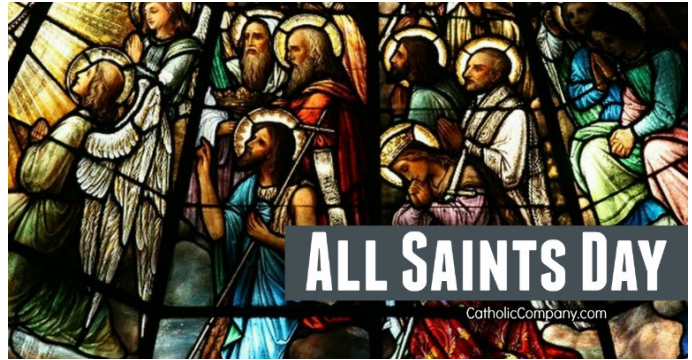


# November 2023

## Parish Visitor



Everyone loves browsing through the family photo album or seeing the ready-made album Facebook creates using highlights and special days we've posted throughout the year. "Ah, what memories!" we say as one image fades into another. Grandmas and grandpas; aunts and uncles; children and pets; holidays and other festive times; even just ordinary, day-to-day happenings around the house. Why reminisce? We enjoy a good trip down memory lane! Perhaps because it anchors us to our past, reminds us who we are, where we have been, shows us we belong.

This is also why we celebrate All Saints' Day – technically on November 1, but we'll celebrate it November 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>. All Saints' Day is the big day when the Church stops to look at her own Facebook page/Family Album. How comforting to look at past saints and see how God dealt with them in his mercy and forgiveness. How comforting to have the family history of God's people. It reminds us who we are as God's people. It reminds us that we are not alone on this journey of faith.

Even though Lutherans claim Luther's "*Simul Justus et Peccator*" (which literally means we are "at once justified and a sinner"), we don't quite accept that we could really be saints. One of my favorite children's sermon on All Saint's Sunday ended with the response of one child to my question, "What is a saint?" The child, looking angelically at the stained glass windows, pointed and simply said, "It's someone the light shines through." Absolutely right!

So, what makes a saint? The answer is simple: God's blessing! We have just celebrated Reformation Sunday, the day we intentionally remember and give thanks that we are justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. We remember that we cannot earn our way into God's grace – but rather, that God's grace is poured out abundantly on all sinners day after day. We remind ourselves that we neither deserve nor merit such blessing, yet God's love, given unconditionally, declares us precious and holy! If that were the end of God's generosity, we'd be incredibly blessed! Yet there is more! God's blessing continues with the giving of the Holy Spirit poured out on all flesh so that the light of Christ shines through ordinary human beings like you and me!

But what does all this mean, given we are simultaneously sinners? Can we really consider ourselves saints? Let's open the Church's photo album.

When we recall the names of saints that appear in the Bible, famous individuals who risked everything to serve the One True God or who gave their life to follow Jesus, we can't imagine that we could aspire to be saints. Not us! Not me! I fear we conveniently experience selective amnesia, you know, forgetting all the parts where the heroes of the Bible seriously sinned or disappointed God, too. We forget that they were also self-centered (King David taking Bathsheba for his own pleasure though she was married to Uriah), feared losing their lives (Abraham passing off Sarah as his sister because he was afraid of being killed), wondered if God would ever keep the promises made to them (Moses leading the Israelites through the wilderness for forty years), well, you get my point.

In the New Testament, God still called and claimed ordinary people, using them to reveal his great love for all humankind. The disciples who stumbled at every turn, argued about who is the greatest, demanded places of highest honor in Jesus' Kingdom, and forever

failed to grasp the expansive grace of God for all people – still managed to be people through whom the light of Christ shines, sharing the story of God’s amazing grace. It is not about us, brothers and sisters, or whether we are good enough. It IS about Christ through whom all things are made possible! Thanks be to God!

Within the Church, November is a month of remembrance, reflection, and celebration as we bring the Church-year to a close on Christ the King Sunday (November 26<sup>th</sup>) and anticipate a new year with the Advent of our Lord (December 3<sup>rd</sup>). It is also a time to give thanks for the cloud of witnesses who have handed on faith that we might come to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. But believing alone is not enough, even Satan believes in God. Imperfect as we are, we are the modern-day saints through whom Christ continues to share his unconditional love and pour out his abundant blessings for all. Rise up, you saints of God, “Let your so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify our Father in heaven!

God’s Peace,

*Rev. Katherine Rood*



## The Truth of What We Bring

On Sunday morning (or Wednesday or Saturday evenings), a person places a check, folded bills into the offering plate, or contributes through Simply Giving. The usher sees the hand drop some money into the plate, but what that usher cannot see is the intention of the Offering. That is known only to the giver and God. Yet the action is one of the most powerful events of the Worship service.

The Offering is the point during every Worship liturgy when most people face the intersection between God’s grace and human gratitude.

Are we willing to freely give, even if it means giving up money, which in our culture signifies power? Be it a tithe, a couple of one-dollar bills, or nothing at all, our Offering is an outward sign of our inner spiritual intentions, and a unique time of truth in Worship. The truth of what we bring reveals itself in answer to such questions as these:

- *Do I give or not? Can I let go of what I consider to be mine?*
- *Why do I give? Do I give out of fear, or duty, or to contribute to the work of building up the Kingdom of God?*
- *And, how much do I give?*

The answers to those questions produce an x-ray of one’s spiritual life. To most people the Offering is about fundraising. The church’s bills must be paid, so there is always tension about money. Unfortunately, church leaders are often left with a burden of anxiousness on behalf of their sisters and brothers that is unjust. Wanting to be faithful stewards, they stress

over how things will be paid while other ministry leaders wrangle with whether there will be financial support to encourage or expand existing discipleship opportunities. Truth be told, the Offering should be a profound spiritual exercise. If those things we possess are all gifts from God's abundance, then giving back to God is an act of gratitude.

Belonging to a church, a community of Christ followers, means we are giving consent to all that God is calling us to do, supporting the work of those on the front lines, while simultaneously, providing for the less glamorous expenses like electric bills, heating/cooling, water, and the day-to-day operating costs.

I believe in Straight Talk that informs, equips, and moves us to action. The COVID dollars which floated the church through the most difficult years of the pandemic, are exhausted. We, your Leadership Team, find ourselves worrying about shortfalls rather than focusing on where the Holy Spirit is leading. We need you! Every Offering, great or small, is deeply appreciated and I thank you in advance.

Prayerfully consider, and listening to the intention of your gift, help us to continue proclaiming the Gospel and equipping the saints of all ages! You, sharing the gifts God has given you, is the answer to heartfelt prayers.

God's Peace,  
*Rev. Katherine Rood*



## **Children and Families News**

**Samantha Nielson**

**First Communion** for 5<sup>th</sup> grade and older students will be held on **Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup>** at the **9:00am Worship Service**.

All 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students will also receive their First Communion Milestone at this time. Come and join us as we celebrate with the following First Lutheran 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students receiving The Lord's Supper for the first time and/or receiving their First Communion Milestone:

Ravith Alakahoon  
Hunter Buysse  
Jude Fahl  
Grayson Hawkinson  
Harrison Koster  
Roy Rauch  
DaVionci Sanchez  
Leo Swenson  
Noah Woodbeck  
Hudson Streicher

Hailey Buysse  
Noah Engebretson  
Kaden Girgen  
Damien Henning  
Mic Paulzine  
Kailyn Roberts  
Keira Steinhaus  
Jack Thomas  
Kylie Zahl  
Bradley Remme





### **TLC Sunday Christmas Program**

The TLC Sunday Christmas program will be on **Sunday, December 3rd**. Dress Rehearsal will be on Sunday, Nov. 13<sup>th</sup> AND Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am.

### **TLC Wednesday Christmas Program**

The TLC Wednesday Christmas program will be on **Wednesday, December 6th**. Dress Rehearsal will be on Wednesday, Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, Nov. 29<sup>th</sup> at 5:15pm.

**Happy Birthday Jesus Party!** On Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 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. If you would like to donate any items, we would appreciate it! Contact Sam at [samantha@1stlutheran.org](mailto:samantha@1stlutheran.org)

**Need:** Aluminum pans with lids, Cake mixes (boxed), Sprite cans, Frosting, Candles, or cake decorations



## **Youth & Family News**

**Bailey Long**



**Hy-Vee Cards available for Purchase!** The Sr High Youth, who are attending the 2024 NOLA Gathering this coming summer, are selling Hy-Vee gift cards throughout the year as a part of their fundraisers. We have \$50 cards and \$100 cards. Everyone needs groceries....and its money you would spend anyway, if not all at one time, eventually. They are good at any Hy-Vee.... And good for gas too! By using the gift cards, part of the money will go to the youth! Thanks!



## **“STOCK IN YOUTH” Fundraiser of the month in November**

Our congregation has the opportunity to participate in our “Stock in Youth” investment. What does this mean? You will agree to invest in a youth’s faith journey to New Orleans this summer. You will be investing in something that will give sure fire returns.....and that’s the next generation!

- 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 help them personally on their faith journey! You will get to pick your youth- each stock being \$75.



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.

### First Lutheran Youth and Family Ministry Fall Fundraiser Finishes up

The youth and family ministry committee and the youth were excited for our fundraiser the month of October. Thank you to everyone who helped by picking up an envelope and donated or donated online. **If you still have an envelope, please drop it off at the office.** Hopefully, soon we will have a total to announce to all! Thanks so much for your support and belief in our youth at First Lutheran.



### Looking Ahead: College Students recognized in worship services on November 25 & 26

If you have a son or daughter that would be interested in helping with the college recognition worship services on Saturday Nov 25 or on Sunday, Nov 26 (only a 9:00am service)....please contact Bailey or the church office. Plans are being made to put this weekend together. There are many opportunities. Help us welcome back our college-age youth!



## Outreach News

### By Tonya Tomasek

### Blessed to be a Blessing

*"...faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." James 2:17*  
*"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, DO; and the God of peace will be with you." Philipians 4:8 & 9*

### "30 Faith Acts in 30 Days of November!"

The Church is a "24/7/365" thing! Also, the building is not the "Church". You are the Church! This November, First Lutheran Church challenges you to be an intentional blessing to others throughout the month of November. **This new activity is called, "Blessed to be a Blessing: 30 Faith Acts in 30 Days!"** The challenge for each member of the First Lutheran's faith community is to DO a faith act each day in November. Then, if you could, share your examples through a note or photo emailed to the church or a comment or a post on social media. (tag First Lutheran if you can). It will be 30 days of thankfulness for all that we can do together as a faith family!



**What are some acts you can do? As the passage from Philippians says, “WHATEVER!”—but here are some examples:**

1. Mow a lawn
2. Do yard work for someone
3. Get groceries for someone
4. Leave a donation at food shelf, Goodwill, First Lutheran, etc.
5. Call someone and see how they are doing
6. Send an encouraging card to someone
7. Babysit or watch someone’s house
8. Give someone a ride to an appointment
9. Share your faith
10. Read a book of faith
11. Volunteer with some organization
12. Read a daily devotional
13. Share a meal with a neighbor
14. Help someone with their homework-tutor
15. Pack a school lunch or a week of lunches for a neighborhood child or children
16. Donate supplies to a local school or non-profit (i.e. office supplies or class supplies such as paper towels, wipes etc.)
17. Use your talents for friends of local organization (i.e. manage a social media account of an organization)
18. Teach your passion/hobby to others
19. Serve a non-profit organization
20. Become a mentor
21. Volunteer to read or do an activity at a nursing home or assisted living facilities
22. Make care packages for individuals or an organization
23. Volunteer coach
24. Welcome newcomers
25. Intentionally looks for new faces in church or people you usually don’t have coffee with.
26. Write encouraging notes to nursing homes, hospitals, local heroes
27. Take part in a seasonal service project (i.e. bell ringer)
28. Donate personal or hygiene items to a local facility or organization
29. Collect and donate items for an animal shelter
30. Volunteer at a local school
31. Cook for an individual, family or organization
32. Lead a small group study group
- 33. Anything else you can think of! Be creative!**

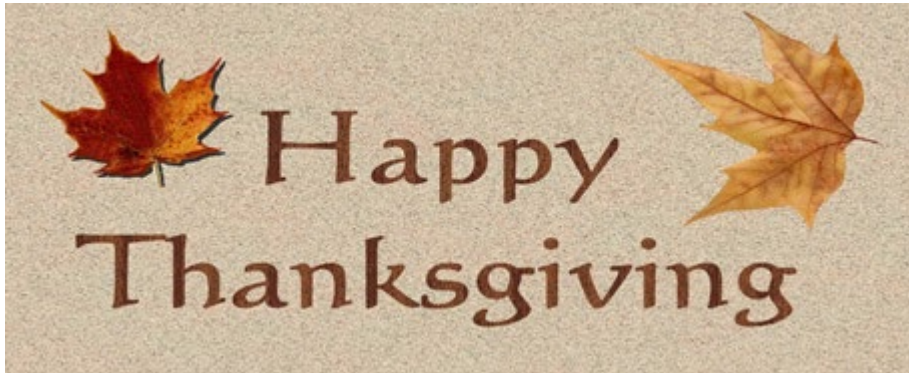
**Coats for Kids** is collecting used and gently used coats. The collection barrel is located in the Narthex. United Community Action Partnership (UCAP) is collecting coats that will be distributed to those who need them. Here are some guidelines for donations:

- 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





Shetek Lutheran Ministries Where Christ Renews and Empowers



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

Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever! 1 CHRONICLES 16:34

### Wish List

- 17 foot Aluminum canoe
- Vest style life jackets
- Good Vacuums
- Volunteers

*We thank you for all your generosity this year!*

### Mark your Calendar

- November 3-4 Confirmation Retreat
- December 3 Annual Meeting
- December 3 Scandinavian Dinner
- December 28 Winter Fun Day

Register at [shetek.org](http://shetek.org) or  
Call 507-763-3567 for more information.

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!

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.







## Other Important Items

**Heart-to-Heart** collection is coming soon. Starting the second week in November the Heart-to-Heart tree will be set up in the Narthex. This ministry offers children in our area the opportunity to celebrate a joyous Christmas. There are tags on the tree with either a boy or girl name 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 sports equipment (balls of all types), sleds, dolls, stuffed animals, age-appropriate toys and games, gift cards to movie theater, gloves, stocking caps, scarves, socks, jewelry boxes, personal care items for boys and girls. No video DVD's or specific gaming system games. There are also envelopes for you to make a monetary donation if you wish. Bring your unwrapped gifts back with tags attached and place them under the tree by December 3rd. Thank you in advance for your support for the families in our area. Thanks for all your help.



**Coloring For Christ** will meet on Monday, November 6th at 2:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. We will be focused on Christmas coloring this month. If you like adult coloring, please join us. If you have questions, call Paulette Hanson @ 507-530-0284.

**The Social Ministries Committee** would like to say "Thank You" to everyone who donated items, made a monetary donation, or colored cards for the Personal Care Kits at Gods Work Our Hands. We were able to build 84 Personal Care kits (total of 291 pounds) for the Kitchen Table Food Shelf. We also made 28 blankets for the Maggie Jean Foundation "Boxes of Blessings", Thank You Heather Rokeh for bringing your sewing machine, and Thank you Coloring for Christ group for completing cards to be used in future caring projects. Thank you also to the Outreach Committee for the wonderful lunch and to the members of the Presbyterian Congregation that joined us for fellowship and working on the projects. Gods Blessings to all.



**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!



### **Community Christmas Cantata Sign Up**

Through a generous Mission Endowment Grant from the SW MN Synod of the ELCA, we have the opportunity for an ecumenical Christmas cantata. We are excited for singers from all around the area to join together in this unique opportunity. Under the direction of Krishana Dempcy, we will unite in a fun and relaxed atmosphere while experiencing a rich and joyous celebration of voices. You don't have to have prior choir experience or be trained in any manner. You don't have to be a member of any worshipping congregation. If you have a desire to be spiritually moved by celebrating the birth of Jesus through singing, this is for you!

We plan to practice from 3:00-4:30pm on the following dates and locations:

**Nov. 12, 2023** – Sunday afternoon at Bergen Lutheran Church  
Rural Granite Falls

**Nov. 18, 2023** – Saturday afternoon at Christ Lutheran Church  
Cottonwood

**Dec. 2, 2023** – Saturday afternoon at a location to be decided by members

**Dec. 10, 2023** Sunday afternoon at a location to be decided by members

**CONCERT – DECEMBER 16, 2023** Concert times and locations to be decided by cantata members. Please register by emailing [areacommunitycantata@gmail.com](mailto:areacommunitycantata@gmail.com)



**Poinsettias** can be ordered through the church again! If you would like to decorate the sanctuary for Christmas and honor a loved one, please drop off a check or send your payment of \$25.00 along with the information below. All donations and dedications are due in the church office by November 17th at noon.



Given in Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

OR

Given in Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

**The FLC Executive Committee** is excited to announce that Pastor Sara Vanderpan has accepted the call to serve as our interim pastor starting November 1. Pastor Sara has served in many churches as an interim pastor over the past twenty years. We look forward to her leadership and guidance as we continue our time of transition. Meanwhile, Pastor Katherine will work with Pastor Sara through worship on Sunday, November 5. After that, Pastor Katherine's time as our interim pastor will end. We are incredibly grateful for the wisdom and experience Pastor Katherine has provided our church these past few months. We will offer our thanks and wish her well at worship on November 5.



In other news, our Executive Committee is reconsidering the rental agreement with the Presbyterian church. At our October council meeting, there was consensus that given the leadership changes and other challenges our church has endured in recent months, the council feels that the job of "landlord" is adding more to an already full plate for our staff and Executive Committee. Because of this, the short-term rental agreement will extend through December but will be reevaluated after that. This may mean that the rental agreement may end on December 31 and our Presbyterian friends have been made aware of this.

Thank you to Chuck Muller, Brent Pederson, Jack Houseman, Ann Schlenner, and others for the extra work they put in to attend to the water issues in the church elevator shaft!

### **Worship Schedule**

Wednesdays 6:00pm \* Saturdays 5:30pm \* Sundays 9:00am

[www.youtube.com/c/FirstLutheranChurchMarshall](http://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**

#### **Church Office Email:**

[ann@1stlutheran.org](mailto:ann@1stlutheran.org)

Phone: 507-640-1251

[www.1stlutheran.org](http://www.1stlutheran.org)

#### **Staff Emails:**

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[tonya@1stlutheran.org](mailto:tonya@1stlutheran.org)

