

December 2023 Parish Visitor



FIRST Notes from Pastor Sara

What a delightful surprise to find myself serving at First! It was just October 1, while driving home from an All-Class Reunion of Clarkfield High School, when I had a sense that I should consider a work change from the Minneapolis/St. Paul area, maybe something commuting to the west. It happened quickly! The bishop's office of your synod, asked me to consider interviewing at First. Now, we are heading into the holidays together. **I'm glad to be here.**

I know I will enjoy my time with you. Times of transition often feel chaotic, but they also offer the **opportunity to listen well to each other and to God.** If we work together, and trust in the leading of the Holy Spirit, we will look back and say it was well worth the extra effort, any extra stress.

In my 12 years as an interim pastor, I've learned to enjoy the challenges and growth of these times of change. I've also learned I must quickly get to know (and trust) the staff and leaders, for they know the congregation best – they are doing the hard work of discernment and decision-making.

I'll have more to say about transitions and discernment when January arrives, but I'll close with two announcements from your leaders and me:

First, our congregation's treasurer, Paul Freeburg, spoke at the November council meeting of the **shortage between year-to-date income and expenses.** Through October, giving is behind expenditures by 9.4%. Paul highlighted his hope that congregation members will consider extra gifts as the end of the year approaches. Both the Executive Committee and the full council reviewed the financial reports he provided and asked that I communicate the current need for additional gifts from you. I am very glad to share this need and give my full support. God is doing a gracious and faithful work among us. It is worthy of our generosity and kindness in return.

Second, the Christmas Eve Services are well in the planning, with beautiful music, candlelight, and the story of Jesus' birth. Amidst the change of pastors these past weeks, the council made the decision that the times of **this year's candlelight services will be 3:00pm, 5:00pm, and 7:00pm.** Please take note. We hope your family is able to join us!

God's blessings to you as you celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus.

~Pastor Sara



Children and Families News

Samantha Nielson, Director Of Education

TLC Sunday Christmas Program

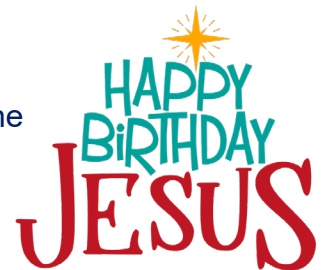
The TLC Sunday Christmas program will be on
Sunday, December 3rd during the 9:00 Worship Service.
Presented by all Pre-K through 6th Grade TLC Sunday Students

TLC Wednesday Christmas Program

The TLC Wednesday Christmas program will be on
Wednesday, December 6th during the 6:00pm Worship Service.
Presented by all Pre-K through 6th Grade TLC Wednesday Students



Happy Birthday Jesus Party will be held on **Sunday, December 3.** After the 9:00am service and Christmas Program, you are invited to join us for a celebration of Jesus's birthday. We will be making birthday cake boxes to donate to the local food shelf.



TLC Christmas Caroling at Morningside

On Sunday, December 10th. We are inviting all TLC Sunday and Wednesday students to come Christmas caroling at Avera Morningside Heights Care Center! TLC Sunday students – this will take place of your class time. We will gather all students by 10:15am right outside of the church office and walk over!

Winter Break



TLC Winter Break:

There will be no TLC Dec. 13th through January 1st.

Confirmation Winter Break:

There will be no Confirmation on December 13th through December 27th. Groups are expected to go to Advent Worship on December 13th and 20th together.



Youth & Family News

Bailey Long, Director of Youth & Family Ministry



Hy-Vee Cards available for Purchase!

The Mission Trip youth are selling HyVee gift cards throughout the year as a part of their fundraisers. We have \$50 cards and \$100 cards. Everyone needs groceries....and it's money you would spend anyway, if not all at one time, eventually. By using the gift cards, part of the money will go to the youth! They make awesome Christmas gifts too! Thanks!

SHETEK Winter Fun Day will be on December 28th from 9:30am – 3:00pm. Open to 3rd-6th graders. Come enjoy activities out in God's creation such as snowshoeing and cross country skiing as well as other indoor camp activities including arts & crafts, games, bible study and more! Sure to be a good time. Register online @ www.shetek.org or complete a form from Bailey.

STOCK IN YOUTH FUNDRAISER

Last chance to help our youth get to New Orleans this summer by investing in them and becoming a shareholder. For \$75, you'll be matched with a youth, personally supporting their faith journey!

- You will receive a biography and picture of your youth.
- We will share our own faith stories with you and ask you to connect with us through prayer.
- You will get a postcard from your youth while we are on our trip.
- You will be invited to a stockholder's banquet after the trip, where we will share with you all of the memories of our trip of a lifetime.

This is the chance to make a connection with our youth, get to know them, and create some fellowship in our congregation! Check out the Youth Bulletin Board in the Narthex and contact Bailey if you're interested or have any questions!



Advent is around the corner!! **Advent Candles** will be available at First Lutheran again for families. This festive 12" tall taper artfully displays 24 numbers detailed in red and green to represent each day of advent. Each day your family can light the candle and watch one day melt away as visit together about your days. It's simple, faith-filled, and easy to have this activity become a tradition in your household. The candles will be available to you Wednesday Nov 15, and the weekend of November 18/19! Questions? Just ask Bailey. Please, one per family.

Reverse Advent Calendar Bags: Along with the Advent candles, First Lutheran will be passing out reverse Advent Calendar Bags. Instead of receiving a treat every day counting down through the season of Advent, we're going to put something in a bag for people who make use of the FOOD SHELF. Every day you're invited to add something practical for a family to use like food items or personal hygiene items such as toothbrushes, soaps, etc. (As part of your devotions, you could add the item to the bag after you light the advent candle?!)



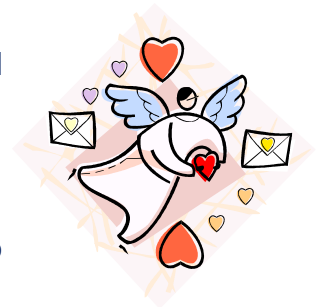
The month after Christmas gets very busy at the food shelf so any items will be greatly appreciated! On or after December 27th, your family can bring your bag to the Kitchen Table-Marshall Food Shelf at 1400 S Saratoga.

Think of the blessings:

- It's a great and different way for your family to give as we prepare to celebrate Christmas.
- It will make you feel good knowing that you're doing something for another family.
- And it will be a wonderful field trip for your kids to see what the Food Shelf is all about. If you can't make it to the Food Shelf, simply drop off your full bag at First Lutheran and we'll make sure that it gets delivered.

It's Heart to Heart time again in Marshall!!

Hey *junior high* youth....will you help out? Hey *senior high* youth! We need you all too!!! *Parents* want to help with driving? **Families want to do this together?** Every year, our families help deliver the food boxes to various families for Heart to Heart..... but we need your help to do it!! *Many hands makes for light work!* And shorter routes! We will meet at the church on **Friday, December 15th after school**. We will divide up the town, and deliver the items. It's an awesome way to reach out and help during the season! Q's? Just call Bailey!



- Also, if you could help with the set up at 1pm, contact Bailey



ST NICHOLAS CHALLENGE ANYONE?

December 6th is the day we celebrate St. Nicholas' life. We challenge you & your family to celebrate this day by serving someone in secret.

Do something to help someone in need and do your best not to get caught!
If you do get caught, follow St. Nicholas' example and tell them to thank God and ask them not to reveal your secret!



Outreach News

Tonya Tomasek, Director of Outreach

New Members Will be Welcomed January 14, 2024

We are really proud of our faith family and love how we welcome individuals and families openly and walk with them wherever they are at on their faith journeys.

We will be having a Welcome for New Members on Sunday, January 14, 2024 at the 9:00am worship. If anyone is interested in becoming a new member or know of someone who may be interested, please contact Tonya at tonya@1stlutheran.org or 507-530-1697...or the church office at 507-532-2429 or office@1stlutheran.org.



Other Important Items



NEW! Peace By Piece Quilters is a new group has started up! They meet every Thursday at 1pm in the new quilt room on the 2nd floor of the Education Wing. Come and join the fun! If you have questions please call the church office.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship at First Lutheran

Christmas Eve worship services at First Lutheran will be:
Sunday, December 24th @ 3pm, 5pm and 7pm.
(Note the 7pm change was made for this year)

There will not be a Saturday, December 23 worship service or Sunday Dec 24 9AM worship service.



The Festival of Music is a beautiful worship service full of Christmas music. This worship service will be held on **Sunday, December 10th at the 9:00am service.** Beautiful music will be played from the First Lutheran Strings orchestra, Handbell Choir, 4Him Quartet, organ and piano duets and the Chancel Choir. All these groups will share their music of the season. Be sure to come and enjoy the sounds of the season together.

Chancel Choir Christmas Tea will be held on Sunday, Dec. 10th, immediately following worship service until around 11:00 am. Christmas goodies and beverages will be served. Freddy's Lefse will be available for purchase @ \$10.00 a package. Come get your Lefse!



Coats for Kids is collecting used and gently used coats. The collection barrel is located in the Narthex. United Community Action Partnership (UCAP) is collecting coats that will be distributed to those who need them. Here are some guidelines for donations:

- Coats can be for children and adults.
- Both new and gently used coats can be donated, used coats will be cleaned by Carrolls before distribution.
- If there is a gently used coat with a broken zipper, UCAP has someone who can replace the zipper.
- Collections will be picked by United Community Action Partner



Coloring For Christ will meet on Monday, December 4th at 2:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. If you like adult coloring, please join us. Bring your coloring supplies if you have them. Call Paulette Hanson @ 507-530-0284 for questions.

Heart-to-Heart Collection for Heart-to-Heart started on November 15, 2023 and the Heart-to-Heart tree is set up in the Narthex. This ministry offers children in our area the opportunity to celebrate a joyous Christmas. There will be tags on the tree with either a boy or girl along with an age bracket to purchase a gift. Gifts should have an approximate value of \$30.00, smaller amount gifts are accepted and will be paired with another gift to total \$30.00. Suggested gifts include drawing and writing items (gel pens, journal books, markers, sketch pads, colored pencils), sports equipment (balls of all types), age-appropriate toys, sleds, dolls, stuffed animals, games (Monopoly, Sorry, Connect 4, Candy Land), gift cards to movie theater, gloves, stocking caps, scarves, socks, jewelry boxes, personal care items for boys and girls. Diapers are always welcome items for Newborn to 12 months. No video DVD's or specific gaming system games. There are also envelopes for you to make a monetary donation if you wish, write checks to Heart to Heart. Bring your unwrapped gifts back with tags attached and place them under the tree by December 10th. Thank you in advance for your support for the families in our area.



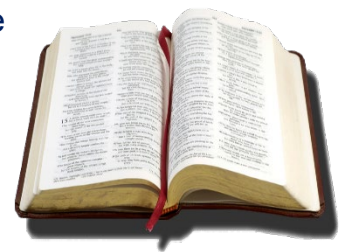
The Angel Tree Project 2023 - *From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. -Luke 12:48.*

The Social Ministries Committee will again sponsor the Angel Tree Project. Angel Ornaments are available for a donation, starting November 25, 2022, through December 31, 2022. Ornaments along with a donation jar can be found on the table in the Narthex.

This year's donations will be sent to the ELCA Youth in Global Mission (YAGM) Program. YAGM invites ELCA young adults ages 21-35 into a transformative, year-long journey in international service. Young adults to become the hands and feet of Jesus in the world, providing critical support to ministries and projects in communities of need. YAGM volunteers are currently serving in 10 countries. Areas of service include, but are not limited to, health and development, congregational ministry, human rights, education, homelessness, addiction recovery, women's issues and children and youth. All site placements provide opportunities for young adults to confront issues of wealth and poverty, racial privilege, economic disparity, and globalization, all through the lens of faith. For more information on YAGM see the flyer on the Angel Tree table.



Something is "Brewing" again! Bible & Brew meets on Thursdays at 5:30pm at Brau Brothers Brewery in Marshall. A handful of past participants will rotate the leadership role. The content is the discussion on the upcoming Sunday liturgy. A variety of beverages are on hand there-and it's okay to just have water! Many attendees also enjoy something from the menu. Come as you are! Come when you can



December 2023



14 Keeley Island Drive
Slayton, MN 56172
507-763-3567
camp@shetek.org
www.shetek.org

Shetek Lutheran Ministries Where Christ Renews and Empowers



These items make great gifts!

Shop for your favorite apparel at
shetek.org/store

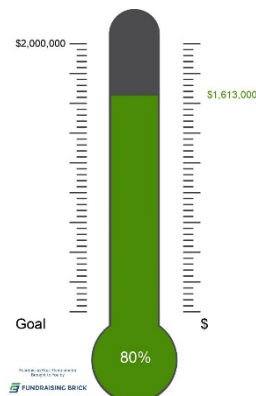
Mark your calendar!!

- December 3 Lodge Dedication 3:00
- December 3 Annual Meeting 3:30
- December 3 Scandinavian Dinner 5:00 p.m.
- December 28 Winter Fun Day 9:30-3:00
- January 17-21 Quilt and Craft Retreat

Wish List

- Vest style life jackets
- Extension Cords
- Volunteers
- *We thank you for all your generosity this year!*

We met our Phase 1 goal!
\$1,613,000 in gifts and
pledges! Our challenge
goal is \$2,000,000 and
with **increased** costs, our
budget has changed for
our different phases.
More info on our website.
<https://shetek.org/slm-master-plan/>



Help send kids to Camp...Become a Pelican Club or Timber Society member today. Pelican Club members support the ministry with a gift of \$100 - \$499 a year and Timber Society members give \$500 or more a year. Thanks for your support!



Worship Schedule

Wednesdays 6:00pm . Saturdays 5:30pm . Sundays 9:00am

www.youtube.com/c/FirstLutheranChurchMarshall

Radio 11am Sundays on 1400AM or 101.7FM

Local Cable TV 10am Wednesdays and 5pm Thursdays

Spectrum 180 & Bluepeak 17

Church Office Phone: 507-532-2429

Interim Pastor
Pastor Sara Vanderpan
pastorsara@1stlutheran.org

Tonya Tomasek
Director of Outreach
tonya@1stlutheran.org

Bailey Long
Director of Youth & Family Ministry
bailey@1stlutheran.org

Samantha Nielsen
Director of Education
samantha@1stlutheran.org

Ann Schlenner
Office Manager
ann@1stlutheran.org

From the Staff here at First Lutheran Church,
We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

