member wish to add to an upcoming Council meeting agenda, please contact Marilyn McNeill, Business Administrator, at 339-1983 ext. 236, or mmcneill@flcsf.org. Council agendas will be posted on a bulletin board in the Atrium and on the church website home page, flcsf.org, the week-end prior to meetings. Meetings are held the fourth Thursday of each month. First Lutheran Church members are welcome to visit meetings.

- Finances look good and pledges are coming in.
- The recent church shooting was discussed and how we would plan if something would happen at FLC. Marilyn has been in contact with the police department about this and is working on a plan.
- The custodial staff was commended on their hard work during the busy fall of Reformation, Hymn Festival and the Bazaar. The Bazaar was very successful and money will be dispersed to many ministries.
- The Luther House fund has \$16,680. Several people have pledged for next year. The first funds won't be needed until July of 2018 or January of 2019.
- The Governance Proposal was discussed. To change the Bylaws of FLC, the Constitution had to be updated. The Constitution and By-Laws are now one document. The ELCA has certain requirements what to be included in the By-Laws and Constitution. The Constitution of FLC has not been updated since 1977. The Council took a significant amount of time going over the proposed new language of the document. The proposed deletions and additions were discussed and agreed upon.

A resolution to recommend approval of the Proposed Constitution and Amended and Restated By-Laws to the congregation of First Lutheran Church:

Whereas First Lutheran has been engaged in discussion about reorganizing church governance structure to accommodate our First and Foremost 2016 Strategic Plan; and

Whereas the Church Council, Executive Committee, and Leadership Task Force have approved a revision of current Constitution and By-Laws that supports this reorganization and adopts required language from the ELCA Model Constitution; and

Whereas the Church Council has reviewed and approved of the draft,

Therefore, be it resolved: That the Church Council recommends adoption of the Constitution and Revised and Restated By-Laws by the Congregation at a special congregational meeting to be held on December 3, 2017.

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

New Life

By Marnie Dahle Backer, Youth and Family Director



*“I’ve been washed by the water,
I’ve been cleansed by the sea,
I’ve been touched by the river of
eternity.
Though I don’t understand it,
I have never been the same.
I can’t turn back the water,
the water of change.”*

That’s the chorus to a song by Larry Olson. It’s been a special song for our family; it was one of the songs for both our boys’ baptisms. I remember when we were baptizing our oldest son, we were super excited because the pastor was using water from the River Jordan – hot diggity! This was going to be extra special. Except... not really. I mean – it was still cool – but the water wasn’t extra special, he wasn’t MORE baptized than I was with my regular old tap water.

Wait. What? Are you sure? – Martin Luther says in that nifty little Small Catechism, “Clearly the water does not do it, but the word of God, which is with and alongside the water and faith, which trusts this word of God in the water. For without the word of God the water is plain water and not a baptism, but with the word of God it is a baptism, that is, a grace-filled water of life and a ‘bath of the new birth in the Holy Spirit’,...” Titus, chapter 3.

A “bath of new birth” – what a wonderful image that is! That we are made new! In this season of New Year’s and resolutions, we can rejoice! Luther continues “it signifies that the old person in us with all sins and evil desires is to be drowned and die through daily sorrow for sin and through repentance, and on the other hand that daily a new person is to come forth and rise up to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.” So each morning we rise, and if we missed that alarm for our 5:30 a.m. work-out time or a late-night snack is weighing heavy, or we are just too exhausted from being up with the baby, or life is overwhelming for any number of reasons, we can get up and know that God has given us a new birth and we might walk in newness of life (Romans 6)! I’ve been washed in the water! And so have you. And we will never be the same.



*Bella Noche
Dinner & Auction*

**Mark Your Calendars
for Bella Noche
Sunday, February 25**

Bella Noche, dinner and auction, fundraiser for the 2018 Youth Gathering this summer in Houston, Texas will be Sunday, Feb. 25. More information coming soon. You will NOT want to miss this fun event!



Milestone Minute

“We are the Church” Milestone was celebrated in late November. Let’s take a look at some of this year’s precious two year olds as they explore and learn about their church.



Emma Bertrand enters the church with parents Erika & Craig and is reminded “I Am a Child of God.”



Khloe Kimber learns where to put her coins for the Children’s Offering.



The Bertrand’s read a Bible story together.



The Holmberg triplets have arrived. Ceclia, Grace and William are ready to check it all out with mom Nicole, and dad Brad.



Khloe Kimber settles in for a photo with Pastor John.



Lincoln Hoyt reaches for his pebble and is reminded by parents, Nathan and Jodi, that he is a precious child of God.



Bye Lincoln! See you on Sunday.

**Anniversary of
Baptism Milestone**

All babies, children and adults who celebrated a baptism in 2017 are invited to a Milestone breakfast on Sunday, Jan. 7, at 10:15 a.m. in Fellowship Hall, followed by a special blessing at the 11 a.m. worship service. *Please RSVP to the Youth & Family Office, 336-3734.*

Milestone photos by Brad Thompson, FLC member

MISSION

First Lutheran Church welcomes all people into the community of Jesus Christ, equipping and sending them forth to serve and witness in Jesus' name.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We are grounded in the great commandment of Jesus.
(Matthew 22:34-40)

We are grounded in the great commission of Jesus.
(Matthew 28:16-20)

We are committed to welcome and minister to all people.

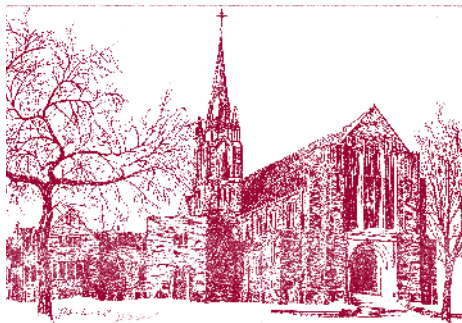
We are committed to equipping people for ministry.

We are committed to service in our community and world.

We are committed to a ministry of relationship building.

We are committed to our heritage and identity as a reforming church.

We are committed to excellence in broadcast ministry.



WORSHIP SERVICES

Saturday (Chapel)

5 p.m. Vespers/Communion

Sunday (Sanctuary)

8 a.m. Traditional Worship with Communion

9:30 a.m. Traditional Worship

11 a.m. Contemporary Worship

Media Ministries Broadcasts

8 a.m. KELO-FM Radio (101.9)

11 a.m. KSFY (Sioux Falls), KPRY (Pierre) and KABY (Aberdeen)

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First Word

First Word is the monthly newspaper of First Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, S.D. It is distributed to members of the congregation and others upon request. Opinions expressed in First Word are those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by the First Lutheran Church congregation or staff. The editors of First Word reserve the right to edit submissions.

Newsletter submissions are due the first business day of the month. Please submit articles or questions regarding First Word to Susan Bell, Communications Coordinator, at sbell@flcsf.org. Reader feedback is always welcome. First Word is available to read or download online at flcsf.org/firstword.

Community Update

By Pastor Lars Olson, Executive Pastor



On December 3, at a special congregational meeting, changes to the First Lutheran constitution and bylaws were approved. This had been in the works for at least two years with the work of many teams and task forces, in addition to First Lutheran's Council and Executive Committee, and was asked for by the congregation through the strategic planning process of the CAT (Church Assessment Tool) and First & Foremost. Here are a couple outcomes resulting from these amended governing documents:

- **An adjusted board structure.** All board descriptions were adjusted to give flexibility toward carrying out ministry. That is the goal of each board. Ensuring that a ministry area is well executed and is part of the whole ministry of First Lutheran.
- **New Board Created.** The Board of Welcome & Community is being established, and will begin working and learning how to best encourage Christian community among members as well as welcome new people into the congregation.
- **Council.** Council will be made up of the Executive Committee, Board Chairs, and the presidents of WELCA and the Foundation. Council will be a "meeting of the minds" from across the congregation, where the leaders of various ministry areas interact and work together in a supportive way, to lead boards in carrying out ministry.
- **More behind the Scenes.** In addition to the board changes, we have also begun restructuring staff positions, the nominating process, and the budget creation to better reflect ministry goals for next year.

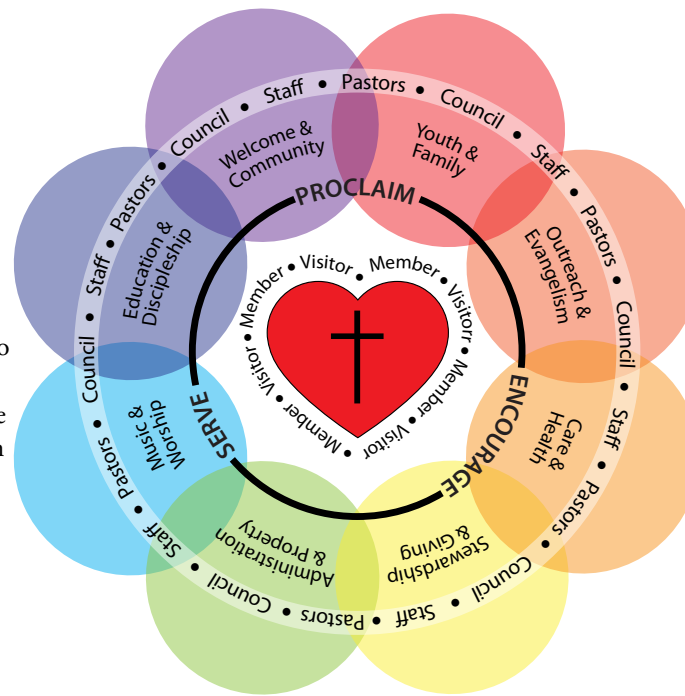
As much work has been done to get us to this point, however, will mean very little for the congregation if we don't live into the hopes that are behind all of this. Changing words on paper doesn't make the changes, they only express how we expect to be. The expressed hope in the CAT to be a more welcoming congregation does nothing to make us more welcoming. Creating a board to lead us in welcoming, is only a step toward actually carrying out ministries that support welcoming and building community. So what is next? What can you expect to see?

Time to learn. All the boards will need time and training to operate differently. In some ways a 'new' board has more freedom than a 'changed' board, but both will need some time to set new direction and goals for the year.

More Intentional Cooperation. For example, the Board for Evangelism & Outreach has been hosting new member orientation and welcome. A partnership between Evangelism & Outreach and Welcome & Community will give this important ministry a focus that spans inviting, welcoming and connecting new people into the ministries of First Lutheran.

In-Reach. Better skills, gifts, and ministry passion inventory will be needed, and a better way of using this information. As we get better at integrating new people, it will be useful to also find out about current members.

Thanks be to God for all the people he has called into the community of Christ at First Lutheran Church, for even as we make changes to the way that we operate, the grace of God continues to be known and shown through the ministry that you are a part of.



Wednesday Night Adult Forums

6:30 – 7:30 p.m. in the Friendship Room

- Jan. 3: Pastor Katherine Olson, Compassionate Connections at First Lutheran
- Jan. 10: Dave Wilson "I Can't Wait to See What Happens Next!"
- Jan. 17: Rebel Hurd, Church on the Street
- Jan. 24 & 31: Stan Schmidt, Messiah, part 2
- Feb. 7: Jeff Backer, Israel trip
- Feb. 14 – March 28: Lent, Jesus' "I AM"
- April 4, 18 & 25: Pastor Lars Olson, Bible Study

CHURCH COUNCIL

Officers/Executive Committee

Brian Aamlid President
Aaron Ellingsen Vice President
Eric Severson Treasurer
Mindy Moore Secretary
Pr. John Christopherson Senior Pastor

Council Representatives

Alma Kallesen Adult Discipleship
Gayle Johnson Caring Ministry
Colleen Kokenge Evangelism, Mission & Outreach
Deb Nelson Financial Services
Marcia Huffman FLCW/WELCA
Brad Thompson Media
Julia Kramer Member-at-Large
Diane Atchison Member-at-Large
Maria Neely Member-at-Large
Lyle Eidsness Property
Tim Heinemann Stewardship
Suzanne Willadsen Worship and Music
Ben Ready Youth and Family

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH DIRECTORY

Pastoral Staff

(203) Dr. John Christopherson Senior Pastor
(210) Rev. Lars Olson Executive Pastor
(214) Rev. Katherine Olson* Associate Pastor
(209) Jeff Backer Intern Pastor
(202) Rev. Bob Chell* Visitation
(202) Rev. David Houck* Visitation
(202) Rev. Roger Noer* Visitation
(202) Rev. Dennis Tranberg* Visitation
(202) Rev. Dave Johnson Emeritus

Administrative Staff

(202) Donna Jahr Secretary to the Pastors
(236) Marilyn McNeill Church Administrator
(201) Judi Mueller* Receptionist/Mbr. Secretary
(201) Cleo Sorensen* Receptionist/Mbr. Secretary
(201) Sandy Rieck* Receptionist/Mbr. Secretary

Caring Ministries

(202) Cheryl Satterlee* Wedding Coordinator

Financial Services

(211) LaVonne Wolf Financial Specialist

Media Ministries

(252) Susan Bell Communications Coordinator
(213) Jared Callahan* Communications Assistant
(236) John Cerwinski* Sound Board Technician
(213) Kathy Hein* Broadcast Director
(213) Garrett Masters* Broadcast Director
(213) David Palmer* Broadcast Director
(213) Hons Oakland* Broadcast Director
(213) Tanner Wangness* Broadcast Director

Facilities

(201) Dave Wilson Facility Manager
(201) Rick East Custodian
(201) Jeff Hartnett Custodian

Worship and Music Ministries

(260) Zachary Rygiel Director/Organist, FLYGHT and Jubilant Singers Director
(261) Shirley Barlow* Administrative Assistant
(261) Donna Hamilton* Accompanist
(261) Dr. Jerry Hanson* Dir. of Music Emeritus
(261) Ali Hoffman* Youth Handbell Director
(261) Marcia Kittelson* Organist Emerita
(261) Bonnie Lindgren* Carol Choir Director
(261) Dr. Paul Nesheim* Adult Choir Director and Women's Choir Director
(261) Larry Olson* Contemporary Worship Coordinator
(261) Mary Ryrholm* Agape Ringers Director
(261) Sue Severson* Accompanist
(261) Pam Sonnichsen* Instrumental Coordinator

Youth and Family Ministries

(204) Marnie Dahle Backer Director
(228) Nancy Henrichsen* Nursery Attendant
(228) Gayle Johnson* Nursery Attendant
(228) Irma Rodriguez Leon* Nursery Attendant
(238) Heather Smith Children's Minister
(228) Kris Stark* Nursery Coordinator
(228) Samantha Stark* Nursery Coordinator
(235) Elias Youngquist Youth Minister
(228) Kristy Zuraff Administrative Assistant

()=Direct dial phone extensions *Part-time

Main phone:(605) 336-3734
Direct dial:(605) 339-1983
Toll-free:(800) 425-9899
Fax:(605) 336-8370
Pastoral emergency:(605) 610-9431
Custodian cell:(605) 351-8281
Project CAR:(605) 332-2777

FINANCIAL SERVICES



Gifts and memorials

Gifts to the First Lutheran Foundation in appreciation of:
 Our children Terry, Roger & Debra: Jake & Norma Hofer

Schiager, Stan & Norma Schmidt, Eric & Sue Severson, Tom & Mary Simmons, Mike & Gloria Simpson, Dickie & Deb Sorensen, Kathy Stelzer, Dave & Judy Van Veldhuizen

Gifts to the First Lutheran Foundation in memory of:

Don Dummermuth: Dorothy Grevlos
Herb Mikkelson: Scott & Diane Atchison, Jeff & Marnie Backer, Jim & Ardys Becking, Elaine Berg, Elvina Birney, Duane & Irene Bloom, Carol Bormann, Kathryn Borns, Jim Carlson, Lillian Carlson, Jim & Dorothy Christopherson, Jim & DeAnn Clark, Phyllis Day, Bob Doescher, Lyle & Jean Eidsness, Marilyn Eikanger, Eleanor Emmel, Gerry & Arlene Gackle, Bob & Betty Gednalske, Leon & Joanne Gerdes, Russ & Carol Greenfield, Mark & Liz Grotewold, Helen Gunderson, Margie Hagen, Evenelle Hamlin, Tim & Becky Heinemann, Don & Arlene Hoek, Jake & Norma Hofer, Mary Ann Hohman, Sandy Holleman, Burt & Gladys Horsted, Maurine Hult, Steve Johnson, Barb Matson, Marilyn McLeod, Dean & Connie Mikkelson, Darrell & Marilyn Moseson, Carl & Janet Naessig, Mary Nicolai, John Odney, Nancy Okland, Gary & Rosaaen Olson, Martin & Mary Oyo, Sandy Pedersen, Lois Peterson, Franklin & Marit Pudas, Rosalie Ramstad, Paul & Lorna Sanders, Roger & Donna

Gift to Caring Ministry in memory of:

Rudy Becker: Bud & Barb Entringer, Patti Erickson, Migs Sommers
Don Dummermuth: Jim & Sandy Fink
Janet Krause: Franklin & Marit Pudas
Herb Mikkelson: Howard & Arlene Bich, Faith Christiansen, Jerry Drake, Jean Edman, Lee & Jan Halstenson, Dick & Alma Kallesen, Wayne & Doris Mitchell, Milt Mutch, Leroy & Elaine Nevin, Gene & Ruth Parker, John Peckham, Bob & Darlene South, Don & Flo Toft, Hazel Wek

Herbert Schaible: Jeff & Donna Hamilton

Ione Simons: Jim & Sandy Fink
Fern Skrabuha: Alice Engebretson, Franklin & Marit Pudas

Shirley Thomsen: Carol Lerdal

Gift to Volunteer Shop in memory of:

Herb Mikkelson: Mel & Dely Anderson, Paul & Jean Colon, Norm Ekeland, Lee & JoAnne Goldhammer, Frank & Joan Hansen, Jim & Gail Leikvoll, Dave & Nancy Millard, Roger & Jan Noer, Howard & Lou Ann Paulson, Grant & Maureen Sorenson

MEDIA MINISTRY



**Media broadcast sponsors
 October – November**

First Lutheran Church's worship can be seen every Sunday at 11 a.m. on KSFY, KPRY and KABY in South Dakota, southwest Minnesota, northwest Iowa and northeast Nebraska. A live radio broadcast of worship is aired Sundays at 8 a.m. on KELO-FM, 101.9.

KELO broadcast sponsored:

- Oct. 1:** In honor of the First Lutheran pastors and given by the staff.
- Oct. 8:** In memory of Arlen, Bea and Chuck Osthus by their family.
- Oct. 15:** In loving memory of parents, Leo & Ingrid Knutson and Adolph & Lucile Quail and brother, Leonard Quail by Allan and Phyllis Knutson.
- Oct. 29:** By the FLC Women in appreciation for all the volunteers who help with the bazaar.
- Nov. 5:** In memory of Chuck Osthus who would have celebrated his birthday Nov. 5, by his wife Tracie and sons Scott and David.
- Nov. 12:** In loving memory of Ken and LaVonne Gunderson by their son Gregg Gunderson
- Nov. 19:** In loving memory of Mark Doescher by his sisters, Robin, LeAnne and Sarah and their families.
- Nov. 26:** In loving memory of Morris & Edith Magnuson whose anniversary would have been Nov. 25, by gifts to the Foundation.

KSFY closed captioning sponsored:

- Oct. 8:** In loving memory of Ron Hohman whose birthday would have been Oct. 13, by his wife Karen, family and friends.
- Nov. 5:** In loving memory of Albert Berdahl, born Nov. 2, 1900, by his family.
- Nov. 12:** In memory of Drs. Arthur Huseboe and Doris Eggers Huseboe and their parents, Delbert and Erna Eggers and Carl and Lillian Huseboe. Funds have been made available through a gift to the First Lutheran Church Foundation.
- Nov. 19:** In loving memory of Mark Doescher by his sisters, Robin, LeAnne and Sarah and their families.
- Nov. 22:** In thankfulness for and in memory of Bonnie Merrill, Carl Wilkins, Maudie Wilkins, Bessie Thompson, Dorothy Peterson, Mabel Jasper, and Agnes Welch. It is given by nieces and nephews.
- Nov. 26:** In memory of Thomas A. Dahle whose birthday was Nov. 24, by his son David Dahle.

KSFY telecast (fully sponsored unless noted otherwise):

- Oct. 1:** By Franklin and Marit Pudas in celebration of their 60th wedding anniversary.
- Oct. 8:** In loving memory of Bill Kost by his wife Janice, family and friends.
- Oct. 15:** In memory of Terry Graves by his family.
- Oct. 29:** By David and Judy Van Veldhuizen and family – Dan, Angela, Sam, Ella, Isaac, Paul, Heidi, Jack, Winter, Gabrielle, and Sasha.
- Nov. 5:** In memory of Trudy Peckham who would have celebrated her birthday on November 2, by her loving friends and family
- Nov. 19:** In loving memory of Mark Doescher by his father, Bob Doescher and sisters Robin, LeAnne and Sarah and families.
- Nov. 22:** In thankfulness for and in memory of Bonnie Merrill, Carl Wilkins, Maudie Wilkins, Bessie Thompson, Dorothy Peterson, Mabel Jasper, and Agnes Welch. It is given by nieces and nephews.
- Nov. 26:** By earnings of a gift to the First Lutheran Church Foundation in loving memory of Hilmer and Susie Lillebo.

Sponsorships available

Worship broadcasts are made possible by supporters from all around the country. To learn more about sponsoring a radio broadcast, telecast or closed captioning in honor of, or in memory of a loved one, or in celebration of a special life event, please call Donna Jahr at (605) 339-1983, ext. 202. Donations of any size will help the broadcast ministry. Openings for future months not listed may be available. Please call for additional dates throughout the year.

KELO radio broadcast sponsorships (\$150) available for Feb. 4.

KSFY telecast sponsorships (\$1300) are available for Jan. 7, 14, 21 and Feb. 25.

Closed captioning sponsorships for the weekly KSFY telecasts (\$140) are available on Jan. 21 and Feb. 18.

Un-sponsored broadcast, telecast and closed caption dates are made possible in part through gifts and memorials to First Lutheran Church Media Ministries.

Financial update

Through November 30, 2017

Total Revenue – year-to-date

2017 Actual	\$1,789,141
2016 Actual	\$1,699,015

Total Expenses – year-to-date

2017 Actual	\$1,803,921
2016 Actual	\$1,792,399

Contract For Deed, Ideal\$326,681

God's Gifts. Our Responsibility. Income\$4,007,081

Worship Attendance November..... 3,881

First Lutheran Foundation

– Did You Know? –

Earnings from designated funds in the First Lutheran Foundation have enabled the Youth and Family's Milestone Ministry to give age-appropriate Bibles to children and youth of the church at their baptism, when children reach three years of age, to third graders and to high school seniors.

To learn more about giving designated gifts to the Foundation, please contact Marilyn McNeill at (605) 339-1983 ext. 236.

*Thank You for supporting
 First Lutheran Church!*

EVANGELISM, MISSION AND OUTREACH MINISTRIES (EMO)



FLC group travels to Colombia!

By Jeff Backer, Intern Pastor



From Nov. 10 through 18, a small group embarked on a mission experience to Colombia, South America. FLC has a long standing relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Colombia (IELCO) through our former pastor, Natanael Lizarazo. Pr. Nate still serves as the missionary for FLC to Colombia and is supported annually through the FLC Evangelism & Outreach Board. This mission experience is an accompaniment model of missions, not to build physical spaces, but building relationships with those that the church ministers to. Colombia still has the second highest population of internally displaced people due to war or conflict. There are stories that are heard and encountered that challenge human sensitivities as to what human beings will do to other human beings in the name of money and power.

We would also like to thank FLC Lutheran Men in Mission for their donation to support giving out food bags, socks, and towels to the elders in the community of Soacha.

The travelers offer their reflections on their time in Colombia:



Sandy Pedersen

My trip to Colombia was a trip that I will always remember. I met so many wonderful people that really made an impact on my life. I think going with a smaller group made it nice to make connections. Having Edwin for our translator and someone who knows the people and the communities really made it a pleasant experience.



Marilyn McLeod

I will always remember how all that we met were gracious and welcoming - both those that work in/for the church and those that were recipients of the blessings extended by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO).

We spent many hours with Mauricio and Edwin. They too were great representatives of the good people of Colombia. God bless Jairo and his excellent driving through all that traffic!

The elders have a special place in my heart. I will never forget the steep hills they had to walk to get to and from the Good Samaritan Center for seniors, and how proudly they danced for us!

The hospitality we were shown as we gathered with Nelida whose family was one of the founders of the Lutheran church in Colombia was outstanding. It was great to see photos of Pastor Nate when he was a young man there.

We had fun in the vehicle as we traveled along, and Mauricio bantered back and forth with Tasha. We became a good group of friends as we learned about each other. It was a blessed trip.



Paul and Kristy Zuraff

This was our second trip to Bogota, Colombia. We also went in 2014. This was a much different trip with a smaller group which was to our advantage. We were able to do things that we didn't on the

first trip. We were tourists, strangers, friends, family and missionaries on this trip.

The people we visited with wherever we went were all very welcoming, caring and loving. They appreciated us being there spending time with them and enjoying each other's company. Practicing either English or Spanish was always an experience, but fun.

We left with heavy hearts wanting to stay longer in this wonderful country that has befriended us and shown us much love. We will be back again, Colombia.



Natasha Letcher

Dakota Wesleyan University Senior

The trip to Colombia was great. It was an experience I never expected but it was an experience that I am glad I had in my life. I am constantly thinking

about our time at Soacha and at Tunja. The people that we met are always in my mind and I am always thinking about them and praying for them. I continue to reflect on how joyful and grateful everyone that we met was. I continue to think of their joy when I face hardships in my life because they inspired me to look at challenges through a new lens. I have made life-long friends from this trip with the people we traveled with as well as the people we encountered along the way. God has placed these people in my life and I am lucky to have had the privilege to meet them.

Honestly, the trip was life changing. I love going to new places and feeling right at home like I did while we were in Colombia. The people were so welcoming and so wonderful and I can't put into words how much this meant to me. I still wish it was acceptable to hug people as much as we did while we were in Colombia but that is a personal issue. I absolutely loved it all!



FLC Outreach at The Banquet

First Lutheran Church has committed to serve breakfast at The Banquet on Tuesday, Jan. 9. We are in need of 5-6 people to prep the breakfast at 5:30 a.m. and 20-25 people to serve beginning at 6:30 a.m.

First Lutheran has been serving The Banquet since its beginning more than 30 years ago. Will you please help us fulfill our commitment? Please contact Betty DeBerg at deberg@uni.edu or 319-961-2227, if you are willing to help.

International Chef Cook-off

FLC Intern Pastor Jeff Backer and Evangelism & Outreach board member Mike Minehart represented FLC at the International Chef Cook-off at the Multi-Cultural Center on December 9.

Sixteen local personalities were asked to offer a selection of ethnic food for the competition. Jeff and Mike served up Colombian Empanada's and Aji. It was a crowd favorite!



Over 300 people attended this fundraising event that goes to support the 19 programs offered by the Multi-Cultural Center, especially to people for which English is a second language, and who have recently settled in Sioux Falls and are trying to establish a new life in our community. The International Chef Cook-off is a significant fundraising event for the Multi-Cultural Center.

First Friday Movies



Friday, January 5 • 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

First Lutheran Church - 327 S. Dakota Avenue
Gym-Reformation Hall

FREE Family Event—Snacks provided!

Sponsored by **THRIVENT FINANCIAL**



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First Word
First Lutheran Church
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Sioux Falls SD 57104

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