

The

Voice

February 2024

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF FIRST EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

A Congregation of the
Northeastern
Minnesota Synod,
ELCA

Joy Hensel brings mental health workshop to FLC

Mark your calendars for next month's visit from Joy Hensel. Currently, she is the Synod Minister for Mental Health and Wellness for the Northeastern Minnesota synod, ELCA.

You are invited to a mental health and wellness presentation on Sunday, February 4th, at 4 p.m. in our Fellowship Hall.

Joy will lead us in a workshop about mental health, and help us to learn about stress relief activities to nurture well-being. Our goal is that this workshop will be a bridge to connect all ages with resources, all within a faith context.

For more information go to page 7.

Meet the new organist—Lynn Salo

"I grew up on a dairy farm in the small town of New York Mills, MN (also the home of Lund boats). When I was 5 years old, I remember my parents bringing an old upright piano into the house which ended my days of playing piano on the windowsills! To this day, I still play my faithful ole upright. During my teen and young adult years, I was regularly scheduled to play organ/piano for church services and other events. I moved to Moorhead and lived there for several years before making the Falls my home in January 1990. During those

years, away from my hometown, my keyboard playing basically took a back seat to raising my four kids and working full time. Last year, I participated in Backus's music events. It was there that I met Nancy. One thing led to another, and she asked if I'd play for church during these winter months. Being asked to be part of the worship team is a great honor to me that I do not take lightly. I am both grateful and thankful for

V Food
Share

MARCH CAMPAIGN

March FoodShare
More on page 5.

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the opportunity—Thank you for the warm welcome ! It feels good to sit down on that music bench and be part of the worship music again. Please have patience with me as I learn the organ and music. My hope and prayer is to place a song in your heart as you leave each service."

Lynn Salo

The VOICE

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From the Pastor's Desk,

Thoug your destination is not yet clear

You can trust the promise of this opening; Unfurl yourself
into the grace of beginning
That is at one with your life's desire.

Awaken your spirit to adventure;
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;
Soon you will home in a new rhythm,

For your soul senses the world that awaits you."

--John O'Donahue (from a longer poem titled For a New Beginning)

As we turn the calendar to the month of February, we find ourselves on yet another doorstep, making ready once again to step out into a new journey. What is this you may wonder? Is it a snowbird adventure to a sunny place much warmer than here? Maybe a spring break destination? While those are fun, this is an adventure of a different sort. One that can be accomplished without, for the most part, leaving wherever it is we are—this is a journey into a new season in the church year. The season of Lent. While this may seem like the opposite of the kind of adventure we might sign up for--maybe because we've been here before—I invite us to look and see Lent with new eyes. This season, if we open ourselves to it, is always a new experience that will take us away and back again, providing much that will us last far beyond its sparse forty days. To begin the journey of Lent is to begin with good courage. Our first steps feel counterintuitive because we are called to stop, and in that stopping, turn inward and reflect on that which on most days scares us most--our own mortality. Lent begins with a deep dive into what it means to be finite human beings. Ash

Wednesday will call us there through a crumbly, dusty cross placed on our foreheads with the words "remember you are dust and to dust you shall return." But we are not left there, out of the ashes we will go, encouraged to continue our



contemplation through the 40 days, but we are also called outward—into a walk of faith with Christ and community as our companions. Through the teachings of Jesus, we will learn anew what it means to love our neighbors as ourselves, through humility and grace. We will find ourselves on mountaintops and in valleys, see what it means to be healers and to be healed. And then stand at what will feel like the end our journey together in a place that for some of us is far too familiar—the foot of the cross—where grief and confusion reside, but, as we stay and face what is there, we will experience the sunrise of love, goodness, and even hope, and find that what feels like the end is actually the beginning. While perhaps this isn't the journey we had planned or even wanted, it is precisely the journey we need for so many reasons in this often broken, self-serving, hard-fought, exhausting time that is ours. And so, I invite you to step out, as John O'Donahue writes, to unfurl ourselves into the grace of beginning, into a time of new rhythm.

Let us begin a new journey with Christ for forty days into a meaningful time of faith in this season of Lent. See you in church!

Your friend in Christ,
Pastor Christie

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

December 15, 2023

Present: , Treasurer Brad Ettestad, Secretary	Next month: Carol Bass
Carol Bass, Discipleship BettyJeanne	Addition to Agenda: None
Henrickson, Service/Outreach Brenda	Minutes from November meeting: Copies
Bertilson, Pastor Christie Manisto, President	provided to all. No corrections or additions.
Brian Briggs, Fellowship Cynthia Warren, Vice-	Motion: To accept the minutes of the
President	November 2023 meeting.
Hoa Sobczynski, Worship & Music Nancy	Made by: Hoa Sobczynski
McBride	Seconded by: Pastor Christie
Absent: Building and Grounds Lloyd Skogstad	Carried
Meeting called to order by President Brian	Treasurer Report: Copies provided to all. The
Briggs at 5:00 PM.	money has been moved into the CD (as voted
Devotion - Cynthia Warren read Ralph Waldo	upon last month)
Emerson's piece titled "Today is Your Best	presided over my uncle's funeral at Our
Day" and asked how do you pray for people	Saviors in Cloquet on 17 November.
when suffering is so great	Youth
(Middle East, Ukraine, refugees)?	

Assisted with Early Release classes including a visit to Good Sam with singing and gifts for members.

Confirmation classes including caroling in the community on 20 December.

Met with Youth Gathering families to plan fundraising efforts. Set up a Team Reach account for all Youth Gathering families.

4 youth and family e-newsletters to Zion and first families

Motion: to accept financial reports for Novem-

ber Made by: Cynthia Warren

Seconded by: Brenda Bertilson

Carried

Pastor Report: Nov 17, 2023-December 21,

2023

Pastoral Acts

Led worship and preached each Sunday.

Bible study on the book of Acts Delivered bulletins and visited homebound members.

Julie Lepisto—Mission interpreter invited to speak.

Pajama Vespers service (new service this year)

Blue Christmas

Christmas Eve service with potluck

Met with worship committee to plan

Advent. Met with Emma at Small town tech

Community

Marched in the Christmas parade with youth from Zion and First (and can't wait for next year)

Attended the Borderland churches meeting at Littlefork Lutheran

Met with reps from Zion Ft. Frances re: questions about us partnering with them (referred to Brian and synod)

Volunteered at the Community Café

meeting on Monday 18 December)

Became a New member of the Community

Welcome committee of the I Falls Rotary (first about website (please see updates and improvements)

Committee meetings (finance, building and grounds, etc.)

Synod Conference meeting in Cook at Camp

Vermilion Text study in Babbitt zoom

meeting with synod journey leadership.

Council, continued on page 4

Rev. Christie Manisto,

Pastor

Office Hours:

Monday—Thursday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Friday—9 a.m. to noon

218-283-2208

www.firstlutheranifalls.org

firstlutheranifalls@gmail.com

Council minutes (continued from page 3)

Personal

Will take the week after Christmas off (Dec 25 -Jan 1) (Nancy Preaching)

Will take Sunday Jan 14th off for a VLM staff reunion at Camp Vermilion. Nancy Preaching

Upcoming:

Planning VBS with BettyJeanne and Zion

(contacting Camp Onamia)

Planning a summer event for "tweens" potentially in August--with Pr. Andy Berry (meeting Jan 4th)

Jan 7th will host Laurentian conference text study at First.

Jan 10th I will be at Trinity in Princeton to share a presentation about my work in Cairo.

Jan 21st Steve and I will share a presentation about the same here at First (with Zion invited) at 4pm

Feb 4th Joy Hensel, Synod Mental Health educator will be here to preach and lead a workshop at 4pm.

Will meet with worship committee about Holy

Feb 25th Thrivent will be here to share a workshop and sponsor coffee hour. Small Town Tech has updated our church website. Check it out.

Release time finished as of last week. A success.

Committee Reports:

President - Thank you to Pastor Christie for her ministry. Have been hearing good things. Zion in Ft. Frances is still interested in doing

some projects with us or exploring possibilities of shared ministry. If a contract for shared pastoral services was agreed on, it would first require written permission from our bishop and the Ft. Frances one, They have both been contacted and would not have any objections. Question was raised that it being in another country, would there be more requirements such as registration to work in Canada? Other paperwork? It was thought that Pastor Christie wouldn't have any such requirements as she is employed by us and not acting as individual seeking employment in Canada.

Vice-President - The next joint council meeting is scheduled for Jan. 2nd, but it is unknown whether the Exploration Team has anything to report yet. The team will be contacted and if they are not ready, the meeting could be postponed till the end of January.

Borderland Churches to meet in January. Service/Outreach - Brenda reported 5 volunteers at community café; may need a couple more volunteers beginning next month when the café returns to in house dining only. (More dishes to do and clean up) 5 cards sent to ill/shut-ins and 30 Christmas cards to shut-ins, special needs members. Checked pews for pencils and visitor envelopes. There will be a Soup/Chili Challenge on Feb 18th after service. Hoping for 10-12 entries with a prize given to the most popular. Free will offering to go to Food Shelf. Thank you to all that helped with Tour of Trees, It was very

successful and raised \$6,490. The possibility of a food drive was raised as we haven't had one for a while. The question was raised if we would be making soup again before Lenten services. Cynthia and Betty Jean may plan this. Discipleship — Programs going well. There is a fundraiser for the youth gathering in New Orleans next summer. Confirmation is going well,

Fellowship - Plans for Christmas Eve potluck well underway, Basement will be cleaned and set up. Using paper plates so little dish washing. People may bring wine if they wish, but church isn't providing.

Building and Grounds: Lloyd was absent but sent his report. We met on Tuesday, December 12th at 10:30 AM. Present were Pastor Christie, Betty Jeanne Henrickson, Steve Lindberg, Dwayne Dougherty, and Lloyd Skogstad.

1. Discussed carpet choices for the front entrances. Samples were brought in by BettyJeanne. BettyJeanne is also exploring the carpet choices for Memorial Hall, the Pastor's office, and the business office.

2. Brad has volunteered to plow the parking lot. Anyone who wishes to help please contact him.

3. We determined the location of the donated AED from the estate of Janet Nelson. Once installed, the fire department will check the device and provide training as needed. 4. We will need to purchase and install new pull-down ladders in the area behind the sanctuary and upstairs leading to the organ, 5. We discussed the rubber roof (flat) repair/replacement and determined that we need to

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No February FELW meeting scheduled

The FELW have not scheduled a regular business meeting for February, but we are encouraged to continue supporting the Falls Hunger Coalition and gathering necessary materials for school kits, sewing kits, health kits, and layette kits.

The next FELW meeting is set for March 12th at 5 p.m. in Memorial Hall.

Everyone is very welcome to attend.

Get ready for March FoodShare Campaign

The aim of the March FoodShare Campaign is to help restock and support the capacity of nearly 300 food shelves in Minnesota. The Koochiching County Food Access (formerly Falls Hunger Coalition) is a participating food shelf.

We are sponsoring two events in support of this campaign. The first is a food drive beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 14th, and continuing through Lent. The items most requested at the food shelf are canned fish and chicken, peanut butter, soups and stews, and pasta.

The second event is a soup and chili challenge after worship on Sunday, February 18th. We will sample all the soups, and vote for the favorite soup and the favorite chili.

The free will offering for this event will be donated to the food shelf in March. Thanks for your continued support.

Lenten worship opportunities abound in Borderland

You have a number of possibilities for worship experiences during Lent this year.

Ash Wednesday at First will be February 22nd at 7 p.m. and a Lenten Luncheon is planned for each Wednesday noon at First Lutheran with soup and a short study/service.

An ecumenical worship will be offered at Zion Lutheran with participation by Holy Trinity Episcopal, Faith United, and Zion Lutheran Churches with soup supper at 6 p.m. and a service at 7 p.m.

Check the schedule on page 6 and sign up to bring soup! Watch for a special Holy Week opportunity, as well!

Lenten book study with

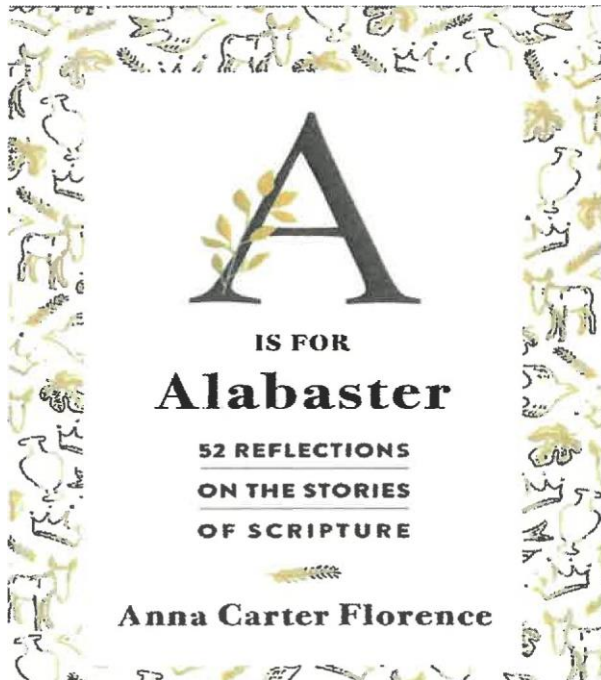
Pastor Christie

Four Tuesday evenings in Lent

Feb 27, March 5, 12th and 19th!

0-7:00PM in Memorial Hall,

First Lutheran Church (this is an in person study, zoom link by request). Book can be purchased on Amazon or through the church office!



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Good News!!

Community Café Volunteers

The Backus Community Café is asking for volunteers. If you are able to volunteer one evening a month, please call the church office at 283-2208.

If you are in need of Community Cafe meals, call the Backus office at 285-7225 by 4 p.m. on Cafe day. Meals are now dine-in only between 5 and 6 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Bible Study

You are invited to Bible Study, Sunday mornings at 9 in Memorial Hall. Bring your favorite Bible and an open heart. Good things are happening!

Building and Grounds

The Building and Grounds committee is looking for people willing and able to help with building and grounds issues. These volunteers need not join the committee, but we are always in need of someone to do a few small carpentry jobs from time to time.

Choir Members Unite!

We are hopeful about starting a choir for Holy Week, at least. If you are interested, rehearsals will be at 5:30 on Wednesday evenings at First before Lenten soup and worship at Zion.

**Do you have an award-winning recipe?
Enter the Soup-Chili Cook-off
Following worship on February 18th!**

Mental Health and Wellness Presentation

Mark your calendars for next month's visit from Joy Hensel. Currently, she is the Synod Minister for Mental Health and Wellness for the Northeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA. You are invited to a mental health and wellness presentation on Sunday, February 4th, at 4 p.m. in our Fellowship Hall. Joy will lead us in a workshop about mental health, and help us to learn about stress relief activities to nurture well-being. Our goal is that this workshop will be a bridge to connect all ages with resources, all within a faith context that speaks to the depths of despair and the promises of hope.

First Lutheran Youth: What's U ?

Help the kids get to New Orleans this summer

First Lutheran is sending six youth and three adult chaperones to the ELCA National Youth Gathering in New Orleans this summer.

We are raising funds to support their travels by supporting this fundraiser.

Pick a number you would like to donate, put it in the envelope and then put the envelope and money into the wooden box. You will be given credit if you give your name.

Thank you so much for your support.



Just another Sunday Funday!



Council from page 4

talk to Range Roofing about replacement as we cannot continue to pay for annual repairs.

6. The 2024 budget for Building and Grounds was discussed and approved.

The budget dollars were what we felt was

Finance: See Brad's report under Old Business.

Worship & Music: Blue Christmas service tonight at Faith United at 7:00. Zion from Falls & Ft Frances, Littlefork, Faith United, Bethany, and First are involved.

The worship setting will change to #4 at the end of month. We have someone who will provide organist services on occasion. The choir is still looking for more singers. The choir will have a prelude at Christmas Eve

Old Business:

1. Vacancies on council: Have some candidates and several members who will remain another year with the option of training a replacement. There is some interest in Youth position but nothing definite yet. The possibility of sharing the position by two young people.

2. Budget: Bread distributed copies of proposed 2024 budget. Several changes were requested. The Sunday School heading was changed to Faith Formation with the budgeted amount raised from \$300 to \$1,000.

Convention/Synod was changed to \$500, and Outreach expenses to \$500.

Motion: to accept the budget with the proposed corrections.

Made by: Nancy McBride

Seconded by: Betty Henrickson

Carried

New Business:

announced to the congregation at least two Sundays before. The suggested meeting date is Jan. 28th with all council reports due in by Jan

19th to allow time for office staff to make up packets.

Motion: That the annual meeting date be Jan 28th with announcement to the congregation on each of the two Sundays prior. Made by: Nancy McBride

Seconded by: Cynthia Warren

Carried

2. Salary Approval -This is a formality for the IRS to indicate how the housing allowance for Pastor Christie is figured into her salary. Motion: That the portion of Pastor Christie's salary as related to her housing allowance be as indicated in the budget.

Made by: Betty Henrickson

Seconded by: Hoa Sobcynski

Carried

3. Joy Hensel - Here to give her talk on mental health in February. No formal approval from the council is needed. 4. Pastors vacation days - Will be gone starting on Dec. 25th with a return to the office on Jan 2nd. Will be at Camp Vermillion on Martin Luther King Day (and Sunday the day before).

Nancy will do the services on these days. There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM

Next Executive Meeting: January 16th, 2024,

Next Council Meeting: January 18th, 2024, at

Respectfully submitted by: Carol Bass, Secretary

1. Annual meeting date: Per our constitution, the meeting date must be

Can we help? If you know of someone going through a tough time, who may be in need of a quick and easy meal, consider reaching out to "Helping Hands". A ready-to-heat meal can be delivered to them. Please contact the church office with information.



THRIVEN T

F I N A N C I A L

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Thank you to our worship assistants: Sherri Mannausau, Tony & Kris Jackson, Duayne & Nancy Johnson, Logan Weisz, Grace Weisz, Lloyd Skogstad, Hoa Sobcynski, Ryan Skogstad, Brad Ettestad, Steve Saari, Brian & Kallie Briggs, Don Nuthak

Thank you to those who helped with fellowship: Sandy Harju, Maureen Jackson, BettyJeanne Henrickson, Julie Jakska, Terry Lucachick, Brenda Bertilson, Kitty Sandstrom, Ardel Henrickson, and Kris Jackson.

Thank you to the musicians: Lynn Salo, Kathy Thureen, Rachel Hasbargen-Glowack, Sue Hewitt, Joe Belanger. Thank you to Brad Ettestad, and to Lloyd and Ryan Skogstad for helping with technology.

Prayer Chain

Please consider serving as a member of the Prayer Chain.

First Lutheran Church has four active prayer chains. If you have prayer requests for someone, or yourself, call either the church office at 283-2208, or Brenda Bertilson 283-2144; 240-4939. You must have permission to put someone on the chain, either from the person, or from a close relative. To put someone on the list for Sunday prayers, call the office at 283-2208. Please call back when they can be removed.

Remember in your prayers, those in need and those in care facilities.

Good Samaritan: Margi Roeder, Jackie Christiansen, Ruby Radford Ranier

Roost: Ruth Milander

General Fund Financial Information

As of December 31, 2023

Thank you for supporting First Lutheran Church!

	Current Month Actual	Current Month Budget	Variance		Year To Date Actual	Year To Date Budget	Variance
Operating Income	17,604	14,829	2,775		174,436	177,951	(3,515)
Operating Expense	21,348	17,091	(4,257)		214,930	205,097	(9,833)
Operating Income Less Expense	(3,743)	(2,262)	(1,481)		(40,494)	<u>(27,146)</u>	(13,348)

February birthdays

2/3 Kaitlyn Droba
Trevor Plasky

2/5 Gage Bergstrom
Madilyn Lorenson
Linda Pelland

2/8 Duayne Johnson
Parker Rousseau

2/9 Don Hale
Erika Rautio
Breana Shofner

2/10 Stella Sandager
Olivia Trask

2/11 David Mannausau

2/12 Michele McDonald

2/13 Tyler Fentem
Regan Hanson
Emmitt Olson
GeorgieAnne Slatinski

2/14 Hailey Fentem
Garrett MacKay

2/15 Rachel Amdahl
Howard Bixby

2/16 Barb Owen-Boerger

2/17 Ashley Germain
Pat Nash

2/18 Kim Rasmussen

2/19 Simon Palm

2/21 Evan Holenko

2/22 Jeraldine Streiff

2/23 Alyce Mannausau

2/24 Floyd Christianson
Mary Jane Haanen

2/25 Melissa Marcotte

2/26 Brady Hasbargen
Eldon Voigt

2/27 Allison Bergstrom

2/28 Jaxon Germain



COMMUNITY CAFE SERVES FREE, HOT MEALS, Pro EVERYONE,

, Serving a free, hot, nutritious dinner from 5:00 to 6:00 pm.

, Meals are dine-in only; there is no pick-up dining at this time. Come to the east door of Backus (the door that faces St. Thomas Church). It's door #3. We'll have dinner ready to go!

- EVERYONE is welcome.

, There is no charge for meals, but donations are gratefully accepted.

Thank you to January's volunteers: Penny Wakeley,
Nancy Johnson, Brenda Bertilson, and Carol Bass

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA
123 Wayside Lane
International Falls, MN 56649

February 2024

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NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE

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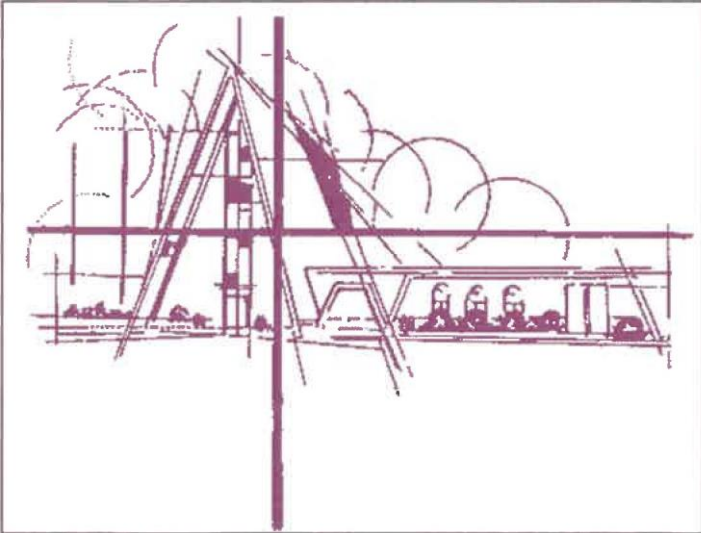
INTL FALLS, MN
PERMIT NO. 52

(CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED)



First Lutheran Church, ELCA

WHEREVER YOU ARE ON YOUR JOURNEY, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!



First Lutheran's Mission Statement Sharing God's Grace

First Lutheran's Vision Statement

First Lutheran Church will be a congregation
that shares God's grace by:

- + Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ with integrity.
- + Welcoming all to active involvement in ministry.
- + Offering a non-judgmental encounter with God through the celebration of liturgical worship with word and sacrament.
- + Responding faithfully to the Great Commission of Matthew 28 -
- to grow.

Committing ourselves to serving the needs of our congregation
and the community at large.

WORSHIP SERVICE

Available on our website, YouTube, and Facebook
Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

OFFICE HOURS

Mon. through Thurs., 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Phone: 218-283-2208

Check out our Website!

www.firstlutheranifalls.org

Look for us on Instagram and Facebook.