



First Lutheran Church

The Voice of First Lutheran First Lutheran

December 2020 Edition

December 1, 2020

From Pastor's Desk- Advent Begins!

It hardly seems possible that as the Great Pandemic of our age struck during the beginning of Lent back in March, that we now find ourselves ready to turn the page into the weeks of Advent. And as we turn that page, we are reminded of God's (and ours) Hope for the future.

We are reminded that the Season of Advent is a season of waiting and a season of being tired of waiting. We recall the waiting Israel as she anticipated a Messiah. We wait for the coming of the day that we remember a promise fulfilled on Christmas as that Messiah named Jesus is born.

We also wait for Jesus to come again in power and bring to completion the creation God has had in mind since the beginning of time. We hope and trust in that second coming because of the assurance of the first.

You see, the disciples struggled with the same problem we all have. They wanted to know the mind of God and wanted to know the "why" of every situation. They put themselves in the same position I often put myself in, where I am ready, willing and able to question what God does and how and why God does it.

I am reminded of the angst I suffer in asking where God is in relation to our great country and the uneasiness we all experience in wondering where God is in the midst of it all. I longingly HOPE for the return of basic human decency for our neighbors though out our land...love for our fellow human beings.

That's what we are being called to do this Advent season. Ask **what**, we can do to help prepare, with hope and trust for a better tomorrow.

St. Paul puts it this way. In Romans he states that "To love" is the key to aid us in our anticipation of the fulfillment of God's kingdom. If we are to love as Paul commands, we are to constantly and actively promote the good of our neighbors and ourselves.

We wait with eager anticipation...I know that I can be happy in believing the world can be a better place for all of us.

And, in that HOPE, we pray!

Grace and peace for a blessed Advent!

Pastor Nord

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Stars and Promises Christmas Concert Invite

For the first-ever event of its kind, ELCA World Hunger presents an online Christmas benefit Concert featuring Peter Mayer, a long time Lutheran and the lead guitarists for Jimmy Buffett.

Although we are in the midst of a difficult winter due to COVID-19, we know that through God's abundance, you have shown incredible generosity by supporting the necessary work

of the church. This concert is a gift to you this Advent season. It is a way for us to say thank you and provide a place for you to gather online with the church community as we prepare for the birth of our Savior.

The concert is free and will premier on the ELCA Facebook Page, with a live chat so you can engage with the audience.

Register now to receive a free,

exclusive Peter Mayer Christmas album download, created just for this event.

[Click here to register and get your free album.](#)



Community Service—Pecatonica Food Pantry

The Pecatonica Food Pantry is preparing to service several families this holiday season. In preparation for nothing only the holidays but also for remote learning; the Food Pantry is looking to increase their supply of children's canned pasta. So for the month of December, First Lutheran will be focusing on gathering the following: Spaghetti-os, Chef Boyardee Beed Ravioli, and

Campbell's Spaghetti.

Please leave all donations in the basket by the church doors.

To learn more about the Pecatonica Food Pantry check out their website:

www.pecatonicacommunityfoodpantry.com/



Community Service—Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

Christmas Gifts Needed for Children in Foster Care

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois is looking to provide Christmas presents, boots, hats, and gift cards to meet urgent needs of children and families served by them this holiday season.

A gift of \$25 will provide a

Christmas present for a child in foster care.

Visit LSSI.org/Christmas to make a donation and help ensure that every child receives a Christmas gift this holiday.



 **Lutheran Social Services of Illinois**

Northern Illinois Synod Rockford Office Closed

The ELCA would like to remind everyone that effective August 3, 2020, the former synod office in Rockford on State Street is no longer in operation and its former telephone number has been disconnected.

The synod mailing address and synod telephone number are that of their Rock Island Office:

Northern Illinois Synod, ELCA
Augustana College—Sorensen
Hall 322
639 38th Street
Rock Island, IL 61201

NIS main phone number:
309-794-4004.

Ms. Nancy Corey remains working in the Rock Island office and will help you with any questions. The remainder of the synod staff is working from home.



Church Council News!

The Church Council meets on Tuesday, December 1, 2020 at 6:30 pm
October Minutes were approved at the November meeting. You can find a copy of the October Minutes on our website: [Church Council](#) or you can request a copy from the Church Office.

As of November, Church Council Minutes will be posted on the Church Council page of our website after they are approved.

If you wish to have a paper copy mailed to you, please let Jen Camplain know at any time.

Church Council Members

President-Dr. Bob Ebbesmeyer
815-541-2182

Vice President-Kent Peterson
815-964-0952

Secretary-Janis DeWall
815-703-1772

Treasurer-Sallie Morgensen
815-222-2638

Pastor Nord Swanstrom -
815-520-5026

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Dorene Lagerstam-815-232-6753

Bob Morgensen-815-222-5285

Roger Wacker-815-871-6131

David ZumdaHL-815-988-7959



In our Prayers



- † *Beverly Banks*
(friend of Kathy Dougherty)
- † *Sarah Banks and Family*
(Daughter of Kathy Dougherty)
- † *Stacey Beyer* (member)
- † *Carrie Brockway*
(Pec Elementary Principal)
- † *McKenzie Camp*
(Craig's grand-daughter)
- † *Kaden Degner*
(Pec HS Sophomore)
- † *Aiden Doner*
(Pec MS 7th grader)
- † *Kathy Dougherty* (member)
- † *Bryan Durand* (member)
- † *Martha Ebbesmeyer*
(member)
- † *Laura Gram*
(Janet Anderson's niece)
- † *Dee Hickman*
(Pec Elementary School Librarian)
- † *Stephanie Klinger*
(Grand-Daughter of David and Linda Book)
- † *Raelynn Merrick* (
Taylor Merrick's daughter)
- † *Alan Olson*
(former head custodian at Pec CUSD)
- † *Audra (Carlson) Smith*
(member)

We Continue To Pray for Those In Care Facilities or Homebound

- † Margaret Stahl



And For Those Serving Away From Home

- † Addison Hass † Jason Hoover
- † Jake Jenkins † Jacob McGrew



Birthdays and Anniversary Celebrations!

December Birthdays

2 Zachary Merrick
 3 Judy Johnson
 5 Ron Heffelfinger
 6 Ann Hoover
 9 Daryl Anderson, Linda Withers
 11 Cameron Bukoski
 19 Matthew Zumdahl
 21 Todd James
 22 Lisa Larson
 28 Mary Saxby



December Anniversaries

10 Ron & Loris Heffelfinger
 21 Ken & Coni Stein
 28 Thad & Linda Withers



Stewardship

Down

*Stewardship begins at creation, where God first comes down to us. In the first chapter of Genesis, God forms humankind in God's own image and commands them: "Be Fruitful and Multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the first of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28). A steward is someone who cares for someone else's property. From the beginning humanity is not an owner, but a steward of what God has created. We are first receivers, not givers!

God's love comes down to us in Jesus Christ. To quote John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." God loved us so much that God sent Jesus to die for us to bring us salvation and new life. God also comes down to us in the sacrament of baptism. In baptism, we are claimed as children of God. We belong to God and all that we have belongs to God. We are bearers of God's love, grace and gospel. Stewardship begins with God coming down to us in love and sharing some of what is God's with us. We are a church that belongs to Christ, and there is a place for all here.

Thank you to everyone who returned this year's Stewardship forms to the church office. We look forward to guiding you in your Stewardship through First Lutheran this year. Even though there are many hurdles ahead of us during these COVID-19 times; we know that the stewards of First Lutheran will lead on to make the upcoming year a great one in the church.

Credit: ELCA's Stewards of God's Love: a year round guide to stewardship in your congregations. Copyright 2013. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

First Lutheran Church

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COVID-19 Update

As of November 20, 2020; the state of Illinois entered Tier 3 mitigations. For the safety of our staff, the Church Office will be closed.

Both Pastor and Jen will be working from home and can be reached by email or phone. Jen will be in the office on Tuesday mornings and Fridays on a regular basis to check the church phone and mail.

You can make an appointment for an in person meeting with Pastor or Jen by contacting them a head of time.

We hope that this will continue to keep our staff and members safe and healthy. As the situation changes we will update you by email, mail and Facebook.

We pray we will be open again soon!
Stay Safe Everyone!

Special Christmas Request

Do you have a favorite Christmas song or story?

Do you like to dance or sing?

Do you have a special talent?

We are looking for a few talented members to share their favorite Christmas traditions. First Lutheran is looking to put together a virtual Christmas program to share with our members the week before Christmas. If you would like to record yourself at home singing, dancing, playing an instrument or anything else you can think of; send your recording to firstluthpec@gmail.com by Dec 13. We will put a video together and share with everyone on our YouTube channel on Dec 20.

Those who are under the age of 18 must have parent permission to participate. For more information, contact Jen Camplain at 815-871-1329.
