

First Evangelical Lutheran Newsletter

December 2025

"Proclaiming the Good News of Grace and Forgiveness in Jesus Christ to Our Community and World"

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

A Christmas Message from the Staff of FELC

Dear Members of First Lutheran Church:

Christmas can be a challenging time for many:

- Grief can be re-visited.
- Finances are often stretched thin.
- Expectations of what to get others as far as a gift, or how to celebrate, all can be burdensome.
- Family time can be stressful.
- The added pressure of feeling the need to appear "happy, like everyone else" can be exhausting.

This Advent and Christmas I hope that you will find First Lutheran Church to be a place that is comfortable, welcoming and where you can lay aside all of those expectations and the added pressure of the season.

Come as you are and know that you don't have to try to be someone you are not. Come and hear the Good News of Jesus, who came into this world to love us as we are.

This Christmas, our doors are wide open. Jesus' invitation to each of us is, *"Come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."*

For those who haven't been back to church in a while, I hope you know that there is no better time than right now to come and be part of worship. I pray that First Lutheran is a place that feels like home for you and your loved ones.

It's an extremely special time of year at church. Please join us as we celebrate the hope that is ours in Christ.

God's Peace.

Pastor Ben

Sue Ellwanger

Maureen Diedrich

Dale Plasek

Julie Lindgren

Brad Lambrecht



December Birthdays

December 2 Ethan Bowman
December 4 Janet Carlson
December 5 Haizel Truax
December 6 Abigail Koep
December 7 Fonda Noe
December 10 Brendon Glebe
December 11 Robin Douma
December 17 Jessica Schroeder
December 18 Lyle Oeltjenbruns
December 22 Marah Uecker
December 26 Owen Olson
December 28 Terry Carlson
December 29 Becky Revering



In Our Prayers

Amanda Steinbeisser,
Tim Andree – grandson of Phyllis Haugen,
Barbara Syverson, Jody Lange, Andy Bowman,
Donna Hegg -mother of Nancy Noga
Pete Baugh -brother-in-law of Ken Bowman

Extended Care

Lucille Trisko, Carol Hanson, Avis Larson

May God Watch Over You During Your Service to Our Country:

Matthew Westad, Jordan Olson, Lukas Johnson, Jean Barbee- daughter of Bea Skoglund
Mitchell Cooper, Patrick Rubner, Dr. Drew Long – grandson of Carol Hanson



Children's Ministry



Sunday December 7 - Sunday School Christmas Program during church.



Sunday December 14 - Christmas Caroling after church. Jodi the Hotdish Lady will be providing a lasagna hotdish and breadsticks. Please see sign up sheet in gathering space, and sign up by December 7.

Sunday December 28 - No Sunday School

Sunday January 18 - Children will sing in church.

Sunday February 15 - Children will sing in church.

Sunday March 29 - Palm Sunday - Egg Hunt and Palm Sunday Breakfast before church, no Sunday School

Christmas Caroling Event on Sunday December 14

There is a sign-up sheet in the gathering space for those interested in joining the caroling event. We will ride around on a trailer to the two apartment buildings and St. Williams to sing. If it is too cold or you prefer you can follow in your vehicle as well.

Prior to heading out we will have a potluck meal in the basement.

The Hotdish Lady will be providing Lasagna Hotdish and breadsticks.

Please sign up by Sunday December 7 if you are attending (with quantity of people) and what you will be making for the potluck.

This was a super fun event last year, and we would love to have even more people join us this year for our new annual event!!



Winter Weather Announcement: If the Parkers Prairie school dismisses early because of bad weather, all events are cancelled here at First Evangelical.

Christmas at Elmo and FELC

Elmo Christmas Eve Worship
with Communion and Candle Lighting
Tuesday, December 24th at 3 pm

First Lutheran Christmas Eve Worship
with Communion and Candle Lighting
Tuesday, December 24th at 5 pm

Christmas Day Worship at First Lutheran
with Communion
Wednesday, December 25th at 10 am

Mission of the Month



The December Mission of the Month is the Parkers Prairie Food Shelf. The Parkers Prairie Food Shelf is open on the 3rd Tuesday of each month from 3:30-6:30 in the Church basement. If you know someone in need, please pass this schedule on to them. Folks in the Parkers Prairie and Miltona area are eligible to use the food shelf. If you need immediate assistance, please call the church office at 218-338-5731 and we will try to help you with your needs. The food shelf is run by community volunteers. A new program was started here in October. Folks 60 years and older are eligible to receive up to 4 frozen nutritious meals monthly. Everyone 60 years and beyond are eligible for the meals. As winter comes upon us, we see an increase in clients needing to use the food shelf. Checks can be written out to FELC with "food shelf" in the memo line

First Evangelical Lutheran Church December Worship

	12/7	12/14	12/21	12/24 Christmas Eve 5 pm	12/25 Christmas Day 10 am	12/28
Reader	Sunday School Children	Terry Carlson	SueAnne Ritter	Mark Helgeson		Ken Bowman
Usher	Brad & Carlye Carlson	Douma family Pat Sukraw	Joe Bridges	Lyle & Amy Oeltjenbruns family	Bob Huckle	
Communion Asst			Jen Glebe	Oeltjenbruns family	Bob Huckle	
Music	Julie Lindgren	Dale Plasek	Dale Plasek	Julie Lindgren Leah Gist Dale Plasek	Julie Lindgren	Brad Lambrecht
Acolyte	Venna Carlson	Blakelynn Douma	Maverick Bitzan	Wyatt Olson		
Sound System	Caleb/Jim Owen	Caleb/Jim Owen	Caleb/Jim Owen	Caleb/Jim Owen	Caleb/Jim Owen	Caleb/Jim Owen



Community Meal will be held at the Community Center in Miltna on Wednesday, December 17 from 4:30 -6:30 pm. The meal is free and everyone is invited to attend. On the menu: Wild Rice soup, Build your own sandwiches, cupcakes and cookies.



Runestone Chorus will be presenting a musical concert on Saturday, January 18th, 2 pm at Shalom Lutheran in Alexandria. Pastor Ben is a member of this choir.

November Contributions

General Fund	11/02	11/09	11/16	11/23	11/30
Sunday Offering	\$1,794.00	\$435.00	\$2,475.00	\$1,192.00	\$1,310.00
Vanco	\$122.35			\$20.00	
Electronic Giving	\$535.00 (1st)		\$835.00 (15 th)		
Elmo Contribution	AA Group \$70.00			\$1,338.65	
Mission of the Month	\$25.00 LSS	\$25.00 World Hunger	\$25.00 World Hunger	\$25.00 LSS \$100.00 Food Shelf	\$25.00 LSS
General Fund Total	\$1,895.35	\$435.00	\$3,294.00	\$2,530.65	\$1,310.00
Building Fund	\$91.00		\$16.00		\$1,500.00

2025 FELC Finances

October 2025

General Income	Bldg. Income	Expense	Month Profit/ Loss
\$7063.33	\$607.00	\$12,433.44	\$4,763.11

Yrly. Net Income/Loss****
(\$19,028.25)



Convenient ways to give to First Lutheran through our Vanco online giving platform: You can give online at this link: <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZX4X/home> or scan the QR Code below. This is a safe and secure way of giving online.

Prayer Ventures for December 2025

1 *World AIDS Day and HIV/AIDS Awareness Month* At the end of 2024, an estimated 40.8 million people worldwide were living with HIV, 1.4 million of them children and 39.4 million of them adults. Remember in prayer health care professionals and care providers who work in HIV/AIDS education, prevention, treatment and research.

2 Hanging Advent wreaths and lighting candles to anticipate the birth of the Messiah are Christian traditions that date back hundreds of years. Thank God for the gift of Jesus Christ that continues to change our identities, our lives and our understanding of life as beloved children of God.

3 Pray for people and whole communities in the Caribbean that have suffered devastation and loss from Hurricane Melissa, especially across Jamaica, Haiti, Cuba and the Bahamas. Ask God to strengthen their faith as they recover and rebuild and to bless them with support, resources, funding, volunteers and prayers for the duration of their recovery.

4 Pray that, throughout this season of gift-giving, we will be mindful of those, nearby and far away, who lie beyond our familiar circles of family, friends, neighbors and co-workers.

5 LWF (Lutheran World Federation) World Service is composed of 154 churches, in 25 countries, that embrace the Lutheran tradition, including the ELCA. Pray for the LWF's humanitarian and development work, which promotes peace, justice, reconciliation and dignity for individuals and communities.

6 Pray that we will exercise hospitality and generosity by inviting others to be part of our Advent traditions, worship, meals and celebrations.

7 Pray for the Spirit to form us into faithful yet ever-maturing disciples of Christ who, like John the Baptist, proclaim the gospel, invite others to believe, and boldly serve our neighbors.

8 Martin Luther is supposed to have said, "I have so much to do that I shall have to spend the first three hours in prayer." For what and whom will you pray today?

9 Ask God to help us find paths to peace and reconciliation in places of conflict where they have proved elusive, especially in Palestine, Israel, Eastern Europe, Northern Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Remember in prayer the millions of people who have suffered and been displaced to unfamiliar lands.

10 Theologian Henri Nouwen wrote, "The Lord is coming, always coming. When you have ears to hear and eyes to see, you will recognize him at any moment of your life. Life is Advent; life is recognizing the coming of the Lord." Say a quiet prayer every day, acknowledging Advent as a time of remembrance, anticipation, celebration of God's presence and hope for Christ's return.

11 Pray that the light of God's love and forgiveness will shine brightly, renewing your faith and guiding you every day.

12 Remember in prayer local, state and national leaders, that they will exercise their responsibilities with compassion, justice, fairness and commitment. Ask God to help them as they address intractable problems in our communities and nation, including poverty, racism and limited access to health care.

13 Give thanks for students returning home from colleges, universities and seminaries. Pray that their journeys will be safe and that they will be renewed by the blessings of family, friends and welcoming faith communities.

14 How will you tell others about your faith throughout Advent? Pray for the Spirit's inspiration as you articulate what God is doing in your life and how you have been changed by the embodiment of God's amazing grace in Jesus Christ.

15 Give thanks for far-reaching programs and ministries of our church and congregations that encourage hope, comfort and healing, grounded in God's infinite love and forgiveness.

16 *Las Posadas* This tradition uses lighted paths and processions from house to house to remember Mary and Joseph's journey through Bethlehem in search of shelter. Pray that this experience will prompt us to welcome, accompany and serve strangers, immigrants, refugees and neighbors in need.

17 Ask God to help us be patient and merciful with ourselves, our siblings in Christ and the people around us.

18 *International Migrants Day* Pray for immigrants and refugees around the world who seek safety, a welcoming community and a place to rebuild their lives. Give thanks for the ministries of our church and other organizations that enable us to respond with compassion, support and resources, including Global Refuge, Lutheran Services in America, LWF (Lutheran World Federation) World Service, and the ELCA's AMMPARO strategy (Accompanying Migrants with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities).

19 Pray that, throughout this season of celebration and gift-giving, our faith and the example of Jesus will inspire our generosity toward neighbors who suffer poverty, loneliness and isolation, especially during the holidays. Pray that our actions and words might reflect the light of God's love, stirring hope, joy and compassion.

20 Pray for Global Mission personnel and those serving in the Young Adults in Global Mission program who celebrate Advent and Christmas far from home, and thank God for our global companions, whose traditions enrich our faith.

21 *Winter solstice* On this shortest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere, give thanks for the brilliant light of God's love.

22 Remember in prayer those who serve our communities, often working hours that prevent them from participating in worship and holiday activities. Pray for those working in health care, law enforcement, retail sales, emergency response, the military, social services, the hospitality industry and other vocations that we have come to rely upon.

23 Pray that our hearts and minds will be receptive when the work of the Spirit surprises us.

24 *Christmas Eve* "Jesus' voice from lowly manger softly thus calls to us: 'You are safe from danger; come and see; from all that grieves you you are freed; all you need I will surely give you'" ("All My Heart Again Rejoices" *ELW* 273). Praise God for knowing what we yearn for most and responding with generous, tender mercy. Let your hearts overflow with thanksgiving.

25 *Christmas Day* Oscar Romero, the martyred Roman Catholic bishop of San Salvador, wrote, "The more simple and humble, the more poor and detached from ourselves, the more full of troubles and problems we are, the more bewildering life's ways, all the more must we look up to the skies and hear the great news: 'A Savior is born to you.' And let us listen in chorus to that great news, sung throughout the universe: 'Glory to God in the heavens, and on earth peace to those whom God loves.'" Give praise and thanksgiving to God!

26 Kwanzaa Pray for our African-descent neighbors and siblings in Christ who observe Kwanzaa, a weeklong celebration of African culture and tradition that emphasizes family, community and culture. Give thanks for the rich and enduring practices of our siblings of African descent and of the global African community.

27 Pray for those who are often forgotten, including neighbors who are incarcerated, are held in immigration detention centers, live in institutions, move from shelter to shelter or are unable to leave their homes.

28 Pray that we might express the life-giving joy of Christmas and that Jesus Christ will continue to bring light, hope and salvation into the world for all people.

29 Lift up prayers of thanksgiving and praise that God illuminates our dark times, gives us strength to endure and surrounds us with love and mercy when we need it most.

30 Give thanks for our siblings in Christ and for our divine parent, who created all that exists and gathers us together.

31 New Year's Eve Our baptism sets us on a lifelong journey of thanksgiving, hope, generosity, learning, service and sharing the gospel. Pray for the Spirit to stir our faith in the year ahead and prepare us to continue our journey even though we don't know where it will take us.

December 2025

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3 Confirmation 5 pm meal – Class to follow	4	5	6
7 9 am Sunday School 10 am Worship Communion Sunday School Program	8	9	10 Confirmation 5 pm Meal – Class to follow 7 pm Council	11	12	13
14 9am Sunday School 10 am Worship 11 am Potluck & Christmas Caroling	15	16 3:30 -6:30 pm Prairie Food Shelf	17 Confirmation 5 pm Meal -Class to follow	18	19	20
21 9 am Sunday School 10 am Worship	22	23	24 Christmas Eve 3 pm Worship at Elmo 5 pm Worship at FELC	25 Christmas Day 10 am Worship w/Communion at FELC	26	27
29 NO Sunday School 10 am Worship	29	30	31			

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