

# The Voice

January 2022



A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

**A Congregation of the  
Northeastern  
Minnesota Synod, ELCA**

THE

*Immigrants, the Bible,*

GOD

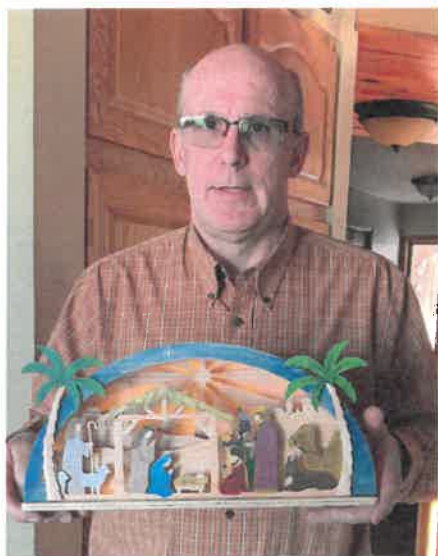
*and the Journey to Belong*

WHO

KAREN GONZÁLEZ

SEES

**Reading recommendations  
See page 9.**



**Steve Lindberg was a  
Tour of Trees prize  
winner!  
See more page 6.**



7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

## From the Pastor's Desk

### "To Reveal" or "To Make Known"

This year **Epiphany Day is on Thursday, January 6<sup>th</sup>**. It always falls on January 6<sup>th</sup>. The Twelve Days of Christmas comes to an end, and we begin the Epiphany season. **Epiphany means "to show" or "to make known" or even "to reveal."** In Western churches, it celebrates the coming of the magi or wise men, visiting and bringing gifts to the Christ child, who by doing so "reveals" Jesus to the world as Lord and King. The season of Epiphany ends with Transfiguration Sunday, on February 27<sup>th</sup>.

It is not biblical, but legend has it that there were **Three wise men** (magi) who brought gifts for our Lord ... *"On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh."* (Matthew 2:11). **People thought it was three because of the treasure chests offered, "gold, frankincense, and myrrh."**

Biblical scholarship would agree that these **magi from the East traveled weeks, not days!** They would have needed animals that travelled well in various climates and terrain. The supplies needed for such a journey would have been immense. It must have been a caravan of people.

**These Magi from the East were not Israelites!** They were non-Jewish people, foreigners to the Jewish faith. Could gentiles be a part of God's plans? Could God use gentiles to accomplish God's divine plan? Could it be that God "revealed" or "made himself known" to non-Jews to proclaim, *"Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage."*

In Matthew, this is the birth story of our Lord! Yes, God does use non-Jewish people, gentiles to announce the birth of our Lord. Imagine the implications! What does this birth story from Matthew, inform us about our God?

**Living Lutheran: Renewing your Congregation by Dave Daubert** is a book I Very Highly Encourage every member of this congregation to read. **It will be used as my Wednesday Evening Midweek Lenten Service as my Preaching Theme. They are FREE to you** as the council has decided it is important enough to get as many reading it as possible.

Dave Daubert provides a practical how-to guide that will enable church leaders to help individual congregations walk through the process for themselves. Creative and informative, the book provides a straightforward approach that helps congregations reclaim Lutheran tradition for the 21st century.

**Weekly Devotions will be available on Facebook.** Starting in the New Year, I will be providing a weekly devotion on Mondays. I mainly use the "Christ in Our Home" book that comes out every three months. It is published by Augsburg Fortress and we have these devotions at church. Contact the church office if you would like a copy. **A new devotion for January-March is available.**



**Pastor Paul Erdal**



## FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

### November 18, 2021

Present: Pastor Paul Erdal, Hoa Sobczynski, Lloyd Skogstad, Kathi Henrickson, Nancy McBride, Brenda Bertilson, Huntz Wagner, Brad Ettestad, BettyJeanne Henrickson, Ardel Henrickson, Stacy Murphy

Opening Devotional: Psalm 93

Pastor's Report:

\*Thanked everyone for welcoming him to the community

\*Has been calling members

\*Will call Good Samaritan about services

"Motion to approve minutes from October 19, 2021"

Motion by: Brad Ettestad

Second by: Nancy McBride

Carried

"Motion to approve the financial report from October 31, 2021"

Motion by: Nancy McBride

Second by: Brenda Bertilson

Carried

President's Report:

\*Confirmands and parents were very pleased with their quilts and Bishop Amy's service

\*Stacy is doing well. She will sit in on the next couple meetings to see how things work

\*People are enjoying Pastor Paul's calls

\*Putting together a list of who needs communion

\*Pastor is meeting weekly with Kathi, Nancy and Stacy

Service/Outreach:

\*Volunteers have been working at Community Café

\*Thanksgiving cards were sent to shut-ins

\*updating prayer chain

\*Funds will be used for food drive

Fellowship:

\*Huntz thanked Pastor Paul for what he is doing for the church

Building and Grounds:

\*Need more committee members

\*Reviewed projects completed this year  
\*Will ask Aaron Johnson is he is interested in shoveling snow

\*Long term – we will need to look at the lift. We are having some issues

\*If someone sees a problem, please note it on the sheet in the office so it can be addressed

Finance:

\*Received forgiveness on PPP loan

\*Budget information needs to be to Brad in a week

\*We need to increase our income to meet our budget needs

Worship and Music:

\*Sue Hewitt is willing to play for Christmas

\*Hope wearing masks will help keep us in the sanctuary

SMART Team: Continue to wear mask in church

Old Business:

\*Kathi conveyed to Bethany that monthly obligation should return to precovid amount

**(Council minutes continued on page 4)**

**Pastor: Paul J. Erdal**

**Office Hours:**

**Monday—Friday**

**9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

**218-283-2208**

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

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

## Council minutes continued from page 3

\*Pastor Paul needs a new computer

-Will ask for bids from Small Town Tech and Jake Kielczewski

-Small Town Tech has a monthly fee

"Motion to purchase two computer towers and software through Jake Kielczewski"

Motion by: Lloyd Skogstad

Second by: Brad Ettestad

Carried

"Motion to accept changes to constitution stating council members will serve two year terms"

Motion by: Nancy McBride

Second by: Betty Jeanne Henrickson

Carried

New Business:

\*Only church members will be married in church

\*Alcohol use must be approved by council

"Motion to change use of alcohol in building and grounds policy use to read "alcohol use must be approved by the

council"

Motion by: Hoa Sobczynski

Second by: Nancy McBride

Carried

\*Picture for Christmas card with council and staff will be taken

\*Pastor Paul is composing a letter to be sent with quarterly statement

\*Stacy will look into Weebly and Paypal. Donate button on website

\*Kathi was to meet with Casey from Bethany to discuss monies but meeting was postponed

\*National Youth Gathering is July 24, 2021

\*Annual Meeting will be January 30th

\*Reports for Annual Meeting need to be in by January 14th

Next Executive Meeting: December 14, 2021 at 5:00

Next Council Meeting: December 16, 2021 at 5:00



## Current guidelines for worship at First Lutheran

- ◆ **Please wear a mask during the worship service as the safest way to prevent any possible spread of Covid.**
- ◆ **Social distancing is also encouraged as a way to care for others in our congregation.**
- ◆ **Individual packets are being used for communion.**

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about these changes, please contact the office at 283-2208

**Thank you for your understanding and patience as we safely move forward during this difficult time.**

# Women of the ELCA

A huge thank you to everyone who contributed, donated their time, or purchased items from the FLW Christmas bake sale! The net profit was about \$4,000. This helped to make year-end donations to the Falls Hunger Coalition, Community Cafe, Servants of Shelter, ELCA Good Gifts (to provide fees and uniforms for three girls to go to school), and to Laurie Youso, school counselor, to purchase gloves and winter items for students without them.

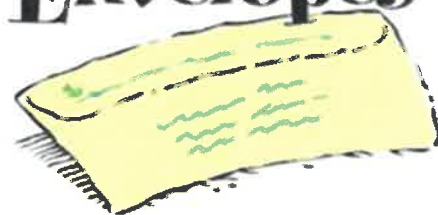
As we get into the new year, remember to bring in your items for the toiletry kits that will be delivered this summer to refugees entering the United States. Your donations can make a big difference in the lives of many.

Also remember the FLW meeting will be at 5 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month. See you there! Thanks for all you do, Brenda Bertilson.

**Your offering envelopes are available in the narthex. Please feel free to pick them up after worship, or during office hours, 9-3.**

**We also have a Donate button on our website for those who cannot attend worship. Thank you for your support.**

## Offering Envelopes



**Mark your calendar!** The FLC annual meeting is scheduled for January 30, 2022. We will be discussing some business and voting on new council members.

**Check out the new Donate button on the First Lutheran website. It makes it easy to support the church when you are not able to attend in person.**

**Donate**



**Thank you in advance!**



# Women of the ELCA

## And the winners are...



Pastor Paul drew the winning names on December 5th. Mike Carey and Larry and Alyce Mannausau won the beautiful gift baskets provided by Sue Frank and Rainy Gorder. Steve Lindberg won the nativity created by Henry Carey. Thanks for your support!



### Help FLW compile toiletry kits

Components include:

- 1 regular size bottle shampoo
- 1 regular size bottle conditioner
- 1 regular size bottle lotion
- 2 deodorants—men's or women's
- 1 regular size bar of soap
- 1 large pack of feminine pads

Or

- 1 package of razors and regular can of shaving cream
  - 1 regular size toothpaste and toothbrush
  - Comb
- Please ensure these are not travel-sized, but regular-sized units.

## Announcements

### Community Café Volunteers

The Community Café is once again 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 285-7225 by 4 p.m. on Cafe day. Meals can be picked up between 5 and 6 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays from the kitchen window.

### Bible Study

You are invited to a Bible study with Bette Simon at 11 a.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at her house. The Bible study is from the *Gather* magazine. If anyone wants to participate but doesn't have a subscription to *Gather*, there are a few extra copies at the church that people can pick up and use. For more information, please call the office at 283-2208.

### Holy Communion

**Holy Communion available in a disposable container may be delivered by Interim Pastor Paul.** Call the Church Office if you would like the disposable container containing the Bread and Wine delivered to your place of residence prior to Sunday worship services. OR if you have not participated in the Sacrament of Holy Communion in a while, please contact the church office or the Interim Pastor Paul. **The pastor would be honored to bring and serve you Holy Communion.**

### Sunday Bulletins

**Copies of Sunday Bulletins are available prior to Sunday Worship.** These will always be available to you prior to our worship services. Especially with COVID-19 being a concern, we are willing to mail our bulletins to you. Call the church office **before Noon on Thursdays prior to Sunday's Worship Service.**

#### Church Organist Needed



Interested? Please call the church office at 283-2208 for more information.

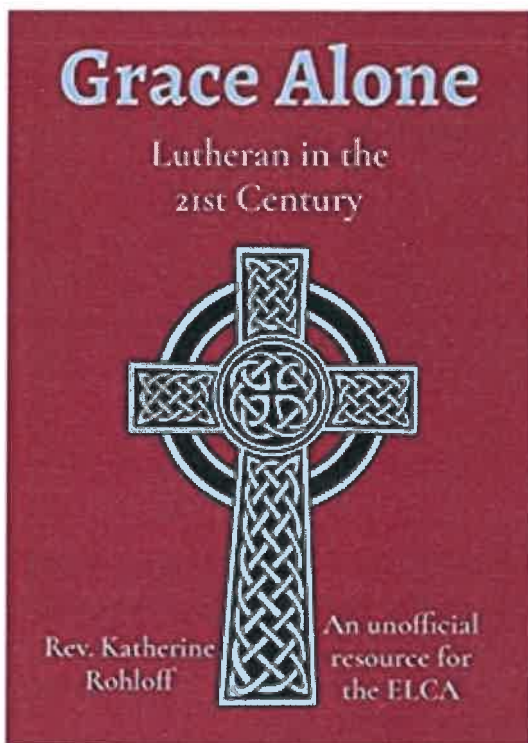
#### Transition Team to be formed soon

A Transition Team will be set up to help First Lutheran Church address current ministry issues and looking into the future of ministry. Pastor Paul will work with the church council to help implement and lead the transition team. Look for more information in the upcoming months.



# First Lutheran Youth: What's Up?

## Information about confirmation classes at First



When Release Time and confirmation classes began in the fall, we had hoped to be able to work together with Zion Lutheran. However, due to the number of COVID cases in our area, when classes resume for 2022, confirmation for grades 5-9 will be organized for First Lutheran youth apart from Zion in an effort to keep the students socially distanced as much as possible.

A meeting will be organized for parents and students in grades 7-9, and possibly 5 and 6 as well, to discover the best time to schedule classes and projects.

When classes resume, seventh grade students will be studying the Bible with Pastor Paul, learning about the books of the Bible and some of the foundational stories.

Eighth grade students will be focusing on the ten commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostles Creed.

Ninth grade students will focus on what happens in worship, Martin Luther and the Reformation, and the sacraments.

When the ninth graders become tenth graders in the fall before they are confirmed, they will consider "What this faith means to me."

When the 5th and 6th grade students meet, they will be working on service projects, perhaps making and serving soup for Lent.

WEEK OF	CAMP HIAWATHA	CAMP VERMILION
June 19-24	Hockey Camp (thru Saturday)	Sojourners LOST WILD
June 26-July 1	Seekers Trekks LOST (cont.)	Reserved WILD (cont.)
July 3-8	Discoverers (7/6, 7/7) Discoverer Overnight (7/6, 7/7)	Discoverers (7/6, 7/7) Discoverer Overnight (7/6, 7/7) Ventures (7/6-7/8)
July 10-15	Discoverers (7/12, 7/13, 7/14) Discoverer Overnight (7/11-7/12, 7/13-7/14) Ventures (7/11-7/13)	Seekers Trekks Explorers Sr. High Canoe Camp
July 17-22	Venturers (7/18-7/20) Rendezvous (7/17-7/19) NEW On-Site Day Camp for 3 <sup>rd</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> graders	Seekers Trekks Explorers Jr. High Canoe Camp
July 24-29	Open for Rental	Seekers Trekks Elementary Canoe Camp
July 31-August 5	Family Camp	Seekers Trekks Explorers
August 7-12	Family Camp (S-W)	Rental

Thinking about going to camp this summer? It's not too soon to register for 2022!

If you are interested, talk to Pastor Paul about available camperships.

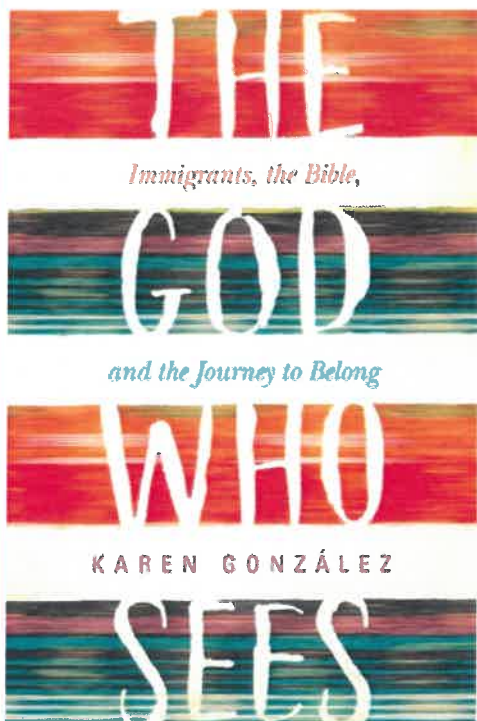
Register at:

Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry  
(vlmamps.org)





## Book recommendations



### **The God Who Sees—Karen Gonzalez**

Here is a riveting story of seeking safety in another land. Here is a gripping journey of loss, alienation, and belonging. In *The God Who Sees*, immigration advocate Karen Gonzalez recounts her family's migration from the instability of Guatemala to making a new life in Los Angeles and the suburbs of south Florida. In the midst of language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and the tremendous pressure to assimilate, Gonzalez encounters Christ through a campus ministry program and begins to follow him.

Here, too, is the sweeping epic of immigrants and refugees in Scripture. Abraham, Hagar, Joseph, Ruth: these intrepid heroes of the faith cross borders and seek refuge. As witnesses to God's liberating power, they name the God they see at work, and they become grafted onto God's family tree.

— Goodreads



**THRIVENT  
FINANCIAL®**

**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**

## Please help us help you!

**The files at First Lutheran are being updated. If you have a new address or phone number, or any other new information you think the church might need, please call the office at 283-2208 or send an email to [firstlutheranifalls@gmail.com](mailto:firstlutheranifalls@gmail.com)**





Thank you to our readers and ushers: Duayne and Nancy Johnson, Rachel Hasbargen-Glowack, Marc Glowack, Tara Tomczak, Huntz Wagner, Ardel Henrickson, Kathi Henrickson, Maureen and Jim Jackson, Linda Torseth, BettyJeanne Henrickson.

Thank you to those who helped with fellowship: Kathi and Ardel Henrickson, Linda Torseth.

Thank you to the musicians who shared their talents: Sue Hewitt, Summer Froemke, Kathy Thureen, Joe Belanger.

Thank you to Lloyd and Ryan Skogstad for pitching in on 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:** Denise Snare Romonowicz and Bunny Katrin

**Littlefork Nursing Home:** Marlene Erickson and Betty Steinbach

<b>General Fund Financial Information</b> As of November 30, 2021 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	8,394	16,362	(7,968)		130,702	179,986	(49,284)
Operating Expense	11,745	16,362	4,617		122,537	179,986	57,449
Operating Income Less Expense	(3,351)		(3,351)		8,164		8,164



## January Birthdays

1/1 Brooks Besch	1/20 Sharon Hedlund
Nina Cole-Smith	1/21 Dylan Streiff
Harvey Steinbach	1/22 Shawn Shofner
1/3 Rick Anderson	1/23 Keith Boelk
1/5 Edward Bernath	1/24 Kelly Blair
Dale Roketa	1/25 Dean Boerger
1/6 Eric Christenson	Laurie Lindberg
1/7 William Bright	Shailynn Shipley
Audrey Forrest	1/26 Max Marcotte
Marc Glowack	1/27 Mary Ojala
Merritt Meyer	Daryl Waller
Kailey Shipley	1/28 Julie Schumacher
1/8 Larry Mannausau	1/29 Lars Lindquist
1/9 Dave Amundsen	1/31 Sydney Anderson
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	

Happy  
Birthday

## COMMUNITY CAFE SERVES FREE, HOT MEALS. TO EVERYONE.

- Serving a free, hot, nutritious dinner from 5:00 to 6:00 pm.
- Meals are pick-up only; there is no in-house 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 graciously accepted.

### Thank you to December's volunteers:

Kim Atchley, Carol Bass, Barb Bergh, Brenda Bertilson, Denise Hall-Atchley, Sandy Harju, and Laurie Lindberg. Cafe usage continues to be high.

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

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
INTL FALLS, MN  
PERMIT NO. 52

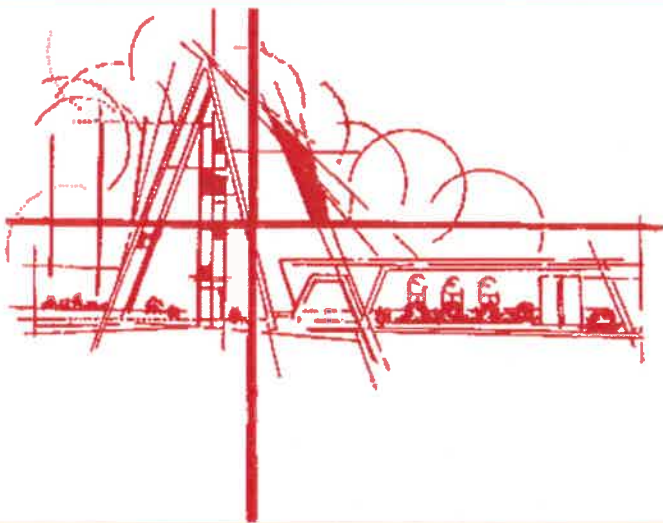
January 2022  
NEWSLETTER

(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 in person and on our website  
Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

### OFFICE HOURS

Mon. through Fri., 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Office: 218-283-2208

Check out our Website!

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

Look for us on Instagram and Facebook.