

News & Views

*First and Nativity
Lutheran Churches
February 2018*



Dear people of God,

As we embark on a new year we find ourselves once again discerning God's will for our lives and the life of our congregations. Every year we lean into God's spirit and see where we are being called, where we are being moved, where we are being challenged. And so pray for the courage and wisdom to trust that God will guide us and lead us during this year.

We lean into God's spirit as this season of Lent approaches and we are reminded as we journey through the Gospel of John that Jesus is both God and human. Throughout John we will witness as Jesus performs signs that point toward who he is: The Son of God, the Savior of the world, the Word that has been with God and is God from the very beginning.

During this season of Lent we are reminded that God, in all of God's divine essence, went to the cross. God, both fully God and fully human in Jesus Christ, went to the cross for you. Jesus Christ – the bread of life, the light of the world, the good shepherd, the resurrection and the life – has given you the gift of new life.

And with this gift of new life we too, like the disciples, have been called, chosen, empowered, and strengthened to proclaim this good news to the world. In the Gospel of John we will hear Jesus describe an advocate and a guide that will be with us once Jesus has ascended – this advocate and guide, the Holy Spirit, will give us faith and give us the ability to continue Jesus' work on earth.

We too have the opportunity to proclaim and be Jesus' promise of new life to the world. And through and in the Holy Spirit we each have the gifts necessary to fulfill this calling to the world. A calling that we first witnessed in Jesus Christ, a calling we are not alone in, a calling that we find ourselves strengthened and empowered to live out through and in the Holy Spirit.

Peace,

Pastor Bryant



Please remember in your prayers Jeanette Zeinert and her family following the death of her daughter, Marsha Marciniak. May the hope of the resurrection give them peace.

PRAYER CAN HELP...

If serious illness or other life factors affect you or those you love, contact the church office and we will send your request through our prayer chain. We have people who will pray for your need. If you are interested in joining a prayer chain, contact the church office.

As a community we pray for those with immediate needs of healing and strength:

Annie Bartlett, John Bennethum, Aaron Behnke, Shirley Cogan, Jackie Grauberger, Tom Hackl, Hildegard Mullarky, Lavone Reis, Marlene Smith, Kathy Stenzel, Nanette Steves and Jeanette Zeinert

For our seminarian, Gus Barnes

For our homebound members & those with ongoing concerns

From Nativity: Wally Buske, Don Brauch, Carol Garza, Ruby Horst, Dorothea Isermann, Peter Jones, Louise Kohn, Lorraine Kuchma, James Larson, Tom and Elaine Lindstrom, Harriet Miller, Helen Peterson, Ken Rieder and Juan Sifuentes

From First: Pastor Tim Benninghoff, Elsie Boese, Beverly Brunn, Marie Casto, Steve Clark, Shirley Cogan, Gayle Falk, Terry Favre, John Isaacson, Earl Junck, Elle Konetzki, Alfred Korth, Elya Lam, Myra Shields, Dennis Schoberg Sr., Jamie Schoberg, Joyce Staub, Carla Syut, Lois Taylor and Pat Zuback

For all those serving in the armed forces:

Sean Brown, Robert Chrzanowski, Jason Dowhie, Andrew Dowd, David MacDonald, Sam Rogers, Robert Simmer and Zach Tennyson

There are many opportunities for worship during Lent

Ash Wednesday
February 14th
Imposition of Ashes

10:00 a.m. at First Lutheran
12:00 p.m. at Nativity Lutheran
6:30 p.m. at First Lutheran

Wednesday services using the Holden Evening Prayer Service

10:00 a.m. at First Lutheran
12:00 p.m. at Nativity Lutheran
with Brown Bag Lunch
6:30 p.m. at First Lutheran



NEVER STOP LEARNING

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS AT FIRST LUTHERAN

After we finish our study of First and Second Peter we will turn our attention to the book of First Kings. We meet in the Fireside Room from 10:00-11:00am on Tuesdays. After class some of us go out for lunch at local restaurants. All are welcome to join us. John Bennethum is our Teacher. While John is recovering from his broken right shoulder, Pr. Bakkum is teaching the class. Come and join the discussion.



The Sunday School children presented “The Symbols of Christmas” on Dec. 17th and made Christmas decorations afterward.



SUNDAY SCHOOL FEBRUARY HAPPENINGS!



Sunday School is offered every Sunday except Easter Sunday April 1st and is open to anyone. The Spring Session will conclude on Sunday, May 20th.

Our Spring Sunday School theme this year is “Celebrating the Seasons of the Church” as well as Miracles/Parables performed by Jesus. Each lesson includes a Bible focus from our Spark Bible and a lesson.

On Sunday, February 11th, you can invite a friend to Sunday School for a Beary Special Event. Children will get a stuffed bear to decorate and take home. If you have children, grandchildren or a neighbor who would be interested let us know so we can have a bear ready for them. If anyone from the congregation would like to help with the decorating let Greta know at greta.plicka@gmail.com.

Check the Sunday bulletin for information on our “God’s Global Barnyard” project. There are Barn and Piggy banks to take home to put your spare change in. When they are full, return them and the children will use the money to purchase animals. If anyone is interested in teaching Sunday School please contact the Church office.

Sunday School Staff: Lori Marquez, Linda Grulke and Greta Plicka



A SUNDAY SCHOOL SELFIE!

Nativity Lutheran News

BROWN BAG IT LENT LUNCH IS BACK AT NATIVITY!

Don't have time to attend weekly Lent Services? We have the answer: Brown Bag It Lent.



Bring your brown bag lunch, and we'll furnish coffee and water (other items at nominal cost). Dine while attending an informal Lenten Worship Service on Wednesdays in Lent (February 21, 28 and March 7, 14, 21) 12:00 noon. We will be done in less than 25 minutes.

LOOKING FOR YOUR NATIVITY PHOTOS



Nativity is looking for your Nativity-related photos to help tell the story of our 85th anniversary (and how we got here) this year. Copies of those photos would be great, and the names of the people in the photos would be even greater. If you would like the photo returned, please include your name on the back of the photo. And you can give them to Nicole DeBack.



NATIVITY AND INTERFAITH

WELCA is looking for a second representative to the Greater Tosa Interfaith group. Many hands make work lighter, and Nancy Jene is looking for someone to share Nativity's representation.

If you're interested, please see Cheryl Isotalo.

NATIVITY MEMORIAL FUND

The Nativity Memorial Fund committee is looking for committee members. If interested, please talk to Jim Ribnek or Don Brauch.



SAVE YOUR BOTTLE CAPS!

Nativity's WELCA is saving plastic bottle caps for Our Lady of the Angels. The caps will be melted down and used to make a garden bench in memory of one of the sisters. Nativity Lutheran has a bag in the narthex for the caps, and First Lutheran members can bring theirs to the office.

Announcements and Upcoming Events

2/7 - 9:30 a.m. - A representative from "Street Ministries" will give a presentation in the upper meeting room.

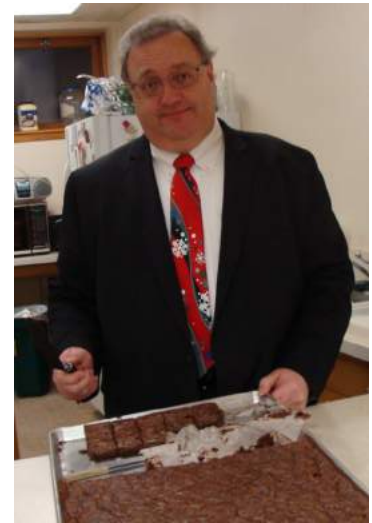
2/11 - 10:00 a.m. - WELCA Mtg.

2/11 - 11:00 a.m.. - Amy Dedow, Greater Tosa Interfaith, will present information on new programs for seniors.

2/11 - 12:00 p.m. - Council Mtg.



Carla Ullerich (above), Susan Platt (below), Jim Stoebe (bottom right) and Dennis Wolfgang (above center) performed in this year's Nativity Christmas concert.



Lillian and Jim Ribnek (above) prepared for the reception after the concert.



A NATIVITY CHRISTMAS WRAP-UP!



Close to 70 brave souls came out of the cold for the Nativity Christmas concert held December 30, 2017. Special thanks go out to everyone who helped make this possible, especially Carla Ullerich, for her heartfelt narration, and Pastor Bakkum, who prepared and ran all the slide-shows. And last but not least, deserved thanks to everyone who brought the treats for the reception. Pictures to follow!

Thanks to modern technology, concert-goers were able to watch Dennis' feet and hands as he played the organ (left). Jim Stoebe along with Dennis at the organ (below).



WHAT IS YOUR CONNECTION IN 2018?

First Lutheran has lots of opportunities to serve others and enhance your life. How do you fit in?



Social Ministry Committee - Steering committee for the food pantry, homebound ministry, Prayer Chain, Operation Christmas, Quilting and Coffee And...after Sunday service and before Saturday service. There are lots of opportunities for praying, planning, visiting, crafting, shopping, sewing and baking in these ministries.

Evangelism – “Reaching Out in Our Community to Share the Word of God”. Planning committee for outreach, connection and spreading of the Word. Plans social activities, informative programs and our National Night Out block party in July. Lots of opportunities for planning, writing, socializing and helping implement events.

Altar Guild – Insures that the altar paraments are appropriate and communion wine and wafers are ready to be served and/or cleaned up. This committee plays a key role in the worship service.

Worship and Music – Worship and music planning for all services. Consider taking a step and becoming a Deacon. If music ministry is for you, we need help planning music for services.

Christian Education-Youth - Our Sunday school offers a fun program for youth. If you enjoy kids and would like to lead sessions as a teacher, lead crafts or help as an assistant during Sunday school or Vacation Bible School, then this committee is for you.

Stewardship – Oversees spiritual planning for the resources that God provides for us. How can we generously use them to support our mission? There is lots of opportunity for prayer, planning and writing.

Property – Oversight and care of the church property. They make sure that the building is comfortable, safe and clean and that the lawn is trimmed and the walks cleared of snow and ice. If you are mechanically inclined, willing to do a little hard work or enjoy working outdoors, consider helping.

Scholarship – Manages our scholarship fund, including approving applications. If you enjoy helping others achieve their education goals, this committee will interest you.

Memorial - Manages our Memorial Fund. Honors requests for funds and insures that all designated donations are used appropriately.

How can you help?

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”

1 Peter 4:10

First Lutheran Opportunities

P. 6-9



ANNUAL MEETING - FEB. 4TH

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sun., Feb. 4th, immediately after worship. Please make every effort to attend as there is a lot of important business to cover.



WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS

First Lutheran recognized new members on the weekend of Jan. 20-21: Heidi Leiser, Kevin Lone, Keith Martin and Curt Sokolowicz.

Welcome to our new member Heidi Leiser, though many of you already know her as a Reader during services and as a Vacation Bible school helper. Heidi saw our webpage on the internet and came to First Lutheran last year because she was looking for a small ELCA church with caring members, centered in Christ and Holy Scripture, in West Allis. Heidi is a nurse working in the community to provide support services to those in need. She is a mother, grandmother, great grandmother and mom to 2 dogs and 2 cats. Heidi enjoys knitting, sewing, card making, outdoor fun, fishing and the PACKERS!!!

We'll feature another new member next month.

Meet our Members...

Audrey Wiefelspuetz was baptized at First Lutheran when the church began on Orchard St. Audrey was married to Howard in 1951 in Washington D.C. She has a son, a daughter, four granddaughters, and eight great-grandchildren. Audrey worked as the manager of the cash room for Treasure Island for 14 years, and at American Building Maintenance for 11 years. Over the years Audrey has been active in Altar Guild, Quilters, Food Pantry and has worked as a teller. She enjoys spending her winters in Clermont, Florida golfing as much as possible.



FIRST LUTHERAN FINANCES 2017			
MONTH	*INCOME	EXPENSES	DIFFERENCE
December	*\$ 13,269.15	\$ 10,983.67	\$ 2,285.48
Year to Date	*\$ 148,231.09	\$ 140,019.01	\$ 8,212.08

*Income in Dec. includes a \$2,500.00 transfer from the Endowment Fund.

*Budgeted Income	Budget to Date	Received to Date	Difference
General Fund	\$117,410.28	*\$99,554.70	-\$13,104.92
Benevolence	\$ 9,450.00	*\$ 7,939.00	-\$ 1,511.00

*Budgeted income includes only offerings and donations. Does not include transfers from savings or the Endowment Fund.

Enjoy the Convenience of Electronic Giving. As First Lutheran starts a new year, it's important to know what support we can expect from our congregation members. By knowing what you are willing to commit to financially, we are able to better plan for our future. Please consider setting up a recurring giving plan. Automating your commitments means your contributions will be received on a steady, uninterrupted basis. To set up a schedule, fill out a form located on the welcome table in the narthex. If you have any questions, contact Joy Dowd or the church office.

*Your giving allows us to share God's love with more than 600 people a month.
 Thank you for these blessings.*

God is the owner of all that is.. Psalm 89:11



GROWING OUR "CONNECTIONS"

The Evangelism Committee is planning activities for this coming year that will help us grow "connections" between each other. We'd like to have a fish fry dinner outing, a game night, pizza and a movie night or *?(what's your idea)* and we need help with all. If you'd be willing to chair, co-chair or help with an event, see Joy, Natalie, Werner, Pastor or Barb to get started.

If saying "Hi," shaking hands and helping others is something you enjoy, consider ushering or greeting at the Sunday service. Responsibilities include welcoming members and visitors, providing bulletins, answering questions, shaking hands, collecting the offering and sometimes helping with communion. See any usher for more information. Welcoming others to worship is an important ministry.



UNITED IN DIVERSITY

Although early Christians had much in common, they also dwelt in diversity. Each of their leaders emphasized certain parts of the gospel and favored certain worship styles. They all believed in the resurrected Jesus, and they all celebrated the Lord's Supper and baptism. But Christians in Corinth had a unique approach, as did those in Ephesus, Philippi, Galatia, Rome and so on.

It might be boring if we all believed and practiced completely alike. Variations don't need to be an impediment to Christian unity. As pastor Charles Best said, "If we're going to be in heaven together, we might as well get along now."



COFFEE AND...

Do you enjoy having coffee and treats on Sunday mornings after worship, and having a little time to visit with friends? Consider signing up to bring treats for one Sunday. Coffee is set up ahead of time - all you need to do is plug it in. Treats don't have to be fancy or home baked - grab a pack of cookies or a coffee cake from the store - that would be fine! We've had some very faithful treat providers, but they deserve a week off now and then. Sign up in the Fireside Room. Thanks!



COFFEE AND... ON SATURDAY!

Stop in a little early for our Saturday service and enjoy a cup of warm coffee before the service. Coffee is served beginning at 5pm.



Taking Steps to Hunger!

Our Food Pantry fundraiser for 2018 is off to a quick "start" and "runs" through Easter, which is Sunday, April 1st. For each \$10 or 10 lbs of food donated, we'll post a note in the narthex! Our "trek" for last year's pantry took us on a journey during which we distributed **1,523 bags** of food and **fed 5,563 lunches** to families, seniors, single adults and the homeless. Each Friday, **over 100 people gather** to share in the community of First Lutheran. We appreciate your support of this caring ministry.



Many thanks to Family Video at 76th & National for donating 10 turkeys we served at our Food Pantry on Dec. 8. Sons of the American Legion ,Todd Post on 92nd and Beloit cooked them for us. We appreciate the support of business in the community.

Free on Thursday or Friday?

Our food ministry is in need of a few more helpers to help serve on Friday mornings and/or cook entrée's or prepare side dishes on Thursdays. Previous cooking experience is helpful. We can also use more dishwashers. Come join our dedicated team of fun people who are passionate about this ministry.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS STOCKING



Operation Christmas Stocking is a year around project. There are people who knit hats and mittens, sew and decorate children's stocking during these long winter months. Please keep us in mind as you shop the after Christmas sales especially men's and women's hats and gloves. Check the Menards T-shirt sale - you can buy up to 4 men's T-shirts and get a full rebate. Menards has this offer about 4 or 5 times a year. For the children's stockings we are focusing on coloring books, activity books and crayons or markers. They do not need to have a Christmas theme. Thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully submitted,
Co-Chairs Jacqueline Bayer and Greta Plicka

Doing For Others ..Is Like Doing For Christ

Matthew 25:35-40 "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'"



Synod Offerings

“HOPE FOR OUR TIMES”

LENTEN DEVOTIONS AVAILABLE

Outreach for Hope’s vision is “that strong, vibrant ministries will be centers of HOPE in the midst of every community challenged by poverty within the Greater Milwaukee Synod,”. Lenten Devotions will present 40 devotions that both acknowledge some of our current challenges, while pointing out where we can see hope. Our intention is to offer hope by reflecting on the good we can, and are accomplish(ing) through God’s grace. They will be available daily by Email. You may sign up to receive the devotions by Email each day. Visit outreachforhope.org, and scroll down and complete the “Sign up for Outreach for Hope Mailings” form on the right. Be sure to check Lenten Devotions as your selected communication.

Antique Roadshow at Luther Manor!

Thursday, February 22nd, 6:30 p.m.
Luther Manor’s Faith & Education Center
4545 N. 92nd St.

Luther Manor is hosting it’s own antique roadshow! Professionals from Heritage Estate Settlement will share stories around the amazing things they’ve found, sold, and evaluated! In addition, every attendee will have the opportunity to have one of their own items evaluated.

Program is free, but RSVP is required. Call 414-464-3880



Handbell Concert

The Agape Ringers
Sun., Feb. 11, at 4:30 p.m.
St. John’s Lutheran

20275 Davidson Rd., Brookfield

The concert, by Chicago’s premier handbell choir, is free and open to the public. A free will offering will be taken. You can learn more about the ensemble at their website www.AgapeRingers.org, and on Facebook and YouTube by searching for “The Agape Ringers”.

UPDATE ON THE PETERSONS



A Day in Delhi

Pastor Peterson and Lois are visiting Neeraj and Nihar Ekka at the Navin Doman Theological College near Ranchi, India, outside of Delhi. The College was established in 2007 and is already training pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and lay leaders from several states throughout the region. They’ll return to the U.S. in mid-March. We look forward to hearing more about their travels and work.

“Please pray for our travel, health, and our ability to communicate. Richard will be involved with Bible and Lois with music and English. Part of our goal is to help WMPL evaluate future ministry when we report back to them about our experience. Thank you for your prayers and support which is making this trip possible. We are seriously considering a trip to Ecuador next summer also.



The day before they left for their trip.

February Birthdays...

First Lutheran

2/1 Shirley Armato
 2/14 Kent Nicolet
 2/15 Thomas Herbert
 2/18 Beverly Brunn
 2/25 Lavone Reis
 2/27 Joy Heintz

Nativity Lutheran

2/1 Jill Sandberg
 2/8 Juan Sifuentes
 2/11 Cynthia Barbian
 2/12 Shirley Zauner
 2/17 Bryce DeBack
 2/26 Dennis Wolfgang
 2/28 Dorothea Isermann

February Anniversaries...

2/15 Warren & Joan Hirschinger (F) 67 yrs.



"Though our feelings come and go, God's love for us does not."

—C.S. Lewis

Friendly Reminders



Remember to notify the church office of any address, phone or email changes!

Need pastoral care?

Please remember to notify the pastor or church office if you are ill or hospitalized so that we can offer prayer and support directly to you. If you have a pastoral emergency (death in the family, hospitalization, etc.,) you can reach Pastor Bryant by calling him at (414)768-3670.

Missed One??

Missed a sermon? If you've missed one of Pastor Bryant's inspiring sermons, you can catch it on our website at www.firstlutheranelca.org. Just click on the Media button. Some also include a video.



Paul declares that nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Which of the following does Paul specify as unable to block God's love?

- A. death; life
- B. angels; demons
- C. present; future
- D. height; depth
- E. all of the above



Answer: (See Romans 8:38-39, NIV.)

On the Lighter Side



"The heart-shaped communion wafers were a nice touch for Valentine's Day."

First Lutheran Church
7400 W. Lapham St.
West Allis, WI 53214

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First and Nativity Lutheran Churches (ELCA)

Office Hours: Monday thru Friday 9am to 12pm
Office located at 7400 W. Lapham, West Allis
(414)476-4664

Worship With Us:

*Saturdays at 5:30 p.m. First Lutheran
Sundays at 9:00 a.m. at First Lutheran
Sundays at 11:00 a.m. at Nativity Lutheran
Sunday School is at 9:00 a.m. on Sundays
at First Lutheran*

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If you no longer wish to continue receiving this newsletter, please contact the church office.