Dear people of God,

Hope. Peace. Joy. Love. They are more than just words to mark the four weeks of Advent. They are promises given to you during this season of expectation. Together, as we await our expected Savior, we do so in the knowledge that everything is about to change.

Now, change can be frightening – it requires us to reorient our perspectives, it asks us to trod a different path, it challenges us to seek out that which is different. And yet, you were called for such a moment as this.

A passage from the book of Esther guides our Advent journey this month. Words that challenged Esther to the point of death: That she was called and gifted by God for a moment such as this. You too have been called for a moment such as this: A moment that is filled with expectation and anticipation.

Many of your brothers and sisters across this community, country, and world are in need of a word of hope, a word of peace, a word of joy, a word of love. God calls and empowers you this day to be that word of hope, to be that word of peace, to be that word of joy, to be that word of love.

God the Holy Spirit has given you all the gifts you need to proclaim the good news. God the Holy Spirit has called and strengthened and empowered you to be the light that shines in the darkness.

For through you the very presence of Christ is made known. Through you hope and peace and joy and love are made manifest. Through you God is at work. For through the Holy Spirit you have everything you need to bear witness to the new life given in Jesus Christ.

And so in this Advent season we wait and we proclaim. We wait for the one through whom hope and peace and joy and love are made manifest. And we proclaim the good news to a world in need of that very hope and peace and joy and love. For through you Jesus Christ is made known to the world.

Advent blessings,

Pastor Brian
**Christian Education**

On behalf of First Lutheran I would like to extend a thank you to John Bennethum for his 20+ years leading and teaching the Bible Study class, as well as his leadership of the deacons at First Lutheran. His wisdom and knowledge throughout the years have proved insightful and beneficial to our members as together we grow in our faith lives. As a congregation we wish John the very best during his time off and give thanks to God for his faithful leadership and service!

- Pastor Bryant

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**SUNDAY SCHOOL AT FIRST LUTHERAN**

Our Fall/Spring Sunday School theme this year is “SUPERHEROES of the Bible”. Each week we include a lesson about a well-known Bible hero and their story. Along with the weekly lesson there are crafts, science, games and music. Our lessons in late October and November included Noah’s Ark, Zacchaeus and Joseph and The Coat of Many Colors. After Noah’s Ark lessons Lori did crafts which included making an Ark and puppets. On Sunday November 4th there was a lot of loud popping going on in the church basement. It was Linda teaching the children about Zacchaeus. They learned a song about Zacchaeus and when they sang “Up jumped Zacchaeus” they got to jump on inflated plastic. Sunday School lessons are not always quiet.

At the end of November Greta will be doing a few science lessons on rejection and forgiveness. Linda and Greta will be teaming up to help the children create their own ‘Vest of Many Colors’.

If anyone is interested in teaching Sunday School, please contact the church office.

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

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**TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS AT FIRST LUTHERAN**

We have finished our study of the Book of Acts. On November 27th Pastor Bakkum will take over the class. The class will decide what they want to study next. John Bennethum will not be teaching during the winter months due to the weather. Icy streets and snow are not his bag since his fall. Pastor Bakkum has agreed to carry on. What happens in the Spring is to be decided. Join us in the Fireside Room at First Lutheran on Tuesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. All are welcome!

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As a community we pray for those with immediate needs of healing and strength: 
Elsie Boese, Harry Grieshaber, Cheryl Isotalo, Nancy Jene, Monica Lam and David Wegener
HELP US PREPARE GOD’S HOUSE
After worship services on Sunday, Dec. 2nd, both churches will decorate their sanctuaries and “Deck the Halls” for Christmas.

Make this place glad! Adorned with green With many garlands hung So shall God’s gift of life be seen His praises gladly sung

Make this place glad! Let gold and white Proclaim our Savior’s worth Whose everlasting glory bright Brings peace to all the earth

Isaiah 61:1, 40:9: Preachers Magazine

OPERATION CHRISTMAS STOCKING
On Friday, December 7th, we will be handing out the children’s stockings and on Friday, December 14th, we will hand out the men’s and women’s totes along with mugs filled with hot chocolate, chocolates and a candy cane. We would like to thank everyone who has filled stockings, knitted hats and mittens and bought items for the men and woman’s totes. Your donations of money are always appreciated. Join us if you have time.

Respectfully submitted,
Co/Chairs Jaqueline Bayer/Greta Plicka

Poinsettia Orders
It’s time to order those lovely poinsettias for Christmas. The sign-up sheets are in the narthex of each church. Take a moment to add some color to the churches on Christmas Eve, and to your home during your holiday celebrations!

Nativity Christmas Concert Celebrates the 200th Anniversary of the First Performance of Silent Night
In 1816, Fr. Joseph Mohr, living at the time in Mariapfarr in the Lungau region of Austria, created the text for “Silent Night!” in the form of a poem. Then on Christmas Eve, 1818, in the schoolhouse of Arnsdorf, school teacher and church organist Franz Xavier Gruber composed a melody to fit that text. "Silent Night! Holy Night!” had its world premiere on Christmas Eve 1818, in the St. Nicholas church of Oberndorf near Salzburg, where it was performed by both Franz Xavier Gruber and Fr. Joseph Mohr.

On Saturday December 29th at 2 PM, organist Dennis Jon Wolfgang, soprano Susan Platt and friends, will join in a celebration of Silent Night featuring a performance of Franz Gruber’s original version of Silent Night, as well as Silent Night in other different styles and arrangements. Also featured will be additional holiday favorites and an audience sing-a-long. The concert is free, although a free-will offering will be taken. A reception will follow.

Come and relax after the rush of Christmas and enjoy the beautiful music – and tell all of your friends!

The Mitten Tree
The Mitten Tree is in the narthex at Nativity for you to hang up scarves, hats and mittens to be sent to Good Samaritan in mid-December.

The Stable Where Jesus Was Born
The Sunday School Christmas Program will be presented on Sun., Dec. 16th, during the 9:00 a.m. service at First Lutheran. Everyone is welcome to come and enjoy our little Angels sharing the meaning of Christmas.
**Happenings at Nativity Lutheran**

**Bishop Erickson to Visit Nativity**

Please mark your calendars now! Bishop Erickson will be visiting our church on February 24, 2019. Come join us and worship that day with your Nativity congregation and Bishop Erickson.

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On October 13, Nativity members loaded up and delivered boxes and boxes of quilts to the boxcars in downtown Milwaukee for shipping to Lutheran World Relief. Thanks to everyone who helped, especially the volunteers from Marquette High School. Their help was greatly appreciated!

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**Nativity 85 Years Ago – Further Reflection**

Nativity is 85 this year. Here are some of the events, 85 years ago, in December of 1933, that were occurring the year that like-minded people established our church:

- In December, the 21st Amendment to the US Constitution was ratified (repealing the 18th Amendment and prohibition)
- the FM radio was patented
- the lowest temperature recorded in the US was measured at -50 °F in Vermont
- President Roosevelt announced that “the definite policy of the United States from now on is one opposed to armed intervention”
- Newfoundland (at the time independent of Canada) returned itself to the direct rule of the United Kingdom (and in exchange for its’ debts being assumed by the UK)
- Archbishop Leon Tourian (of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church) was stabbed to death by political opponents as he was preparing for Christmas Eve services in NYC
- singer Lou Rawls was born
- the Nissan Motor Company was organized.

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Nativity’s WELCA will meet on Sunday, Dec. 9th, at 10:00 a.m. All women in the church are welcome!
RUMMAGE SALE

A BIG RUMMAGE THANK YOU!

A BIG Thank You to everyone who made this sale the success it was. Over 600 people shopped and came and spent and spent and spent over $3,100 dollars! This couldn't have been done with out EVERONE'S HELP!

Special thanks to everyone who baked and brought treats for the bake sale - to all those who priced and organized - to every person who cleaned, and setup before and packed up afterwards - to all those who set out signs and posted advertisements. None of this would have been remotely possible without your help - THANK YOU!

A “SPOOKTACULAR” SUCCESS!

A huge thank you to everyone who worked to make the October Spooktacular concert a success – to everyone who baked and organized the reception, and tidied up before and after, to all the performers and everyone who came in costume (Did the hunter let those deer in?). A special thank you goes out to Redemption Church, for the use of their projector.

Trying Out A New Recipe?

Too many brownies? Bring your favorite treat, a box of donuts, or a bag of bagels to the Nativity coffee hour. Nativity and your fellow churchgoers will appreciate your delicious donations. You can co-ordinate those tasty treats with Don and Joan Brauch.

GOOD SAMARITAN OUTREACH CENTER

Please continue to bring donations of food for Good Samaritan Outreach Center. They are also requesting donations of Bibles. There is a box in the narthex at Nativity for your donations.
With joy, 
We, Martin O’Neil and Heidi Leiser, 
invite you to share in our celebration 
as we unite our lives. 
Commitment Ceremony 
Date: Sunday, January 20th, 2019 
Time: 9 o’clock AM 
Location: First Lutheran Church 
7400 W. Lapham St. 
West Allis, WI 
Continental breakfast will be served immediately following the service.

The holiday season has begun. We have planned a full schedule of services including baptisms and a couple’s blessing. Let’s all get enthused about our church and the reason for the season by attending our usual and special services.

We have advertised our holiday season by delivering 500 door hangers in the neighborhood. We were looking for volunteers to help deliver them when Bill Hanson stepped forward and delivered all 500 by himself. Thank you Bill! I wish we had 100 more Bill Hanson’s in our congregation.

Heidi Leiser and Colleen Siarnicki led a successful craft fair in our fellowship hall. It not only raised much appreciated money for the church, but it involved many of our members and neighbors. Thanks to all who helped.

Our Stewardship chair person, Lori Marquez, has us off and running with our stewardship drive, beginning with a brunch on Nov. 18th and plans to keep stewardship front and center during the entire year.

We have plans for three baptisms. In January we will also be celebrating a blessing of the union of our member, Heidi Leiser, and her fiancé Marty O’Neil. God’s blessing to all.

We will be in need of volunteers for the Church Council and Endowment Committee beginning in February. Please consider giving time to these worthwhile causes.

Keep praying for the success of our Pastor and congregation in the future.

Werner Bayer, President
**Many, Many Thanks...**

to our generous members and friends of First Lutheran: St. Luke’s in Greendale, Luther Memorial and Holy Trinity in West Allis, Panera Bread, General Mitchell Grade School, All Saints Lutheran Church in Oak Creek, Pick N Save on 84th & Bluemound, the Women’s Club of West Allis and the Siebert Foundation for their generous support of our Food Pantry. Donations from other churches and our community help our pantry immensely!

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**Share Some Christmas Cheer**

We’ll be visiting, delivering cookies and sharing a little holiday cheer with our homebound members. We are asking for donations of cookies to be brought to church the weekend of Nov 25th. Cookies will be packaged and available for delivery on Nov. 26th

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**We Love Our Food Ministry Volunteers!**

Thank you to our awesome dedicated volunteers who help us feed the hungry. On any given week there are about 25 volunteers available to do God’s work and help set up, cook, distribute and serve food and beverages, shop for food, pick up food, pack and hand out bags and clean up. We could not be successful without you!

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**To the Only Wise God Be Glory Forevermore Through Jesus Christ!**

-ROMANS 16:27, ESV-

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**First Lutheran October Financial Summary Report 2018**

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Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Colleen and I would like to thank all the volunteers and those who made donations that helped to make the First Lutheran's First Holiday Craft and Vendor Fair such a HUGE success. The Holiday Spirit was experienced by all attendees, vendors, crafters and volunteers. Positive feedback was abounding.

Colleen and I set a goal of 20 crafters and/or vendors and a profit of $800.00. We’re proud to announce that we had 19 crafters and vendors which resulted in a profit of $900.00, with all proceeds going to our Church. All participants have requested that we contact them again next year because “of the friendliness and happy spirits felt at the Holiday Fair”---of course, we all know “It was all the work of the Holy Spirit”. We give all the praise and thanks to our Lord today and everyday for this and all of our Blessings. The exposure of our beautiful church to the community was amazing and will hopefully bring new members in the near future.

Again, thank you to each of you for your prayers, assistance and support with this new endeavor and potentially an annual event going forward. We encourage you to step out in faith with new ideas to open our doors to the community and bring the Grace of our Lord and Savior to others. Be creative and don’t be afraid to step outside the box with your ideas---God works in very mysterious ways....

Your sisters in Christ,
Heidi and Colleen

News Flash!

Our collection for “God’s Global Barnyard” is coming to a close. Our Sunday School students are hoping to collect enough money to purchase some chicks, honeybees or even a goat to help support a family in need through the ELCA. If you’d like to help them reach their goal, drop your change in the barn on the welcome desk in the narthex.
**Meet our Members...**

John Bennethum was born on 4-20-1941 and was raised in West Allis. He graduated from W.A. Central in 1958 and obtained three degrees from UW. John taught Science/Biology for MPS 33 years, retiring in 1996. He was the chairman of the 12 member Science Dept. John has been a lifelong member of First Lutheran. He was baptized on 5-11-41, his older brother’s birthday. John has served First Lutheran as an usher, council member, Crossways Board member for many years; signer (with Pastor Felton) of Founding document for Crossways Camps, Bethel Bible student and teacher (a "mountain-top experience"), Sunday School and VBS teacher, Confirmation teacher, and adult Bible Class teacher year-round for the past 20+ years. John took AIM training (predecessor to the Diakonia program) and established the Deacon program at First Lutheran, and has done the deacon scheduling. John sang tenor (with Ralph Bayer) in the church choir until Dennis Wolfgang resigned. John has been a real Pipe Organ supporter all his life. For the last 18 years he served as Chaplain for Tripoli Shrine and has been a 50+ year member of most Masonic organizations. John and his mother designed and made the altar coverings of all the colors to save FLC money. John fell and broke his right shoulder on 12-10-17 which has slowed him down considerably, but he continues to stay involved. Thanks be to God for all his blessings and for blessing First Lutheran with John for all these years.

**Scholarship Committee**

Donations can be made to our Scholarship Fund at any time. This money is invested and grows slowly. Members of the church can apply for use of the funds at any time by submitting a letter addressed to the committee stating WHEN you need the money, the AMOUNT needed and the PURPOSE for the need. After we receive the letter, the committee will meet to take action on your request. A decision will be reached in a timely manner and you will be notified of our decision. Priority is given to educational pursuits. Questions should be directed to Pastor Bakkum or John Bennethum.

**How Does Church Fit Into Your Life?**

“We who are baptized are in possession of this wonderful gift of salvation. Therefore wholehearted participation in God’s church is not too much to ask from all members of the family of God. Many seem to forget that at their baptism, they became part of the church completely. Baptized, you are part of God’s family and a member of the team.”

Rev John Krahn: From Surviving to Thriving - A Practical Guide to Revitalize your Church.

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**Fellowship Time**

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

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. We've had some very faithful treat providers, but they deserve a week off now and then. Sign up in the Fireside Room. Thanks!
**Out and About in Our Community**

**CHRISTMAS ON THE AVENUE**

Christmas on the Avenue is right around the corner! On December 1st from 2-4 pm, downtown West Allis will be hosting free hay rides, s’mores, and holiday fun for families to enjoy before the annual Christmas Parade.

Some businesses will have special offers such as: the Clock Center will be selling their holiday clocks at cost ($20 vs $80) during the hours of Christmas on the Avenue, and Eden Garden and Pets will be offering free face painting to attendees.

Stop on down to enjoy the fun!

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**GREAT MESSAGE:**

When **God** solves our problems, we have faith in HIS abilities.

When **God** doesn’t solve our problems, **He** has faith in our abilities!

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**JUST A “CLICK” AWAY**

If travels, illness or schedule conflicts have kept you away, Pastor Bryant’s weekly sermons are available on our webpage. You can either listen to an audio recording or read them online. If you are receiving this newsletter online, use this link to access the sermons at:

https://bryantbakkum.wordpress.com/.

Read them online by selecting the MEDIA tab on our webpage at firstlutheranelca.org or at firstlutheranelca.com.

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**LUTHER MANOR**

A Life Plan Community

“A Very Elvis Christmas”
December 6, 6:30 p.m.
Alan Graveen will croon along to the King’s Christmas carols and gospel favorites.

“Long Term Planning: Take Charge of Your Financial Future”
January 15, 6:30 p.m.
A representative from Merrill Lynch Wealth Management, will discuss the what, how and why of long-term care planning and options for care.

RSVP to 414-434-1768 for both events.
December-January Birthdays...
First Lutheran
12/1  Monica Bayer
12/6  Kenneth A. Masch
12/12 Crystal Zehe
12/17 Gayle Falk
12/17 Crystal Wegener
12/18 Kathleen Santos
12/20 Jason Zehe
12/22 Maxx Jaeger
12/27 Michael Temke
12/28 Donald Moncher
12/29 Joy Dowd
12/29 Dorian Jaeger
1/1 Nancy Krizan
1/5  Katie Bakkum
1/11 Carla Ullerich
1/12 Christina Behmke
1/14 Timothy Wegener
1/21 John Isaacson

December-January Birthdays...
Nativity Lutheran
12/4  Roger Reinert
12/13 Maureen Jones
12/31 Lorraine Kuchma
12/31 Lori Leiser
1/4  Gary Soerfass
1/5  Katie Bakkum
1/7  Alexander Leiser

Dec. - Jan. Anniversaries
12/11 Carrie & Joseph Muffler  (F)  8 yrs.
12/12 Garrett & Cindy Labadie  (F)  37 yrs.
1/14 Wayne & Lucy Wagner  (F)  58 yrs.

HUNGER TASK FORCE
STOCK BOX DELIVERY
WEST ALLIS SENIOR CENTER
7001 W. NATIONAL AVE.
The next West Allis distribution at the Senior Center will be on Dec. 11th between 1-2 p.m.

What’s the Church Council doing?
First Lutheran’s church council minutes and reports are posted on the bulletin board outside the church office as soon as they are available.

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.

Bible Quiz
According to the fourth Gospel, “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the _______”

A. love
B. life
C. light
D. Lord

Answer: (See John 1:6-7, NRSV.)

“First Church will do anything to steal our Christmas pageant surprises!”
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

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
7400 W. Lapham St.
West Allis, WI
www.firstlutheranelca.org
E-mail: firstlutheranelca@att.net
Phone: 414-476-4664

NATIVITY LUTHERAN
CHURCH
6905 W. Bluemound Rd.
Wauwatosa, WI
www.nativitylutheran.us
Nativity Phone: 414-476-1853

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