

# The Voice

December 2023



A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

*A Congregation of the  
Northeastern  
Minnesota Synod, ELCA*

## Zion and First walk together in the Lights Before Christmas Parade



The Christmas Day Kitten  
JAMES HERRIOT



Book recommendation  
page 9.



Youth News page 8.

Affirmation of baptism—families and friends gather to  
bless the confirmands on Reformation Sunday.

## From the Pastor's Desk

### The Work of Christmas

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
 When the star in the sky is gone,  
 When the kings and princes are home,  
 When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
 The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,  
 To heal the broken,  
 To feed the hungry,  
 To release the prisoner,  
 To rebuild the nations,  
 To bring peace among others,  
 To make music in the heart.  
 --Howard Thurman



Dear Ones, in a year that has been up and down and perhaps all around for so many of us, I give thanks for every one of you. For your tenacity, for your ministry, for your light, for your love and for the ways that you do the "work" of Christmas each day.

May these days of Christmas, as we once again welcome the Christ child, who is Emmanuel-God-with-us, be days of peace and love and light to you and yours. May these days also be a time of rest and even a bit of surprise and joy for those who are work weary or whose souls need reprieve.

From my family to yours, blessings, and peace to all this Christmas.

Your friends in Christ,  
 Pastor Christie, Steve,  
 Winter, Neil, and Sunday  
 (and Jasper)



## FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES October 19, 2023

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

Meeting called to order by Treasurer Brad Ettestad at 5:00 PM.

Devotion – Pastor Christie spoke on the situation in the Middle East and said a prayer for the people there.

Addition to Agenda: None

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

Motion: To accept the minutes of the September 2023 meeting.

Made by: BettyJeanne Henrickson

Seconded by: Pastor Christie

Carried

Treasurer Report: Copies provided to all. The estate gift is in. Funds are not dedicated yet. There was a shortfall in September of \$9,311. Offering envelopes will be available in November, Pastor said she would send a letter out to encourage giving. There is a shortfall year to date of \$23,000. Lloyd pointed out an error in the report and Brad said he would correct it.

Motion: to accept financial reports of September 2023 with the correction.

Made by: Lloyd Skogstad

Seconded by: BettyJeanne Henrickson

Carried

### **Pastor's Report:**

Two funerals; one graveside service

Installation

All Saints Sunday

Bible Study Sunday mornings

Preaching at Zion on 22nd

Planning for Advent devotionals and preaching series

Will confirm five students on October 29  
Started early release with BettyJeanne, Cynthia, and Rachel

Started confirmation

Planning for National youth gathering—6 youth, 3 adults

Attended two community meals

Met members of the fire department

Met Sheriff Hedlund

Prayer group Wednesdays with Hoa at Backus

Text study with conference pastors in Iron

Met with the new synod youth coord in Duluth

Bronco football game

Attended Borderlands churches meeting

Attended joint council meeting

Text study with Pastor Andy Met with BP of NE MN Synod

Applying to serve on the VLM board

### **Committee Reports:**

President - absent

Vice-President – absent

Service/Outreach – Brenda reported 5 volunteers at community café, 3 cards sent, 2 meals provided, 3 on the prayer chain. Possibly do food drive around Thanksgiving. Packed school;. kits for FLW. Served at 2 funerals. Made 67 packs of meatballs for Tour of Trees.

(Continued on page 4)

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

**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 (continued from page 3)**

Discipleship – Release and Confirmation continues. There are 5 registered for the New Orleans Youth Gathering in July 2024. Four of the 6 are our new confirmands. Will need to do fund raising for costs of trip.

Fellowship – Absent but sent report that fellowship project in October was the holiday months. no projects will be planned till January installation meal for Pastor Christie. Since the next two months will be busy.

Finance: Audit was done and everything was good.

Music & Worship: Absent.

Old Business: FYI – the next joint council meeting will be on Tuesday, Oct, 24th at 5:00 PM at Zion.

New Business:

1. Nominating Committee/Term Limits – There was some uncertainty as to all those whose terms end this year. The nominating committee has some

suggested candidates for office. Will do some more checking to clarify who is up for election and if those in office wish to continue.

2. Mission Interpreter Ministry - Pastor shared a brochure about the program which has trained volunteers who share the stories of God; s work done in and through our ministries. She asked if Julie Lepisto could come to speak to the congregation about possibly establishing one here. It was agreed that she could come and speak.

Other Business: The Internet is not currently working and has been out for about a month. Jim Yount has been contacted about this.

Next Executive Meeting: November 14th at 5 PM

Next Council Meeting: November 16th at 5 PM

Adjourned at: 5:55 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	12,473	14,829	(2,356)	146,599	148,290	(1,691)
OPERATING EXPENSE	22,006	17,091	(4,915)	180,059	170,910	(9,149)
OPERATING INCOME LESS EXPENSE	(9,533)	(2,262)	(7,271)	<b>(33,460)</b>	(22,620)	(10,840)

In 2023, 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.**

**October—Income short of Expenses by (9,533) - Large shortfall  
YTD- OVERALL SHORT OF EXPENSES BY (\$33,460)**

**EXPENSES-**

**YTD—EXPENSES—10 MONTHS—OVER BUDGET (\$9,149)**

**THANKS FOR SUPPORTING FIRST LUTHERAN MINISTRIES!**



## Crafts and baked goods sale planned for December 2

WELCA meeting minutes  
November 7, 2023

The meeting was opened by Brenda Bertilson with a reading from Hopeful Living based on Luke 10: 33 and Galatians 6:10. The Mission & Purpose statements were read. The minutes from the October meeting were read & approved. Treasurer's report – none  
No old business  
New business: Flyers for the Christmas bazaar are available to be delivered to businesses. Set up for the Christmas bazaar is 9:00 a.m. on Friday December 1st . Helpers are needed.

Voted on the Christmas gifts for Pastor & secretaries.  
Tuesday, December 5th, at noon, is an FLW potluck. Christmas singing will be enjoyed. Come and have a nice social time. There will not be FLW meetings in January or February.  
Motion made & seconded to have Brenda Bertilson bring six totes for collection of school kit items, etc. Carried.  
Motion made & seconded to give \$1,000 to buy new altar cloths. Carried.  
Meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.  
Respectfully submitted,  
Sandy Harju, Secretary

# BAZAAR



**Holiday Baked Goods**  
**Christmas Cookies**  
**Swedish Meatballs**  
**Gifts \* Crafts**  
**Saturday, December 2nd**  
**9 a.m. to 1 p.m.**



## Things to do this month:

**A Holiday Concert** at Backus, Friday, December 1st at 7 p.m.

**Lutefisk Dinner** at Littlefork Lutheran Church, Dec. 3rd, 11:30-3.

**“A Christmas Carol” Dinner Theatre**, Saturday, Dec. 16, at 5 p.m.  
Call Backus for tickets.

### **Blue Christmas Worship Service**

Faith United Church of Christ — Thursday, Dec. 21, 7 p.m.

Join us at the 10:30 worship Sunday morning, December 24th,  
for a unique **Christmas program**.

Our **Christmas Eve service** will be at 4 p.m. followed by a potluck  
celebration of the season in Fellowship Hall.

## Join the choir for Christmas!

**Rehearsals are Wednesdays from 6 to 7 p.m.**



**Merry Christmas** from your church council members!  
Left to right:  
Brian Briggs, Pastor Christie, Cynthia Warren, Carol Bass, Brad Ettestad, BettyJeanne Henrickson, Lloyd Skogstad, Brenda Bertilson, Nancy McBride, and Hoa Sobczinski.  
**Have a blessed Holiday season!**

# Release Time Fun

All the young people from Zion and First are working hard and learning lots and having fun in the process.

They made “sandals” for their faith journeys, and done some bead projects and painted ornaments for the tree in Memorial Hall.

Thank you to all who shared their time and talents with us this year.



## First Lutheran Youth: What's Up?



**2023 Confirmands left to right: Nick Schultz, Gracie Froemke, Linnaea Yount, Max Youso, and Zach Wichner. Joining them for the picture are Nancy McBride, 8th grade confirmation instructor and Pastor Christie Manisto. Congratulations!**

**Grades 9-12 — Sunday Funday — December 3rd — 5 p.m.**

**Pizza and fun with Steve**

**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. Keep an eye out for information, 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**



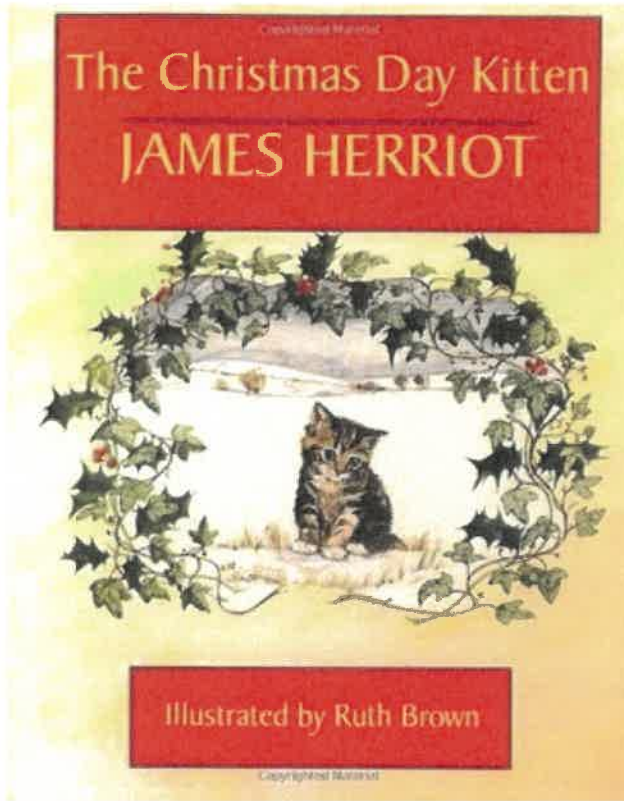
## Reading recommendation

### A Christmas book for young and old

For fans of *All Creatures Great and Small*, this is a great book for a snowy holiday evening.

"Christmas can never go by without my remembering a certain little cat."

So begins *The Christmas Day Kitten*, another true story from James Herriot's rich experience as a country vet. As always, the tale includes a vivid group of characters on two legs and four: Mrs. Pickering and her three stately Basset hounds, James himself, and Debbie, the self-possessed stray cat who makes a special contribution to Christmas at the Pickering house. This is one of James Herriot's own favorite stories, and it is sure to be one of yours.



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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



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**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
ELCA**

## December 24th Worship Services

**Advent IV with program at 10:30 a.m.**

**Christmas Eve at 4 p.m.**

**Christmas Potluck to follow at 5 p.m.**



To those who helped with worship, including: Don Nuthak, Hoa Sobczinski, Ashley Golnick, Liz Blight, Leah Boe, Summer Froemke, Ardel Henrickson, and Cynthia Warren.

To those who helped with fellowship, including: Kris Jackson, Zach, Max, and Courtney Youso, BettyJeanne Henrickson, Kathi Henrickson.

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

To those who shoveled, and decorated, and helped make the church beautiful.

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 November's volunteers:**

Pastor Christie, Carol Bass, Penny Wakeley, Laurie Lindberg,  
and Maureen Jackson

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

## December Birthdays

12/1 Steve Early Amy Milender	12/12 Cory Eide	12/26 Anna Cowman
12/2 Jackie Christianson Caren Panchot Nicole Shipley	12/13 Margaret Roeder Nicholas Schultz	12/27 Logan Amundsen
12/3 Janice Hale Alex Larson	12/15 Brenda Luettjohann	12/28 Sandra Harju Jake Klow
12/4 Matthew Burri Essa Eide Hailey Sobkowicz	12/16 Dennis Martin	12/29 Bonnie Curran Alan Sullivan
12/6 Ava Gilbertson Brenda Sullivan	12/17 Jasmine Gillespie Al Youso	12/30 Anna Earley
12/8 Courtney Mannausau	12/18 Richard Bergh	12/31 Jay Schulz
12/9 Barbara Bergh Jessica Kennedy Maggie Roeder	12/20 Bradley Reiners	
12/10 Rick Kennedy	12/21 Kimberley McDonald	
12/11 Ava Grover Dorothy Olson	12/22 Tayler Hebner Donna Olsen Wendy Reiners	
	12/23 Eric Boe Jackson Schulz	
	12/24 Marcia Arnquist Randee Roketa	
	12/25 Nicholas Bernath Cindy Gilbertson	



**You're invited to a**  
**Blue Christmas**  
**Worship Service**  
**Thursday, December 21 at 7 p.m.**  
**Hosted by Faith United Church of Christ**

This will be a contemplative service for those experiencing loss, grief, and uncertainty during this holiday season.

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

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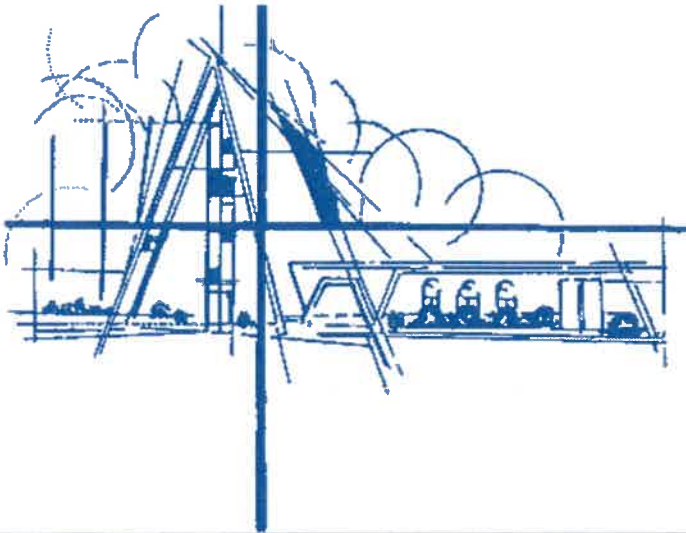
(CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED)

December 2023  
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.