

Join us for worship!

Saturday
5:00pm

Sunday
8:30, 9:45 & 11:00am

Wednesday
6:15pm

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE SCHEDULE

10:00am • Family Worship

2:00pm • Worship

4:00pm • Worship

6:00pm • Candlelight Worship

9:00pm • Candlelight Worship

FOCUS december

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH | DECEMBER 2017

ADVENT 2017

It's a Wonderful Life

Life is full of ups and downs, times of joy, and times of despair. This Advent season, we will be exploring how God is active in the midst of all of it; filling us with the gifts of peace, hope, joy, and love to see us through. Please join us this Christmas season as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Sunday, December 10: Children's Christmas Programs

- 11:00am Pre-K and Kindergarten
- 2:00pm 1st-5th grade

Saturday, December 16: 5:00pm Carols and Candles

Saturday, December 23: No Worship

Sunday, December 24: Christmas Eve worship services (with Holy Communion)

- 10:00am: Family Worship
- 2:00pm: Worship
- 4:00pm: Worship
- 6:00pm: Candlelight Worship
- 9:00pm: Candlelight Worship

Saturday, December 30: 5:00pm Worship

Sunday, December 31: 9:45am Worship (only)

PASTOR'S PEN

New Building Update

Dear members and friends of First,

This is an interesting and exciting time for First Lutheran as we move toward breaking ground on our new church home next spring. At our Congregational Meeting on Sunday, November 19th, the congregation voted to hire Innovative Builders (an Alexandria company) as our general contractor and construction manager for our building project. The vote was 149 yes and 1 no. The congregation was also updated in regard to ongoing revisions with the building and our upcoming timeline.

You may remember that a year ago, the scope of the building project was downsized, and it was decided that the building would be done in phases. This meant that we would need to function out of both our current location and the new site.

This fall as the staff and leadership began to review how the two site model would be lived out, it became more apparent that our current location would end up functioning primarily as office and preschool space, and that nearly all other operations would happen at the new site. So, if that were the case, we asked the obvious question which is, what would it cost to build adequate office space and include enough room to move completely out to the new site?

Over the last month the Building Committee and Vision Team have been working on this question and feel that since it is important for us to get this right, and since there is still time to make adjustments to our plan, we want to bring this possibility and important decision to the congregation. Another recent development that has had an impact on this is that a local congregation and a community nonprofit organization have recently shown interest in our current building.

As a result of these developments, the Building Committee and Vision Team have taken a closer look at the function of spaces, the pros and cons of working out of two sites, compared the cost of operations, and feel that the one site option is a realistic long-term approach that we need to consider.

However, this is a change and we want to set aside time to discuss this important decision. As a result we are offering a number of Information Sessions for the congregation during the coming weeks. Check out the dates and times below, and please make an effort to make it to one of these sessions.

On December 17th we will have a Congregational Meeting at 11:00 am in the sanctuary to discuss and vote on what it would mean to build and carry out our mission from one site.

Building Team Meetings

- Monday, November 27th at 10:00am in the Family Room
- Sunday, December 3rd at 11:00am in the Fellowship Hall
- Thursday, December 7th at 6:00pm in Family Room
- Wednesday, December 13th at 7:00pm in the Family Room

Congregational Meeting Sunday, December 17th

JANUARY SERMON SERIES

Money and Meaning

Our faith reaches into every part of our lives. It guides us in each and every day and in all that we do, including our relationship with money. Join us in worship this January as we go beyond the offering plate to explore the role that money plays in our lives and how it affects us and our relationships.

As part of this series, we want to create opportunities for us to have meaningful conversations concerning money from practical tips to bigger questions about finance and faith. Setting aside time to talk together opens the door for a more healthy relationship with the resources that we have been given. In the coming weeks, look for special opportunities to gather together and go deeper into money and what it means for us as followers of Jesus.

PARISH HEALTH

Remembering Our Elderly Family Members and Friends This Holiday Season

As Christmas approaches we look forward to festive gatherings with family and friends. It's important to remember that Christmas can be a lonely time for many seniors. Here are 3 great reasons to schedule in a visit or two to those seniors who are important to you this holiday season:

- To Show Your Love: Remind them of their worth and let them know how much you cherish time spent in their company.
- Keep Spirits High: Seniors who live alone are at greater risk of depression and social isolation. Your visit will help to nurture their psychological well-being. (It will probably give yours a boost as well!)
- Share Memories: There is nothing more heart-warming than taking a trip down memory lane. Look at old photos, reminisce or listen to favorite old songs. Sharing our love and time is the greatest gift we can give.

Friendly Visitor Program

An opportunity to show our Christian love and fellowship to the homebound and lonely people of First Lutheran Church

Pastor Ben and Val plan to meet with the current Friendly Visitors Team on Tuesday, January 16 from 12:00-1:00pm. We are in need of more volunteers! If you want to learn more about this important outreach program or would like to become a visitor, please join us! Call Val Trumm, Parish Nurse, for more information 320.762.2196.

Support Groups in and Around the Alexandria Area...

•**Caregiver Support Group:** Meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 2:00pm at First Lutheran Church. The next meeting is December 12.

•**Memory Loss Caregiver Support Group:** Meets the 4th Thursday of each month at 1:30pm at the Douglas County Public Works meeting room, 526 Willow Dr., Alexandria. For more information call Mary at 320.762.3047. The next meeting is December 28.

•**Alexandria Area Parkinson's Support Group:** Meets the 4th Wednesday of each month. Because of the holidays, this group will not meet again until January 24 (4th Wednesday). For more info contact Val Trumm, Parish Nurse at 320.762.2196.

•**NAMI (Nat'l Assoc of Mental Illness) WebConnect Support Groups:** People living with a mental illness regardless of diagnosis. Groups are led by individuals who live with a mental illness themselves and are doing well in recovery. The groups are online and in real time. Adult groups "meet" every Thursday from 7:00-8:30pm. Young adults (age 18-30) "meet" on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month from 7:00-8:30pm. To access either group visit www.supportgroupscentral.com/nami-mn. For more information call Morgan 651.645.2948 x121 or mcaldwell@namimn.org or Val Trumm, FLC Parish Nurse, at 320.762.2196.

PRAYERS FOR THOSE RECENTLY BAPTIZED

Jack Benjamine Erickson
Owen Ryan Droppo
Dawson Mark Gruenes

PRAYERS FOR THOSE RECENTLY MARRIED

Allie Lundsetter & JP McMillion

PRAYERS FOR THOSE WHO MOURN

We express sympathy and God's love to the family and friends of:

Judy Williams
Dorothy Fernow
John Gronli
Violet Dyrstad
Keith Lundsetter

COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL

Merry Christmas from the staff and children at Community Preschool. As we practice our songs in celebration of Christmas, we are reminded of how important music is in children's development. We are fortunate to have Leila Preston come into our 4 & 5 year old classes and share her Musikgarten curriculum. Leila recently touched on a few of the benefits of music. Music nurtures gross and fine motor skills and fosters impulse control while recharging the brain. This aids in giving children the mental energy needed to succeed in school. Music and movement activities assist in the area of children's language development by engaging them in singing games, stories, and poetry. This nurtures verbal skills, memory, and creativity. The children enjoy rhythm and tonal patterns each visit. Even the youngest of children can echo short rhythmic and tonal patterns which help them build their own musical vocabulary. We are fortunate to be able to have this music time in preschool.

~May the simple joys of Christmas ~ warm your heart, fill your home, and last a lifetime. ~

Merry Christmas!

Melisa, Kelli, Helen, and Angie



DEEP AND WIDE CELEBRATIONS

Service Saturday

On Saturday, November 11 we enjoyed a morning of fellowship, learning, teaching and fun! Service Saturday was a day for participants to grow deeper in relationship with one another, share gifts and talents, and learn a new skills. Some of us taught classes while others enjoyed learning new skills. New friendships were formed while people of all ages came together to share their time and talents. It was a joy spending time with our church family.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **New Member Social** will be Monday, December 4 from 6:00-7:00pm for any members who have joined in the past year and new member sponsors. Appetizers will be served and childcare will be available.
- **Bookseekers** just finished reading *Calling Me Home*, which is set in 1930s Kentucky and is a story of forbidden love. Isabelle, a willful young white teen, falls in love with the black son of her family's housekeeper in a town where blacks aren't allowed after dark. Her sad story is presented in flashback told by a now-elderly Isabelle to her black hairdresser, Dorrie, while the two drive cross-country to a funeral. Dorrie, a young single mom, has her own troubles that she has set aside to help Isabelle return home. The story weaves the past with the present, providing a painful reminder of our ugly racial history as well as the prejudices of today. The next meeting is Monday, Dec. 11 at 6:30pm at Helen Johnsrud's home. We will be discussing the book, *The Martian*, by Andy Weir.
- **WELCA potluck** will be on Thursday, December 7 at 12:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. Please join us as we enjoy the music of the Gospel Four+. Bring your favorite dish to share and invite a friend.
- **Your offering goes Deep and Wide.** Did you know that we at First Lutheran tithe? One of the responsibilities of the mission board is to help allocate part of this money. One of the places we give to is Lutheran World Relief (LWR). LWR is a nonprofit organization that helps families in the world's poorest communities build the resilience they need to thrive. There are 118 projects in 32 countries helping almost 3,500,000 needy individuals. LWR strives to work as partners in many different projects. Everyone from project participants to their families to LWR staff to you is involved in learning, sharing and offering hope and lasting promise! When you make your offering at FLC,

Mission Support

Thank you for all that you do to make mission happen here at First Lutheran. Your support allows us to...

- Encourage people in their walk with Jesus
 - Bring communion to residents at nine different care facilities each month
 - Reach out to our community through the Living Nativity and the Shelf at the middle school
 - Bring smiles to children's faces
 - Keep our popular radio ministry going
 - Touch the lives of over 90 youth each week through confirmation
 - Reach people in India through our missionary
 - Make our worship and music ministries possible
- Your gifts of time and financial support make a difference. Together we are accomplishing great things! We continue to make progress in our goal of ending the year strong. God continues to touch lives through this church. Thank you for your generosity.
- **Christmas Store** will take place from 8am to 11am on Sunday, December 10th. This is an opportunity for the children of FLC to purchase gifts for their family for Christmas. Wrapping is included! The Children's Christmas store is accepting your new or gently used donations through December 9th. Please leave donations in the bins located in the East Narthex or by the Welcome Center. (We can no longer accept stuffed animals.)
 - **Family Music classes** will be offered for children 18 months to 4 years old. Tuesdays, December 5 and 12 at 8:45 to 9:15am and Fridays, December 8 and 15 at 8:45-9:15am at FLC. A Thrivent Action Team is being used to offer this class FREE OF CHARGE. Bring a child-friendly instrument, children's CD or music-inspired toy to donate to the United Way. Sign up by calling First Lutheran 762-2196 or TEXT instructor Paula Odland 760-5917.
 - **Mission Quilters** will have their Christmas potluck on Tuesday, December 12. Bring your favorite dish and a friend. PLEASE NOTE the date change.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, November 25 to Sunday, December 24

Advent of Gratitude

This Advent, FLC is going Deep and Wide by gathering supplies for Lutheran World Relief and Global Health Ministries. Each day in Advent, do the Faith5 together as a family/household. After sharing the Faith5, place the item listed for that day in the yellow shopping bag you received from the church. On Christmas Eve, bring your bag of collected items back to your church. A detailed shopping list as well as the Faith5 are on the back of the calendar hand outs available inside the yellow bags on the coat rack by the West Northex.

Sunday, December 3 at 4:00pm

Service of Ordination for Jim Odden

Jim and his wife, Kristal, and family have been members of First Lutheran since 2014. Jim started seminary at Luther Seminary in St. Paul in 2011 and graduated in 2015. Jim, Kristal and their family have been involved members at FLC. Jim has assisted in worship, confirmation and with our communion services at various care facilities. We are excited to announce that Jim has received a call to serve as pastor at Mountain View Ministry of Rollette, Dunseith and Overly, ND. You are invited to celebrate and support Jim as he is called into full time ministry. Blessings on Jim, Kristal and their children as they make this

Sunday, December 10 at 11:00am and 2:00pm

Children's Christmas Program

Join us on Sunday, December 10 as we enjoy two Children's Christmas Programs. The 3 year olds to kindergartners will perform "Color of Christmas" at 11:00am and the 1st through 5th graders will perform "No Strings Attached" at 2:00pm.

Saturday, December 16 at 5:00pm

Carols and Candles

Saturday, December 16 at 5:00 worship service. Carols and Candles features the Chancel Choir (and Nathan Doege, accompanist), Alleluia Ringers, Kids Choir, Brass Ensemble, and organist Randy Morken. We appreciate the dedication of the people in these choirs and groups who meet weekly throughout the school year to rehearse. Invite your family and friends to join you for this special worship service that includes carols, scripture readings and lots of candles!

Sunday, December 17 at 11:00am

Special Congregational Meeting



Wednesday night worship: If your weekend is busy or you are out of town, this is a great alternative for worship. Feel free to join us for supper at 4:45-6:00pm in the Fellowship Hall.

12/6 Lasagna and Bread Sticks

12/13 Salad Bar

12/20 Chicken Alfredo and Bread Sticks

YOUTH AND CHILDREN

Dates to Remember

DECEMBER 10:

Children's Christmas Store: Children can purchase gifts for their family at an affordable price.

DECEMBER 10:

SR FLY CHRISTMAS PARTY

DECEMBER 20:

KICK JR, KICK and FLY Christmas celebrations

NO PROGRAMMING:

*December 10: Kingdom Kids

*December 17: SR FLY

*December 24: Kingdom Kids and SR FLY

*December 27: KICK JR, KICK, FLY/Confirmation /Candle Time

*December 31: Kingdom Kids and SR FLY

Children's Christmas Programs

COLOR OF CHRISTMAS

Sunday, December 10 at 11:00am

Color of Christmas

3 year olds to Kindergarten

Sunday, December 10 at 11:00am

NO STRINGS CHRISTMAS

Sunday, December 10 at 2:00pm

Grades 1-5

GIFTS & MEMORIALS

BUILDING FUND:

In memory of Olive Leland given by Bruce & Jan Leland, Dianna Anderson, Peter & Suzanne Gill, Richard & Phyllis Tavis, Linda Engebretson, Talora Grosland, Wayne & Sharon Woxland, Allen & Barbara Rasmussen, Bernadette Arneson, Westbrook Estates, Stan & Helen Johnsrud, Patricia Kuiper, Ruth Amundson, Rose Marie Stoeck, Arlou Schwendemann, Duane & Sonja Troe, Junnell Widmark, Gene & Carol Westphal, Corinne Ehlke, Jenny Trumm, Sonia Bale, John & Joan Huseh, Roger & Barbara Riley, Joseph & Joan Francois, Mark & Therese Knutson, Roger & Sheryl Bakewell, Ruth Irgens, Priscilla Reineke, Gracie Lewis, Orin & Lois Lundberg, George & LaVerne Dyrstad, Richard & Sandra Telander, Greg & Val Trumm, Ivan & Lois Wambheim, LaVina Larson, Clarke & Molly Comer, Dale & Sandra Rasmussen

In memory of Mitchell Brazel given by Paul & Joan Thompson, Arlou Schwendemann, James & Phyllis Norton, Linda Engebretson, John & Margaret Schroeder

In memory of John Gronli given by Glenda Seela, Ivan & Lois Wambheim

In memory of Betty Berry given by Sandra Doege

In memory of Helen, sister of Gordon Kalland, given by Sandra Doege

In memory of Violet Dyrstad given by George & LaVerne Dyrstad, Greg & Val Trumm

In memory of Gene Lundberg given by Dennis & Martha Lyngen

In honor of Jack Erickson's Baptism given by Alan & Kathy Patton

RADIO FUND:

In memory of Olive Leland given by Audrey Gustafson, John & Dot Swanson, Al & Bev Nelson, David & Lola Anderson, Cortlan & Joanne Krogstad, Sue Johnson, Pat Johnson, Lois Lubeck

In memory of their parents given by Don & Sandra Van Valkenburg

In memory of Jerry Amundsen & Tammie Amundsen Reignier given by Jola Amundsen

In memory of Violet Dyrstad given by Pat Johnson, Sue Johnson

In honor of Orville Ackerman's 94th Birthday given by Lynn & Mary Ackerman

PARISH HEALTH:

In memory of Betty Berry given by Lillian Schuneman, Corinne Ehlke

WORSHIP AND MUSIC:

In memory of Mary Lindquist given by Gary & Nancy Ekdahl

CHANCEL CHOIR:

In memory of Mary Benesh Lundstrom given by Darrel & Margaret Kalina, Randy & Mary Morken

YOUTH MINISTRY:

In memory of Mitchell Brazel given by Dianna Anderson

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY AND VBS:

In memory of Mitchell Brazel given by Randy & Mary Morken

In honor of Jack Erickson's Baptism given by Emalee Erickson, Cody Gibson, Ella Gibson

COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL:

In memory of Mitchell Brazel given by Vinal & Kathy Franson

In memory of Olive Leland given by Vinal & Kathy Franson, Curtis & Bonnie Thorfinnson

In memory of Judy Williams given by Vinal & Kathy Franson

