

# The Voice

January 2024



A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

*A Congregation of the  
Northeastern  
Minnesota Synod, ELCA*

THE  
SELECTED  
*Poetry*  
OF  
JESSICA  
POWERS

**Book recommendation  
page 9.**



**Youth News page 8.**

## Kids bring joy to the care center



Under the guidance of BettyJeanne and Pastor Christie, release time kids created Christmas arrangements and shared their work with those at the Good Samaritan Care Center. Below: Congregation members join in to portray the Christmas story.





## From the Pastor's Desk

*"We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose."*

**Romans 8: 28**

Happy New Year!

Can you feel it? As the calendar turns there is an almost tangible anticipation of something about to happen. It's not unlike that which we have been living into during Advent. What's around the corner? What's next? What might this year hold? Will it be different than last year? What resolutions should I make? Should I make a resolution at all?



For some of us this anticipation is very real and extremely urgent. Like the mythical Phoenix, some of us have had to succumb to the all-encompassing flames of a fire we may not have even seen coming. We may know far too well the feeling, as we bid farewell to 2023, of what it means to be reduced to a pile of ashes, and in the aftermath stand wondering if rebirth is even possible. For others, the anticipation isn't quite as acute. There are things we've been putting off and a new year is a great time to dive in, but we aren't really sure if we are ready for any change. Yet as the calendar turns to January 1, something tugs at us, calling us to look out with fresh New Year eyes and see things from another perspective.

Whether we are climbing out of the impossible or peeking tentatively out through our comfort to the New Year, all of us can anticipate a re-birth of sorts, ready or not. This has to do with the fact that as God's creation, we are constantly experiencing life in a new way. Unlike our resolutions, which we may make and later break, God's love for us is never broken. It is always working encouraging, moving, interrupting, reaching and calling out to enable us to grow. This newness of life is the work of God who makes it his business to take what seems to be the every day and dares us to look and live and experience things not as we might see them, but as God does. Not just some things—not just the easy things, but all things. Our pain, our sorrows, our fear, our joy, our celebrations, everything--all are held by God, and out of all of it, somehow, somehow, something new begins to grow. This doesn't mean we will always notice it; this doesn't mean it'll be easy or life will be simple. It doesn't mean the bad stuff that happens to us is okay. But it does mean that God is in it. All of it. God showed up last year and in the lifetimes of years before that, and God will show up again this year and will make good on the promise we received in our baptism, and because of this we will rise from the ashes. We will be strong enough to look at the world head on, and we are made new, because God makes it that way.



Happy New Year everyone! May 2024 be a time of new beginnings, of endings, of newness and of grace, and may we know without a doubt that the love and promise of God is with us all.

Your friend in Christ,  
Pastor Chris

## FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES November 16, 2023

Present: Treasurer Brad Ettestad, Secretary Carol Bass, Discipleship BettyJeanne Henrickson, Service/Outreach Brenda Bertilson, Pastor Christie Manisto, President Brian Briggs, Fellowship Cynthia Warren, Vice-President Hoa Sobczynski, Worship & Music Nancy McBride

Absent: Building and Grounds Lloyd Skogstad

Meeting called to order by President Brian Briggs at 5:00 PM.

Devotion – Brenda Bertilson read a piece about “You Are My Favorite.”

Next month: Cynthia Warren

Minutes from October meeting: Copies provided to all. No corrections or additions.

Motion: To accept the minutes of the October 2023 meeting. Made by: Pastor Christie; Seconded by: Brenda Bertilson; Carried

Treasurer Report: Copies provided to all. A shortfall of \$9,539 this past month. Repairs/upgrades to computers and electronic equipment contributed to this. The monthly status and YTD will be printed in the “Voice.”

Motion: to accept financial reports for October. Made by: Cynthia Warren; Seconded by: Hoa Sobczynski; Carried

Pastor’s Report: October 20-Nov 16th Worship: Confirmation service on 30 October. Planned All Saints Sunday and remembered members who have died this past year as well as those from other times with candles. Planned Advent and Christmas Eve. Led worship and preached. Bible study with Hoa at 9 a.m. on Sundays Performed Olivia Trask’s wedding on 3 November. Altar guild/worship committee meeting

Youth: 4 early release classes—delivered pumpkins as a service project to members of the First and Zion communities. 4 confirmation classes

Rescheduled Sunday Funday for 5 December

Meeting with students and families going on the ELCA gathering on 20 Nov. Community Volunteered at the Backus for the Haunted Basement Event. Volunteered at Community Café. Met directors of Servants of Shelter and Friends Against Abuse with Pastor Andy Met Nursing director of Good Sam (and visited members there ) Delivered bulletins 3 x’s and visited with homebound folks.

Synod: Conference meeting in Chisholm Text study in Eveleth Met with Bp Amy and Colleen via zoom

Other: Joint council meeting; Borderland churches meeting; Prayer on Wednesdays with members of Zion and First; Youth and families newsletter published on Mailchimp 15th and 30th of each month. Met with Julie Lepisto and learned about the Mission

Interpreter program (she is scheduled for 26 Nov worship).

Book club with members of First, Zion and community Diva Daze lunch at Faith United Will be part of the welcoming committee of the Rotary meeting with Jeff Hardwig in December. Stewardship Thanksgiving letter Committee Reports: President – Thank you to everyone who filled in while Brian was gone. Vice-President – The Exploration Team will be invited to the next Joint Council meeting to be held at Zion on November 28th at 5:00 PM Service/Outreach – Brenda reported 5 volunteers at community café, 3 cards sent to ill/shut-ins. The question was raised if printing the names of those in nursing homes was a violation of privacy regulations? All the families of those listed have been or will be contacted to get permission. Discipleship – There will be a meeting Monday with the parents of our youth to get ideas for projects/socials There is much excitement about the upcoming parade, and a number of interested walkers. There also will be a cart if anyone needs to ride.

Fellowship – No current projects but will be involved with the Christmas Eve Dinner following the 4:00 PM Christmas Eve Service. Suggestion for a sign-up sheet for potluck to get idea of how much food. Building and Grounds: Lloyd was absent. Brian Briggs will act as back up to Brad Ettestad for snow removal this winter. The organ badly needs cleaning and tuning. Will get a quote on costs for this.

Finance: Copies of proposed budget were distributed. Please review and get any changes to Brad before the next Finance Committee meeting in the second week of December. Suggestion was made that we increase our giving to the synod and to VLM (Camp Vermillion).

**Council, cont’d. on page 4**

**Rev. Christie Manisto,**  
**pastor**

**Monday through Thursday**

**10 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

**Friday**

**9 a.m. to noon**

**218-283-2208**

**[www.firstlutheranifalls.org](http://www.firstlutheranifalls.org)**

**[firstlutheranifalls@gmail.com](mailto:firstlutheranifalls@gmail.com)**

**Council, from page 3**

The synod giving would be changed from the present amount of \$14,400 to \$15,000 and the VLM rate from \$1,050. To \$1,250.

Motion: That our giving to the synod increase from the present \$14,400 to \$15,000 and the contribution to VLM be changed from \$1,050 to \$1.250.

Made by: Hoa Sobczynski; Seconded by: Betty Henrikson; Carried

Pastor would like included in the new budget money for a retreat at VLM for both Zion and First councils. There would be a featured speaker and would be a one-day/one-night event. Cost would be around \$1,000. Discussion also about increasing gifts to staff and possible increase in wages. No motion on either currently.

Music & Worship: The Advent calendar is set. There will be special liturgy. The decorations for the trees have been taken down from the storage space and the trees will be decorated beginning Sunday. There are a number of walkers for the upcoming Lights Parade. There will also be a cart with an "elf" which can be used by those who can't walk. There is a person who may possibly be available to play either piano or organ once a month. The choir is still a work in progress. There will be an intergenerational Christmas pageant presented for morning service on Christmas Eve. This would involve readings and a sign-up sheet would be available.

Old Business: Clarification of which offices will need to be filled in the upcoming year. Nancy and Brenda

are finished and Lloyd, too, if he no longer wishes to continue. Brad would also like a replacement if there is someone suitable. The Nominating Committee is working on these.

New Business: 1. Moving money into a CD- Per recommendation of the Finance Committee, it is suggested that we take \$135,000 and place it into a CD for a period of 7 months with a possible interest rate of 5.15%. Motion: That the sum of \$135,000 be put into a CD for a period of 7 months. Made by: Nancy McBride; Seconded by: Pastor Christie; Passed

2. Blue Christmas – this special service for those who may be having a difficult holiday season due to bereavement will be December 21st at 7PM at Faith United. This is also the night of our council meeting so Pastor may have to leave early to be there. Brian said he would see that the meeting was finished no later than 6:30. 3. Undesignated funds – There is over \$600 in undesignated memorial funds. It is recommended that these be allocated to the roof fund. Motion: That the undesignated memorial funds (of \$600+) be put toward the roofing fund. Made by: Brenda Bertilson; Seconded by: Pastor Christie; Passed

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 PM

Next Executive Meeting: December 19 th at 5 PM

Next Council Meeting: December 21st at 5 PM

Respectfully submitted by: Carol Bass, Secretary

	CURRENT MONTH ACTUAL	CURRENT MONTH BUDGET	VARIANCE FAVORABLE (UNFAVORABLE)	YEAR TO DATE ACTUAL	YEAR TO DATE BUDGET	VARIANCE FAVORABLE (UNFAVORABLE)
OPERATING INCOME	10,217	14,829	(4,612)	156,816	163,122	(6,306)
OPERATING EXPENSE	14,008	17,091	3,083	193,567	188,005	(5,561)
OPERATING INCOME LESS EXPENSE	(3,791)	(2,262)	(1,529)	<b>(36,750)</b>	(24,883)	(11,867)

In 2024, we need to focus on our year-to-date (YTD) information so that we understand if we are getting behind (or eating into our cash). **Yes. We are now.**

**YTD– OVERALL SHORT OF EXPENSES BY (\$36,750)**  
**YTD—EXPENSES—10 MONTHS—OVER BUDGET (\$11,867)**

**THANKS FOR SUPPORTING FIRST LUTHERAN MINISTRIES!**



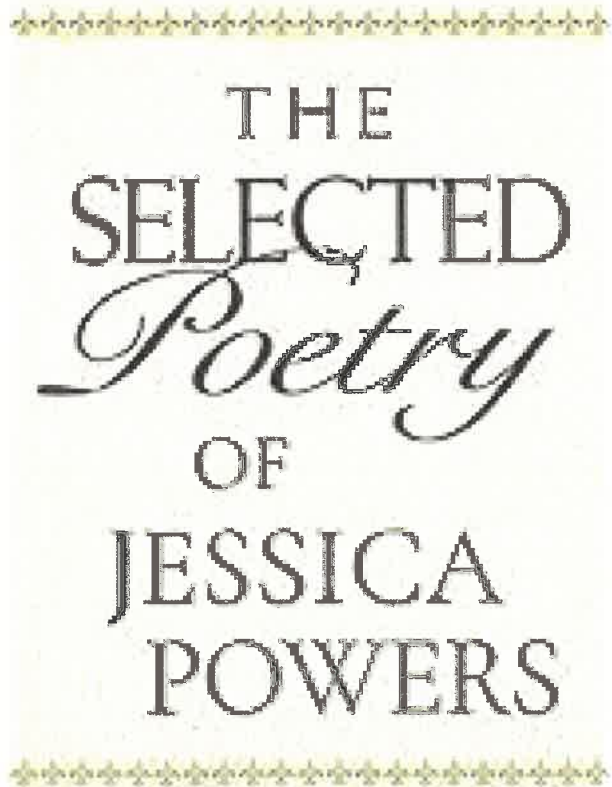


# Meetings postponed; start collecting kit needs

There will be no FLW meetings in January or February.



## Reading recommendation



### TO LIVE WITH THE SPIRIT

To live with the Spirit of God is to be a listener.  
 It is to keep the vigil of mystery,  
 earthless and still.  
 One leans to catch the stirring of the Spirit,  
 strange as the wind's will.

The soul that walks where the wind of the Spirit blows  
 turns like a wandering weather-vane toward love.  
 It may lament like Job or Jeremiah,  
 echo the wounded hart, the mateless dove.  
 It may rejoice in spaciousness of meadow  
 that emulates the freedom of the sky.

Always it walks in waylessness, unknowing;  
 it has cast down forever from its hand  
 the compass of the whither and the why.

To live with the Spirit of God is to be a lover.  
 It is becoming love, and like to Him  
 toward Whom we strain with metaphors of creatures:  
 fire-sweep and water-rush and the wind's whim.  
 The soul is all activity, all silence;  
 and though it surges Godward to its goal,  
 it holds, as moving earth holds sleeping noonday,  
 the peace that is the listening of the soul.

## Mark your calendar with things to do

### **Bible Study**

Sunday morning Bible study will resume on January 14th at 9 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.

### **Confirmation**

Classes will resume on January 3rd for grades 6-8. It's never too late to get involved.

### **Sunday Funday for grades 9-12**

January 7, gather for food, fun, and a movie! Bring a friend!!

### **Learn about Pastor Christie and Steve's work in Egypt**

January 21st at 4 p.m. Pastor Christie and Steve will share a presentation about their work in Cairo.

**First Lutheran's Annual Meeting is  
January 28th following worship  
Please plan to attend.**

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

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.

# January Birthdays

- 1/1 Brooks Besch  
Nina Cole-Smith  
Harvey Steinbach
- 1/3 Rick Anderson
- 1/5 Edward Bernath  
Dale Roketa
- 1/7 William Bright  
Audrey Forrest  
Marc Glowack  
Merritt Meyer  
Kailey Shipley
- 1/8 Larry Mannausau
- 1/9 Dave Amundsen  
Alexander Sobkowicz
- 1/10 Dorothy Carey  
Alissa Jensen
- 1/13 Garret Froemke
- 1/14 Emerson Mannausau  
Nancy McBride
- 1/17 Diane McCarthy  
Joyce Rasmussen
- 1/18 Steven Landmark  
Sharleen Mitchell
- 1/20 Sharon Hedlund

- 1/21 Dylan Streiff
- 1/22 Shawn Shofner
- 1/23 Keith Boelk
- 1/24 Kelly Blair
- 1/25 Dean Boerger  
Laurie Lindberg  
Shailynn Shipley
- 1/26 Max Marcotte
- 1/27 Mary Ojala  
Daryl Waller
- 1/28 Julie Schumacher
- 1/29 Lars Lindquist
- 1/31 Sydney Anderson

Happy Birthday



**THRIVENT  
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**Did you know...** If you are a Thrivent member, you can contribute to First Lutheran Church through Thrivent Choice Dollars and Thrivent Actions Teams.

Log into your Thrivent account online, call 1-800-847-4836 or speak with your personal Thrivent representative for more information.

let's be friends



@FIRSTLUTHERANC



**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
ELCA**

**Annual Meeting—Sunday, January 28, 11:30 a.m.**



# First Lutheran Youth: What's Up?







**Remember to sign up for worship assistant positions.  
Crucifer, acolyte, usher, or reader,  
all are needed in the coming months.**

### **ELCA Youth Gathering 2024!**

Hi everyone! We are excited to announce that we have six students and three adult leaders who will be attending the 2024 ELCA National Youth Gathering in New Orleans, LA July 16th -20th . Making a trip like this a reality is a labor of love. Over the next several months our students and adult leaders will spend time in learning about leadership and accompaniment. We will also prepare to gather with other Lutheran youth from across the nation and ultimately to work with local community members in New Orleans. We will be affirmed and challenged in our faith, learn new perspectives, ponder our vocation and more. This will be a congregation-wide effort and we will all learn and grow together through this exciting event. Check out the fundraiser board in the narthex and keep an eye out for more infor-

mation, events, ways to learn more and opportunities to support this group!

Group members include:

Gracie Froemke, Nick Schultz

Linnaea Yount, Max Youso

Lauren Basaraba, Lachlan Reiners

Pastor Christie, Steve Saari, Becca Shultz

**CREATED  
TO BE**



To those who helped with worship, including: Don Nuthak, Hoa Sobczinski, Ardel Henrickson, Megan, George, and Leah Boe, Grace Weisz, Maureen Jackson, and Cynthia Warren.

To those who helped with fellowship, including: Anne, BettyJeanne Henrickson, Kathi Henrickson.

To those who helped with music: Sue Hewitt, Kris Jackson, Rachel Hasbargen-Glowack, Steve Saari, Lynn Salo, Sunday Saari, and Kathy Thureen.

To those who shoveled??, caroled and visited and sent cards and decorated to make the church beautiful.

To those who helped with the first annual? Christmas potluck!

To those who folded this Voice! Thank you all!

## 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. People will be on the list for one week only, unless you ask that they remain on the list. In that case, please call back when they can be removed.

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

**Good Samaritan:** Jackie Christiansen, Joe Van Guse, Ruby Radford,  
Margi Roeder

**Ranier Roost:** Ruth Milander

## **BACKUS COMMUNITY CAFE SERVES FREE, HOT MEALS TO EVERYONE**

**Call 218-283-7225 to reserve meals for you and your family for  
pick up from 5-6 on Tuesdays and Thursdays.**

**There is no charge, but donations are greatly appreciated.**

**Thank you to December's volunteers: Sue Mathews, Pastor  
Christie, Laurie Lindberg, Carol Bass, and Brenda Bertilson**

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To volunteer, please call the church office @ **283-2208.**



## Christmas creates opportunities for group involvement, including pageants and a special "Blue Christmas" service



**Top: a variety of members donned costumes to act out the story of Jesus' birth. Bottom: Five area churches participated in a "Longest Night" service with music, meditations, and readings.**



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

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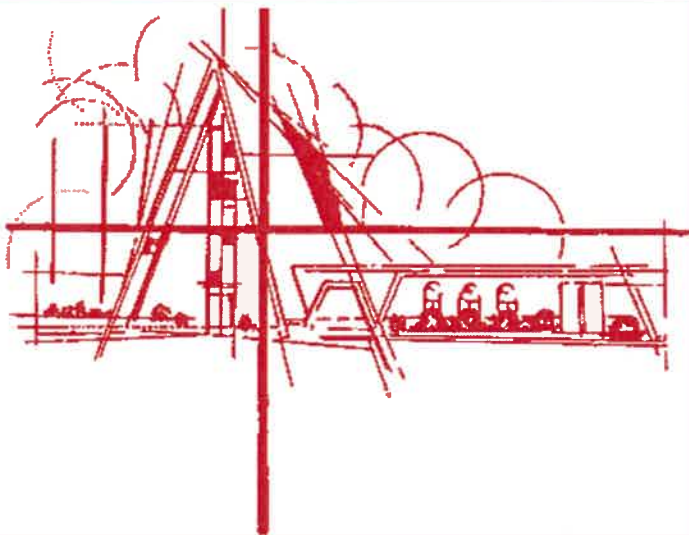
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January 2024  
NEWSLETTER



## 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.  
Office: 218-283-2208

Check out our Website!

[www.firstlutheranifalls.org](http://www.firstlutheranifalls.org)

Look for us on Instagram and Facebook.