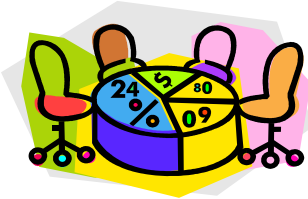


4:00 PM, followed by a potluck supper.



First Lutheran Church Council Highlights of November

Present: Erica Johnsrud, Angie Mole, Gretchen Stenehjelm, Mark Sparby, Stefanie Russell, Glen Beard, Megan Wirtz

Absent: Steve Holen, Mikka Haugeberg, Ari Johnson, Craig Paulson

Others present: Pastor Rob Favorite, Pastor Mark Honstein, Pastor Alyssa Quade

Meeting was called to order by Vice-President, Angie Moe. Erica Johnsrud gave devotions.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved with one correction.

Staff Reports:

Pastor Rob: Nominating committee will meet. They need to fill 1 positions on the council. Area Parish Council will meet to go over the 2018 budget.

Pastor Mark: GriefShare will have a session on "Surviving the Holidays"

Pastor Alyssa: Sound System training open to all who would like to attend.

Other Business: Choir Cantata on December 10th. Caroline and Jane need new ELW accompany books

Next Council meeting will have a change of date – Tuesday, December 12th @ 6:00



There will be one worship service on the 4th Sunday in Advent, December 24th at First Lutheran – 9:00 AM



**First Lutheran Choir Cantata
"Night of the Father's Love"
Sunday, December 10th
6:00 PM
at First Lutheran Church**

Committee Reports:

***Finance report** was approved.

***Property:** Darby Hanson will fix the parking lot problem in the spring. Maintenance needs to reduce the amount of salt they use. A heavy-duty broom needs to be purchased for light snow removal. Storage rooms need pallet racking for organization.

***Worship:** Poinsettias have been ordered and sanctuary will be decorated before Advent.

***Stewardship/Evangelism:** Operation Christmas Child boxes will be delivered to Dickinson on November 20th.

****Youth/ Education:** Christmas program practice has started. LYO National Gathering meeting on the 29th. 15 kids attended Sonshine Kids and they made bags for foster children.



**Parish
Christmas Programs**

First Lutheran Sunday School Program will be held during the 11:00 AM worship on December 17th

Banks/Garden Sunday School Program will be held at Garden Church on December 17th at



Worship in the Parish

<u>Christmas Eve</u>	<u>December 24th</u>
5:00 PM	Banks
5:00 PM	First
9:00 PM	First

**Christmas Day, December 25th
9:00 AM First**





Grace, peace and greetings to all of you!

“See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the spirit.” (1 Thessalonians 5:15-19)

As we have now experienced the season of Thanksgiving, and now enter the beginning of a new church season with Advent, I wonder how many of us could simply kick back and reflect upon our lives as faithful servants of Christ, and simply say “Thank you.” And for what and to whom would we extend such gratitude? What are we so grateful for? By the grace of God through our faith, we are loved and forgiven children of God. For me personally, I am humbly grateful for that; that in spite of all that occurs daily in my life, I know that God has a guiding hand on my shoulder to steer me in ways in order to glorify him.

But, for all of us, how does God reach you in order for you to be grateful to Him for everything in your life? What does a life overflowing with gratitude look like? The theologian, Max Lucado, wrote this, “God is for you. Had he a calendar, your birthday would be circled. If he drove a car, your name would be on his bumper. If there is a tree in heaven, he’s carved your name in the bark.” God bestows goodness and gifts on undeserving people, like ourselves. When we feel God’s grace flowing through us, our gratitude will flow out.

Because we are flawed human beings, we need God’s grace more than ever. Sometimes we lose sight of that undeserved love that we automatically receive from God. By taking time to reflect, to pray, to worship, and to read Scripture, awareness of God’s presence

December 2017

becomes a habit. With grace, gratitude is a natural byproduct. When we lose sight of God’s grace, it is easy to become disgruntled, to see life with the glass half empty, and to see only things to grumble about

Are we thankful people or are we grumblers? As an aside, St. Benedict began a monastic order for priests’ centuries ago, and he enacted a set of rules for his monastery.

He considered grumbling a serious offense against the community life of the monastery. He wrote this, “First and foremost, there must be no word or sign of grumbling, no manifestation of it for any reason at all.” And there were consequences to grumbling. He wrote, “Let Father Abbot send two STOUT monks to explain the matter to him.”

In other words, there were monk “bouncers” to take care of business if you decided to whine or complain. I wonder what would happen if the Church Council decided to implement that kind of policy here. Perhaps, in all seriousness, it may cause us to reflect on how each of us comes across to others whether it be in church or outside of church.

What flows out of our mouths – grumbling or gratitude? But guess what, we can choose what our attitude is, no matter what else is happening around us or to us. Read the Psalms. There is much gratitude expressed even in the midst of horrible circumstances. “This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.” (Psalm 118:24) Take a few moments to reflect on God’s grace, that undeserved love that offers forgiveness. Allow that to seep in, and then move on with all of your tasks and responsibilities that you have to face.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Rob



Worship Assistants

For December, calling chair Sylvia Leiseth

Not

December 3

9:00 AM

Reader: Jean Wold
Greeters: Neal & Lisa Shipman
Ushers: Larry & Debbie Larsen
Comm: Mike & Sharon Endrud
Coffee Hr: Dale & Joy Patten

11:00 AM

Comm: Confirmation Students

December 10

9:00

Reader: Valerie Williams
Greeters: Jim & Jan Riley
Ushers: Morris & Vonne Tarnavsky
Coffee Hr: Michon Sax

December 17

9:00 AM

Reader: Matt Beard
Greeters: Jean Wold
Ushers: Steve & Levi Sanford
Comm: Lloyd & Ardyce Alvershere
Coffee Hr: Steve & Gretchen Stenehjem

11:00 AM

Comm: Confirmation Students

December 24

9:00 AM

Reader: Frances Olson
Ushers: _____

Christmas Eve

5:00 PM

Ushers: David Tschetter Family
Candles: Lorri Honstein and children

9:00PM

Greeters/Ushers/Candles: _____

Christmas Day

9:00 AM

Ushers: _____
Comm: _____

December 31

9:00 AM

Reader: Dale Washburn
Greeters: Dale & Holly Washburn
Ushers: Brian Anderson/Kevin Sullivan
Coffee: LYO

If you would like to volunteer for any of the open spots, please call the office or Pastor Mark.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



Women of the ELCA Circles

Wednesday, November 30th
6:30 PM **FLC WELCA General mt @ FLC**
A Christmas Party and a light lunch

Monday, 11
5:00 PM Hope @ Horizon

Tuesday, 12
2:30 PM Garden @ the Horzion

Wednesday, 13
1:30 PM Peace @ the church

Youth and Kids



**What Was.....
..... And What Is Yet To Come.**

Our children & youth program is thriving and growing! In September, 19 youth joined us for our Paintball Extravaganza where we also learned about the armor of God. In October, we had 21 Youth participate in our 5th Quarter event at the First Lutheran Church. Then, on the 31st we had a dozen kids participate in our LYO Halloween event. Creative costumes, pumpkin carvings, competitions and evening games made for a fun and eventful LYO evening.

November was a busy month for our Youth. They had success with their bake-sale at the vender's fair, their pie sales on the 19th, and their big Premier Jewelry sale on the 24th! The youth are working hard to raise money for their National Lutheran Youth Convention Trip. If you would like to donate to their cause, you can write a check out to Watford City LYO and deliver it to Karen in the FLC Office.

Our Children have also had a busy past few months. Our Sunday School attendance is up. We had 36 kids at our November 5th Game Sunday. Many congregants found humor when 26 of those kids swallowed up Pastor Rob during his Children's Message at the 11am worship service.

Our Sonshine Kids, made 16 care bags for foster-care students in October. They also sang for residence at the Good Shepherd home in November and got to paint pumpkins and make Thank You Cards for parents, grandparents, and teachers. With Christmas activities, there will be NO Sonshine Kids in December.

Speaking of Christmas, our Sunday School kids have been showing up every Wednesday evening from 6:45-7:45pm to practice for their Christmas Program. We invite you to come support our kids as they share the Christmas Story with us on December 17th, at 11am, at the First Lutheran Church.

Many Holiday Blessings,
Pastor Alyssa Quade

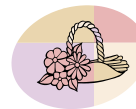


Annual Meetings are coming in January, so end of the year reports are due in the office.

I understand the busy holiday season will be upon us, so I'm asking if you would take an hour and finalize your report and either send it to me via email or drop it off at the church office, I would be grateful.

Reports include Banks, Garden and First Lutheran: WELCA secretary reports; minutes from the last church's annual meeting; Council President.

All Treasurer's reports including the Churches; WELCA; FLC Trust need to be in by **January 16th**



IN MEMORY OF.....

Building Fund

Paul Bergem	\$20.00
Harriet Hillesland	\$20.00
Howard Lange	\$20.00
Charlie Mosby	\$20.00
Janet Parish	\$20.00

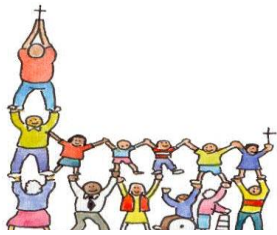
Thank You !



Thank you to the following for sponsoring the Sunday morning broadcast of FLC worship for the month of November. Ed & Charlotte Schilke in honor of loved ones; Caroline Schwartz; David & Donna Lou Sanford in memory of Marion Sanford Dahlgren; Madeline Miller in memory of Charles Miller and Cakins and Aakvik family members. Please check your special dates and call the office (444-3244) to sponsor a Sunday in the new year.

The cost is \$110.00 per broadcast.





Growing, Together, In Christ

“¹²⁷Because I love your commands more than gold, more than pure gold, ¹²⁸and because I consider all your precepts right, I hate every wrong path. ¹²⁹Your statutes are wonderful; therefore I obey them. ¹³⁰The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. ¹³¹I open my mouth and pant, longing for your commands. ¹³²Turn to me and have mercy on me, as you always do to those who love your name. ¹³³Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me.” (Psalm 119:127-133)

Question, are you hungry for God? Amidst the holiday season, perhaps the last thing on your mind is more food, but what about more God? Where has our hunger for God gone? As I talk with people, I hear that God is still an important part of their lives. But it is almost as if God is a picture hanging on every wall, present but not really engaged in the lives of the people. When we pray, do we imagine God as distant or detached? Are we asking God to intervene from Heaven and help us, or are we asking our very present Lord to pick up the other end of whatever concern we are carrying?

One of the devotions for December from Sarah Young's book, Jesus Calling, says the following: “Your needs and My riches are a perfect fit. I never meant for you to be self-sufficient. Instead, I designed you to need Me not only for daily bread, but also for fulfillment of deep yearnings.... As you spend time in My Presence, your deepest longings are fulfilled. Rejoice in your neediness, which enables you to find intimate completion in Me.” And in my mind, there is no better way to

spend time in God's presence than in reading God's Word.

Psalm 119 is a love song about God's Word. It is the longest chapter in the Bible and, with 176 verses, it is longer than 33 other books in the Bible. As you can see from the text above, it is a song of praise as well as of prayer to God, and written by David. What you don't see from reading the psalm is that it was written as an acrostic in Hebrew, which means that it is alphabetical. The psalm is divided into 22 sections following the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and each of the eight verses in the 22 sections starts with the same letter of the alphabet. This was done to help the people memorize the psalm as it is, in itself, a mini Bible.

As an Augustinian monk, Martin Luther would have been very familiar with Psalm 119 and likely had it memorized as he was in the habit of reciting it every three hours at the beginning of his week. It is a wonderful song that speaks of a hunger for God and for God's Word that we don't see much of today. The funny thing about God's Word is that the more you read of it, the hungrier you become for it. It seems to work the opposite way that normal hunger works.

When I get in the habit of reading the Bible on a regular basis, I find that I have trouble putting it down. But when I get out of the habit, it is easy not to pick it up. The problem then becomes that my relationship with God begins to cool, and I begin to see God as more distant rather than right in the midst of whatever I am dealing with that very minute. Yes folks, this happens to pastors too. In fact, during the holidays, when I find my schedule becoming busier, I find that I go long periods of time without reading my Bible, other than sermon preparation, and my relationship with God begins to cool at a time when the church is celebrating the power of God's presence in miraculous ways! It's odd but true. Is it the same for you?

Frederick Buechner (*Beek-ner*) was a Presbyterian pastor, author and theologian who spent two weeks at Wheaton College, an Evangelical Christian college, that changed his life. He wrote in his devotional book called, Listening to Your Life, of an event that happened at the college. “One day I was having lunch with two Wheaton students who were talking about whatever they were talking about—the weather, the movies—when without warning one of them asked the other, as naturally as he would have asked the time of day, what God was doing in his life.” The question shocked Buechner because in the part of the East where he is from, they keep their faith secret, if they have any. So, when he experienced students who freely discussed their faith in Christ and in His Kingdom, it was like finding something which, only when he tasted it, he discovered that he had been starving for years. That is the way it is with faith, isn't it?

When we are away from church, from Bible reading, from spending time with God, the need or hunger diminishes, until we go back to church, pick up our Bibles, and spend time with God and then we realize how much we missed it. So, brothers and sisters in Christ, in this Advent season, let us return to those habits of attending church, reading our Bibles and spending time with God so when the great celebrations of Christ's miraculous presence on earth occur, we can truly celebrate and have a desire to know God more fully, and experience God more personally in our daily lives. May we hunger for Christ this Christmas!

Together in Christ,

Pastor Mark

