



***Worship service on the  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent,  
December 23<sup>th</sup>***

**First Lutheran – 9:00 AM  
11:00AM**

**Garden Lutheran – 11:00 AM**

***Christmas Worship  
in the Parish***

**Christmas Eve December 24<sup>th</sup>**

**5:00 PM Garden**

**5:00 PM First**

**9:00 PM First**

**Christmas Day, December 25<sup>th</sup>**

**9:00 AM First**





**Grace, peace and greetings to all of you!**

This is the season of great anticipation. Decorations and advertising continually remind us of the event that is to come. Many of us are faithful to the original story, whereas others treat the occasion as a winter festival, a break from the dark and gloom and cold of the season. Worshipping the child who came onto the scene over two thousand years ago is an essential element of Christian reverence. I can only imagine, as I looked over the green valley outside of Bethlehem when I visited there, what the shepherds witnessed on the night of Jesus' birth. I began to think how appropriate it was that shepherds were to appear at the stable to honor this very special child, who came to all of us from a kingdom not of this world. How is it that God would choose shepherds to proclaim the glory of God? They were probably the most common of common people. But how could we forget! God loves all of his children. And it was appropriate for God to choose shepherds because they tended to sheep, the very creature which would be used as sacrificial offerings in the great Temple in Jerusalem. Once a year, every Jewish family was supposed to come to Jerusalem and offer sacrifices in the Temple for their sins. A lamb was generally bought in the city and then sacrificed. The shepherds in the Nativity story knew about these sacrifices. They spent their lives on the hills outside of Bethlehem, just a few miles away from the bustling city of Jerusalem. These shepherds realized that sin was awful in the eyes of God, and that it required the shedding of blood and the giving of life. God had made it known to this group of shepherds that the Lamb of God would be the Savior of the World. And they came to believe. Their hearts and souls were ready, and they accepted the news with great joy. So, also, the Wise

Men, the Magi. They were well-educated and rich. They knew about the great prophets of Israel and the promise of a coming Messiah. As they waited and hoped, they saw the bright star. They knew it had to be an uncommon, yet very special event. And they made the journey bearing expensive gifts. They were ready. King Herod turned a blind eye to all of this, not that he was unable to notice, but chose not to open his eyes and ears to what was happening. Herod chose not to prepare, but only to resist because his primary interest was to hold on to power at all costs. So, what are we prepared to do? Hold on to our own power or control, and do we resist calls to change from within? Christmas remains that unique reminder to be open to where God would lead us, and to follow that star on the path that is true and direct. We surrender ourselves to God in this journey of life. Christmas was and is that reminder of that surrender, because God saw the sin of man and decided to do something about it. And thank goodness God did. In our surrender, and in our belief, we open ourselves to God's continual love and mercy, which knows no boundaries. We come to the manger with hope, and then to the Cross with eternal thanksgiving. I wish to extend the flowing joy of the birth of Jesus once again with the hope that it brings of God's undeserved grace.

***Yours in Christ, Pastor Rob***



**We would like to welcome the newly baptized members of First Lutheran Church:** John Clayton, Jessen Bauer, Kason Hilleren, Iver Maattala and Roarch Maattala

**Garden Lutheran Church:**  
Eden Algremen, Braxton Saylor



**Retirement Party for Karen Broderson  
Sunday, December 2  
from 2-4 pm**

We would like to congratulate Karen on her retirement of 26 years of service as our Area Parish Secretary / Treasurer with a gathering at First Lutheran Church's Centennial Hall on Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> from 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Bring your favorite appetizers to share along with your best wishes on her retirement.

Cake, coffee and lemonade provided.  
Everyone is welcome!



**IN MEMORY OF.....**

**Building Fund**

Belinda Fadness	\$500.00
Stephanie Ryan	\$500.00
John Kirkland	\$590.00
Ethelyn Basol	\$575.00
Dan Wold	\$280.00
Dwayne Turnquist	\$500.00
Jay VanDyke	\$500.00

**Memorial Fund**

John Kirkland	\$250.00
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**Music Fund**

Dan Wold	\$ 25.00
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**General Fund**

Coralie Bruegger	\$300.00
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**Quilting Fund**

Jackie Andre`	\$110.00
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LYO to Christmas Caroling at Good Shepherd on December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30 PM





**Worship Assistants**

**December 2**

**9:00 AM**

Reader: Owen Hamre  
 Greeters: Dave & Lynette Hansen  
 Ushers: Dale & Vickie Karpyak  
 Comm: Jim & Jan Riely  
 Coffee Hr: Gen Hutmacher

**11:00 AM**

Greeter: Jory Lund  
 Usher: Max Paulson  
 Communion: Gracie Johnsrud  
 Powerpoint: Kanyon Tschetter

**December 9**

**9:00**

Reader: Anne Beard  
 Greeters: Rick & Steph Jore  
 Ushers: Kelly & Peni Peterson  
 Coffee Hr: Diane DeFoe

**11:00 AM**

Greeters: Koen Helmuth  
 Ushers: Tyler Leiseth  
 Powerpoint: Kanyon Tschetter

**December 16**

**9:00 AM**

Reader: Jean Wold  
 Greeters: Larry & Debbie Larsen  
 Ushers: Scott & Jane Swenson  
 Comm: Steve & Gretchen Stenehjem  
 Coffee Hr: Morris & Vonne Tarnavsky

**11:00 AM**

Greeter: Tell Sorenson  
 Usher: Aubrey Wollan  
 Communion: Neil Dahl  
 Powerpoint: Kell/Koen Hellmuth

**December 23**

**9:00 AM**

Reader: Frances Olson  
 Ushers: Justin & Nicole Johnsrud  
 Greeters: Neal & Lisa Shipman  
 Coffee Hr: Michon Sax & Jean Wold

**11:00 AM**

Greeters: Nolan Dahl  
 Ushers: Ethan Evanson  
 Powerpoint: Kell/Koen Hellmuth

**Christmas Eve**

**5:00 PM**

Greeters/Ushers/Candles:  
 Orrin & Joyce Moe  
 Terry & Angie Moe

**9:00PM**

**Greeters/Ushers/Candles:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Christmas Day**

**9:00 AM**

Ushers: Orrin & Joyce Moe  
 Communion: Terry & Angie Moe

**December 30**

**9:00**

Reader: Valerie Williams  
 Greeters: Erica Johnsrud  
 Ushers: Jim & Vonnie Johnsrud  
 Coffee Hr: Caroline Schwartz

**11:00 AM**

Greeters: Derek Holen  
 Ushers: Judd Johnsrud



**Women of the ELCA Circles**

**Wednesday, 5**



The FLC WELCA are having an evening Christmas meeting at 5:30 PM. Potluck /various Christmas items for lunch, bring your favorite dish or dessert. A program is planned followed by a short WELCA meeting along with installation of 2019 Officers.

**Monday, 10**

5:00 PM Hope @ Horizon

**Tuesday, 11**

2:00 PM Garden @ the Horzion

**Wednesday, 12**

1:30 PM Peace @ the church

**Thank You !**



**SPONSORS**

Thank you to the following for sponsoring the Sunday morning broadcast of FLC worship for the month of November--In honor of Don & Virginia Lund on their 90<sup>th</sup> birthdays by David & Kathy Drovdal, Odean Bendixson, Wally Johnson, Philip & Caralynn Olson, Jim & Jan Riely, Ed & Charlotte Schilke; Rick & Nancy Wisness in honor of children, grandchildren, & father Emil Saint and in memory of Arno & Anna Wisness and Vernon & Shirley Knox; Scott & Jane Swenson in honor of grandchildren: Scott, Spencer, Evan & Edward; Carol Berwald and family in memory of Loren Berwald.

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.



**Parish**

**Christmas Programs**

**First Lutheran Sunday School Program** will be held during the 11:00 AM worship on Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>

**First Lutheran Choir Cantata** will be held on Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM

**Banks/Garden Sunday School Program** will be held at Banks Church on December 16<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM, followed by a potluck supper.





As many of you may have heard, I'm retiring at the end of this month and I'm so please that Ardyce Alvshere will take my place. She will be wonderful!! With that news out of the way you know that Annual Meetings are coming in January, so end of the year reports are due in the office.

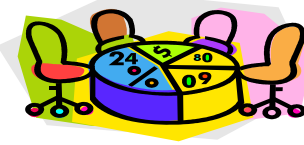
I understand the busy holiday season will be upon us, so I'm asking if you would take an hour and finalize your report and either send it to me via email or drop it off at the church office, I would be grateful.

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 16<sup>th</sup>



McKenzie County Healthcare Systems Auxiliary Christmas Party will be held on Wednesday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM in the Activities Room. Please bring a plate of Christmas goodies to share.



## First Lutheran Church Council October 14, 2018

**Present:** Jeremiah Beard, Pastor Alyssa, Megan Wirtz, Pastor Rob, Craig Paulson, Angie Moe, Jeff Meyer, Keith Helmuth, Erica Johnsrud, Glen Beard, Pastor Mark, Steven Holen, Ashley Holen

**Absent:** Gretchen Stenehjelm,

**Guest:** John Quade/ Ann Beard

Call to Order: Glen 6:00 PM

Devotions: Keith

Motion to approve minutes: Jeff Moved, Megan Second- motion carried

**WELCA Report:** Ann Beard- New Advent wreath purchased with \$1000 memorial money. Ordered 12 silk poinsettia plants and 20 real plants, Ann will lead Alter Committee and will put up adds to get people

### Committee Reports

**Finance:** (Jeremiah/Jeff/Keith) Income was up \$12,000, offering \$10,000 of that because of 5 Sundays in September, need to make request to Trust Committee for 2019 Building Funds

Motion to approve Finance Reports by Keith, second by Steve- motion carried

**Property:** (Glen/Craig) Parking lot striping done per quote, still can do the diagonal spaces down the middle to give and extra 12 spots. Egress windows complete at the parsonage, \$9,800 and WELCA to pay half. Sprinkle system winterized, snowblower ready

**Worship:** (Erica/Angie) Picked out music, will be getting ready and volunteers to decorate for Advent 11 AM services on Facebook live is getting attention

### **Stewardship-Evangelism:**

(Gretchen/Angie) Shoe boxes are here- need to put together- confirmation kids might be able to help with this

### **Youth & Education:**

(Mikka/Megan/Craig/Steve) Sunday school is going well, Confirmation is more of a time commitment this year, Still need to find more Sunday school teachers/helpers

**Old Business:** NONE

**New Business:** Area Parish will meet with Ardyce- she will be taking over as secretary when Karen retires, she will hold both Area Parish Secretary /Treasurer and First Lutheran Treasurer positions

Area parish will meet November 1 to go over budgets; Steve and Ashley will be looking it possible mobile app for the Clarion; Need to find replacements for at least 2 council members, Steven & Gretchen terms finished in January.

### Staff reports:

**Pastor Rob:** Annual meetings will be coming in January; Would like council to consider changing committees a little (Finance/Stewardship) (Worship/Hospitality)

**Pastor Mark:** 2 Baptisms. Thankful for the parsonage windows

**Pastor Alyssa:** Police will be coming to talk to Sonshine kids; Working on "Girls Night"

Motion to adjourn: Megan moved, Keith second- motion carried

Devotions next meeting: Pastor Mark

Closed with Lord's Prayer

Next Meeting will be Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM  
Craig Paulson, secretary





*<sup>21</sup>And since we have a great priest (Jesus) over the house of God, <sup>22</sup>let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup>Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup>And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup>not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:21-25)*

A recent article, “The Kingdom Within,” in the November issue of Living Lutheran had this quote, “Historically, Lutheran identity in the US was shaped by pastoral care, theological integrity, and right teaching about doctrines, sacraments & church structure. Devotional disciplines & psychological reflection—modes of spiritual care—were often dismissed. Now social justice & institutional survival are major themes across the ELCA, and in many congregations, spirituality is not a priority. We pay a price for that.” If the author, pastor and psychotherapist Jon Magnuson, is correct, this is not the first time our church has struggled with its sense of purpose.

October 31, 1517 was the day that Luther nailed his protest of Catholic church practices to the door of the Wittenberg chapel, which eventually led to the Reformation. Luther wanted to return the Catholic church to the understanding that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. The Bible shows that our salvation is not based on our works but rather on God’s love. Luther wanted us to first understand that we are saved by grace in order to do good works, not the other way around. Well the result was that people took hold of being saved by

grace and were happy to forget about the works.

100 years later, pastor Johan Arndt wrote a devotional book called True Christianity. His stated purposes were “to draw students and preachers away from vain theological arguments, to help Christian believers think and do things that brought forth fruit, and to show all the practice of faith and godliness wherein a truly Christian life that accords with true faith consists.” Pastor Arndt was a man ahead of his time because his work brought no real change until a young man named Philip Jacob Spener read it and was deeply influenced by it some 40 years later.

Spener himself went on to be a pastor who emphasized personal spirituality over orthodoxy, in other words, right living over right belief. Spener too was disgusted with all of the theological bickering while the everyday lives of people remained unchanged. In a sermon he preached in 1669 Pastor Spener said, “How much good it would do if good friends would come together on a Sunday and instead of getting out glasses, cards or dice would take up a book and read from it for the edification of all or would review something from sermons that were heard!” And you can imagine that the response then was the same as it would be now. “You’re crazy pastor! What’s the fun in that? We get together to have a good time and leave the spiritual stuff up to you.” But Spener was persistent.

The following year he started meeting with seminarians, much as Luther did, to discuss the deeper issues of life, to edify one another, and to support one another in the spiritual disciplines of Bible reading, prayer, fasting, and alms giving. Much like Luther, Spener sought to reform the church. So along with his meetings, he wrote a book titled Pious Desires, and had Johan Arndt’s devotional book republished. In his book, Spener pointed out the moral laxity of society at the time—sins were not taken seriously, and religious duties were carried out

superficially—and yet he was hopeful for reform. He proposed 6 steps to return to a vibrant Christian life. 1)Make the Scriptures more commonplace in private and public use, 2)Have more laity involved in the practices of the church, 3)Realize that Christian doing is just as important as Christian believing, 4)Educate ministers in spirituality, as well as theology, worship, and church studies, 5)Preach sermons that have the inner life and edification as their goal, 6)Model Johan Arndt’s sermons in preaching. And like Luther’s works, Spener’s call for more pious living was the right words at the right time.

His reform was not perfect, but it did have an impact on many people. Spener influenced Nicholas Zinzendorf, the founder of the Moravian church, as well as John Wesley, the founder of the Wesleyan and Methodist churches, all of which emphasize the inner life of the Christian. At the end of the Living Lutheran article, Pastor Magnuson wrote, “ELCA leaders now have a chance to help us reclaim ... the inner spiritual life with all its depth, power and magnificent complexity. One step forward is to prioritize spiritual practices in our congregations. We need to reclaim the sacred in worship and outside of it.” According to Pastor Magnuson, this means small-group meetings, similar to the meetings held by Philip Spener, where we talk about the sermon, a Bible passage or devotional reading and how it applies to our lives. It means having holy conversations like Pub Theology at Stonehome on Thursday nights at 7:30. It means going deep with each other, sharing wounds and reconciling hurts. It means listening and loving others of differing opinions because Christ loved them, and us first. As Pastor Magnuson says, “Guided by God’s grace, we can allow ourselves to be led into a more attentive and redemptive way of living.”

Together in Christ,

Pastor Mark

